

Senior Forum Q&A

****If you have a question that was not asked during the Q&A, you can check out our [Applying to College FAQ](#) or reach out to your counselor.**

Upcoming Opportunities:

Financial Aid Night (virtual) - September 14 from 6:00-7:30 PM - [Register here](#) (will be recorded)

Common App Bootcamp - September 15 from 3:15-4:45 PM - [Register here](#)

College Essay Workshop - September 20 from 3:30-4:30 PM - [Register here](#)

College Application First Aid - September 22 from 8:00-3:00 in the Auditorium

FAFSA 1 on 1 support (virtual) - October 5 and November 15 - [Registration link coming soon](#)

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

- **Does every student need a counselor recommendation letter?**
 - No. Students only need to request a counselor letter of recommendation if at least one college to which they are applying or a scholarship requires a counselor letter. To see if a school requires a counselor recommendation letter, on the Common App go to the My Colleges tab, click on each college, and scroll down to the Recommendations section. If you see “Counselor Recommendation Required,” you need to request a counselor recommendation letter via the paper transcript form and by filling out the Senior Packet / Parent Brag Sheet in Naviance (About Me > Surveys from Your School).
- **How do I request a letter of recommendation from an outside recommender?**
 - Not all colleges allow or prefer letters from outside recommenders. First, check the college’s requirements. If the college accepts outside recommenders, you can invite him/her on the Recommenders and FERPA tab of the Common App (the FERPA waiver must be signed first). Non-Common App schools will specify instructions for requesting/uploading recommendation letters. Alternatively, recommenders are able to “snail mail” an application letter. Provide your recommender with a stamped, addressed envelope. The recommender should include your first and last name and date of birth on each page of the letter to help colleges match the letter to your application. Letters must arrive at the college before the application deadline!
- **Should I request teacher and counselor recommendation letters in the Common App or in Naviance?**
 - Teacher and counselor recommendation letters should only be requested through Naviance using the process described in the Senior Forum video. The only time you should request a letter through the Common App is if you are using an outside recommendation.
- **How do we know if teacher recommendations have been submitted?**
 - In Naviance, go to Colleges > Apply to College > Letters of Recommendation. “In progress” means the teacher has uploaded the letter. “Submitted” means the letter has been sent to colleges. You will not be able to see or read the letter.
- **Do the letters of recommendation have to be sent when you submit the Common Application?**
 - No. Students, teachers and counselors do not need to wait on one another to complete their pieces of the application. Counselors and teachers have two separate portals and can submit documents independently. All the materials just need to arrive by the deadline. It does not matter what order they arrive. Continue to check the submission status and follow up with the appropriate person, when necessary. If you are using a fee waiver, your counselor will need to approve it before you can submit your application.

- **How do recommendations get sent for non-Common App schools?**
 - Those schools are still in Naviance. When adding the college to Colleges I'm Applying to, indicate that you are applying directly to the institution. The colleges may use other systems, like Parchment, but they are connected to Naviance on the counselor side.
- **When should the counselor letter of recommendation be requested?**
 - You must submit the paper transcript request form (from Counseling Office) indicating you need a counselor letter AND have the Senior Packet completed at least three weeks before your college application deadline. This will allow your counselor time to write and process your letter. The three weeks is based on the college application deadline and does not mean the letter will be written within three weeks of the forms being submitted if they are submitted further in advance.
- **Can you describe what information would be helpful in a Parent Brag Sheet? Are there specific prompts on Naviance, and where can we find that?**
 - The Parent Brag Sheet asks questions about your student that will help the counselors write an effective letter. It's helpful to include anecdotes from high school years to illustrate your student's qualities and character. For example, if your child is a leader, try to share a story of a time they led. You can find the Parent Brag Sheet on the parent Naviance account (if you need access, contact Jennifer Meininger) in the same place as the Senior Packet (About Me (top right) > Surveys from Your School).

TESTING

****Testing policies vary from one college to another, so it's imperative that you check each college's website in order to make the best decisions.**

- **When should I send my test scores?**
 - If the test scores you want to send are already in your ACT account, you can send them as soon as you want. It's okay if they arrive at the college before your application and other materials. Plan to submit the request to send scores to ACT or College Board at least 4 weeks before your application deadline. If you are retaking the ACT, keep in mind scores are usually available in your account 2-4 weeks after the test date (ACT quotes up to 8 weeks). If you want to see your scores before deciding to submit them, you will need to allow 2-4 weeks from the time you request them to the time the college will receive them. If you are applying early action, you will likely want to use the four free score sends available at the time of registration (and up to 5 days after the test). For more specific information about the timeline, see next question. Also note that some colleges allow students to self-report scores at the time of application and only require official scores upon enrollment to confirm the self-reported scores, which would allow you to save money and give you more flexibility with timing. Check the college websites to find individual policies.
- **What's the timeline for a student taking the September or October ACT and applying early action to a test-optional school by November 1?**
 - Some colleges specify the last test date they will accept. The last ACT Ohio State will accept for early action is the October test, but you will need to use the four free sends for your score to arrive by the deadline. If you take the October test, you will need to decide whether or not you want your test scores considered before you see the results because the application will be due before you are able to view the results in your account. You have more time if you take the September test, but it's still possible the scores wouldn't make it in time if you wait for the scores to come back before requesting they be sent to the colleges. ACT quotes 2-8 weeks for scoring and another 2-8 weeks for scores to be delivered, though scoring normally takes 2-4 weeks, with the October test taking 3-8 weeks because of equating. Therefore, it would be safest to use the four free sends. For most test-optional schools (check their Common App Questions

sections to verify), you will be able to answer a question in the Common App saying you do not want your scores considered even if they've already been sent. So by using the four free sends, you ensure the scores arrive by the deadline if needed, but you also have the option to withdraw them from your account after you view your scores and before you submit your application. If you will still submit scores from a previous test even if your new score doesn't increase, you have until the beginning of October to request those scores be sent.

- **Can I submit test scores after the application deadline, specifically for scholarship consideration?**
 - The answer is specific to the school. Check the college website to see if they clarify this in their testing policy. If not, you can reach out to a college representative. Some schools will allow you to continue taking the test to try to improve your scores. Many schools will not. Oftentimes, the early action deadline is the scholarship deadline and schools will want the scores by the deadline to consider during their evaluation process.
- **How important are ACT/SAT submissions for test-optional schools?**
 - The decision of whether or not to send scores to test-optional schools is best determined by evaluating if doing so will strengthen a student's application. If a student's scores fall in the middle 50 percent range for previously admitted students, generally, the score will strengthen the application and should be sent. If the student's scores fall below the range, the score should not be included.
- **What is superscoring? How do I send a superscore?**
 - Superscoring is when a college takes the highest score for each test section across multiple test dates to create a new composite score. Some colleges superscore the SAT but not the ACT. Check the testing policy on the college's website. ACT offers a \$16 superscore report that includes the superscore AND scores from the tests that make up that superscore. If the scores are the same (eg. your highest math scores across multiple tests are equal) then the most recent will be chosen for sending your superscore. You can see which scores will be sent when you add the superscore report to your cart. If, for some reason, you do not want the most recent score to be sent or want more control over which scores are sent, you will need to either send only your highest score or pay to send multiple individual score reports of your choice, which would cost \$16 per test date per college. For the SAT, College Board uses a score choice policy that allows you to select which scores you want sent on a single report. You only need to send the tests that, when the average is recalculated, will give you the highest total score. **You cannot order a superscore report until scores have been released, so you may not have sufficient time to send a superscore report that includes your September or October test for an early action deadline. As an alternative, you could send an individual score report or a superscore report from tests already in your account and use the free sends on the upcoming test.
- **Is there an easy way to see which schools take superscores?**
 - No. The best way to determine if a school superscores is to find the testing policy on the school's website. You can more quickly find that page by googling the school's name + superscore. Lists of schools that superscore exist, but they're not always accurate.
- **How do I self-report ACT or SAT scores when some of my colleges are test-optional and others are not?**
 - It's best to change the testing section on the Common App to reflect what you want each college to see prior to submitting each application. However, most test-optional schools will allow you to have reported scores omitted from the application even if official or self-reported scores have already been sent. To indicate you don't want your scores considered, appropriately answer the test-optional question in the Questions section for each college.

- **If my student already registered for an ACT/SAT, is it too late to request a fee waiver?**
 - Fee waivers cannot be applied retroactively, so if you've already paid, you cannot get your money back. However, if you qualify for a fee waiver, you may qualify for an application fee waiver.

TRANSCRIPTS

- **Which kind of transcript should I request?**
 - At the beginning of the year, students should request an initial transcript. If the college requires or requests a mid year transcript, students should request that at the beginning of second semester. To request a final transcript, which will only be sent to the school a student commits to attend, s/he should go to Colleges I'm Applying to in Naviance and select the college name from the drop down under "College that I'm attending."
- **When should transcripts be requested?**
 - At least three weeks before the application deadline.
- **Why were students given a copy of their transcript in English class?**
 - Students were given the opportunity to review their transcripts and report any errors so that the counselors can correct them before they upload the transcripts to be sent to the colleges.
- **Is there any way to indicate CCP classes under Courses in Progress?**
 - The Courses in Progress on the transcript cannot reflect the dual enrollment courses, but there are two sections on the Common App to report these classes. One section asks you to list colleges through which you have taken or are taking college courses (Education section > Colleges & Universities). The other section asks you to report your current year classes (Education section > Current or Most Recent Year Courses).

NAVIANCE

- **Some of my information is incorrect in Naviance. How do I fix that?**
 - You can make an appointment with your counselor or send your counselor an email. However, GPA and test scores recorded in Naviance are not transmitted to the colleges, and both are updated at the District level.
- **How do parents log in to Naviance?**
 - Go to the Counseling page of the Walnut Hills website and click on the Naviance tab on the left-hand side for the link to log in. If you don't know your login information, please contact Jennifer Meininger.

COMMON APP

- **Should I sign the FERPA waiver?**
 - Students must select either 'I waive my right' or 'I do not waive my right' on the FERPA waiver in order to link the Common App with Naviance to allow their transcripts and letters to be sent. We recommend students waive their rights. Some teachers will not agree to write a student a recommendation if the student does not waive their rights. Additionally, the colleges believe letters will be more credible if there is not an expectation to show the letters to the students. If students do not waive their rights, they will only be allowed to see the letter(s) sent to the school they decide to attend.
- **How do you indicate that you'd like to apply to a specific college within a university, eg. the College of Business at University of Cincinnati?**
 - Typically, for the colleges that offer this option, in the college-specific questions section of the Common App (My Colleges > click on college name > Questions tab) you will find a question that asks you to indicate your academic program choice(s). Other times, you may need to indicate your choice(s) in the college-specific portal after you submit the application. If you

believe the college offers this option but don't see a place to tell them your choice(s), you can reach out to a college representative for clarification.

OTHER

- **How does the process work for the Black Common App?**
 - Counselors get alerts if a student applies through the Black Common App. Counselors only have to upload the transcript. You can identify four top schools but you can apply to others. You will need to let the other schools know that you made an application. Some HBCUs don't know they are on the Black Common App, so they don't pull the information. Students should make sure the colleges know they are applying through the Black Common App so the school knows to retrieve the information. Some of these schools are also on the Common App, which may be easier to use.
- **What is the school report and how do you request one?**
 - The school report is a profile for Walnut Hills that the counselor sends with the other supporting documentation (rec letters and transcripts). Counselors upload the school report for every student; you don't need to request one.
- **Does submitting my application before the deadline give me an advantage in the admissions process?**
 - Sending your application weeks ahead of time will not give you a leg-up in the admissions process. Colleges start to review applications after the posted deadline, except for rolling admission plans, which review applications as they are submitted. In order to avoid internet or website disruptions that could cause you to miss a deadline, you should not wait until the last minute to submit your application.
- **Should students attend college visits at Walnut if they've already visited the college?**
 - Yes. It's a way to show demonstrated interest and learn about schools. The reps who visit are likely the same people who will be reading your application, so it's nice to allow the reps to put a face to the name.
- **When are the college representatives visiting Walnut? How do we know when which colleges will be there?**
 - Most college visits will take place in person during the 11/12 grade lunch in the Conference Room. A few colleges opted for virtual visits in the evenings (5:00). The full schedule of visits is posted on the home page of Naviance on the bottom right side. College visits will also be read on the morning announcements each day, and visits for each week will be published in the Eagle Flyer and posted on the Counseling Office door. CPS is hosting a college fair on October 24 from 4:00-6:00 at Withrow. A list should eventually be available on the CPS website.
- **How do students receive help on their college essays?**
 - It's a good idea to have someone review your essay before submitting it. Supports for the college essay include the Writing Center, the College Information Center, and English teachers. If you are uncomfortable scheduling a face to face meeting, you can email your essay to Dr. Carlton-Ford in the Writing Center to get online feedback or visit your counselor.