

Staples High School

2022-23 Guide to Post-High School Planning
And College Applications



Mission Statement

The Staples High School community inspires learning,
fosters integrity, and nurtures empathy.

Staples High School
70 North Avenue Westport, CT 06880
203-341-1201

**The Westport Public School System affirms non-discriminatory practices in
employment and in educational opportunity.**

In compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Westport Public Schools do not discriminate in employment or in educational opportunity on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, ancestry, learning and/or physical disability, or past or present history of mental disorder.

Complaint Procedures

1. File complaint with Principal; copy to coordinator (see below).
2. If not satisfied with Principal's resolution, you may appeal to Coordinator.
3. Next level appeal is to Superintendent.
4. Next level appeal is to Board of Education.

Superintendent of Schools

Thomas Scarice
Westport Public Schools
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203-341-1025

Title VI and Title 504 Coordinator

Michael Rizzo
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Westport Public Schools Pupil Services Office
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Title VII and IX Coordinator

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Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
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Westport Public Schools
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Title IX Compliance Officers, Staples High School

Christine Cincotta, Class of 2026
James Farnen, Class of 2023
Patrick Micinilio, Class of 2025
Penny Proskinitopoulos, Class of 2024

FROM THE SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Introduction

The Staples High School Counseling Department follows a developmentally appropriate post-high school planning timeline, starting in ninth and tenth grade with introductory programs in classrooms, small groups, and individual conversations between students and their school counselors. In December of junior year, students learn how to perform a college search. In January, we hold our *College Planning Night for Juniors and Families* covering various aspects of the search and application process.

Juniors and their families are encouraged to schedule an appointment to meet with their school counselor second semester. These meetings typically include the following: reviewing the transcript, graduation requirements, and senior year course selection; developing an appropriate standardized test schedule; and discussing college and career goals. Knowing that college is not the immediate next step for all students, we may discuss options such as employment, the military, a gap year, or PG year. Juniors attend various workshops and activities with school counselors in the spring to follow up on the post-high school planning process and tasks that would be beneficial for students to complete prior to the start of senior year.

Early in September of senior year, students receive information explaining the college application, teacher recommendation, counselor recommendation, and transcript request process. Parents receive the same information in a morning presentation. While specific details are presented at that time, instructions and all required forms are available on the SHS Counseling website and can be worked on over the summer between junior and senior years.

We offer two evening programs geared toward financial aid and fit in the college selection process, first in January for underclassmen followed by September of senior year when filing financial aid applications. We hold a *College Admission Testing Presentation* with a local test prep agency and college admission panels with representatives from a variety of institutions every year. We also hold programs for student-athletes, visual and performing arts students, students with disabilities, and students considering two-year colleges, technical schools, gap year programs, the military, and other post-high school possibilities. *Spark Your Future* is a career exploration webinar series featuring career development professionals and Staples alumni working in various fields.

Your junior and senior years are filled with excitement, hard work, and many important decisions about your future. The School Counseling Department and College and Career Center staff are here to assist you and your family, and we wish you all the best in this process.

School Counseling Department Philosophy

The Staples High School Counseling Department values every student. Our philosophy is predicated on the belief that each student is a developing, capable, and unique individual who will learn from experience and grow personally and educationally throughout adolescence. We believe helping students to understand themselves will assist them in making sound decisions today and in their future.

School Counseling Department Mission Statement

The Staples High School Counseling Department supports our school's mission to "inspire learning, foster integrity and nurture empathy." Toward that end, we strive to provide each student with a developmentally appropriate program that fosters an understanding of, and appreciation for, one's unique self. Based on the American School Counseling Association model, our counseling services are proactive, developmental, and responsive to the individual needs of every student. We cultivate balance, strength, direction, and resilience, as we support each student on their own unique path. Our specific services, delivered by way of individual and group meetings, are geared toward enabling each student to develop the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills necessary for them to achieve their goals and lead successful adult lives in an increasingly complex and diverse society.

SCHOOL COUNSELING STAFF DIRECTORY

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shs.westportps.org
Phone: (203) 341-1225
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JUNIOR PLANNING CALENDAR

September

- Register for PSAT

October/November

- Take PSAT
- Consider informal visits to colleges
 - Register for May AP exams
- Attend *Navigating the College Search for Juniors*
 - Attend *Spark Your Future* career exploration webinars

December

- College search instruction
 - Review PSAT results
- Register for Khan Academy free online SAT prep
 - Update résumé
- Create an appropriate email address for college applications

January

- Attend *College Planning Night for Juniors and Families*
- Attend *Understanding College Financial Aid and Paying for College* program
- Schedule individual family meeting with counselor
 - Begin developing a preliminary list of colleges
- Plan appropriate testing schedule; register for SAT and ACT
- Review *Program of Studies* and consider courses for senior year

February

- Plan senior year courses with counselor
 - Plan college visits with family
- Individual family meetings with counselor

March/April

- Take state-required SAT
 - Continue college visits
- Begin financial aid research through the FAFSA4caster and Net Price Calculators
- Attend *Prospective College Athlete Night for Students and Families* and/or *College Night for the Visual and Performing Arts* (alternating years)
- Attend *College Transition for Students With Disabilities* program
- Attend *College Admission Testing Presentation*
- Attend *Spark Your Future* career exploration webinars
- Attend *Exploring Post-High School Options* program

May/June

- Attend *College Admission Panel* program
- Request 1-2 teacher recommendations and complete required questionnaires
 - Distribute *Reference Forms for Counselor Recommendation*
- Post-High School Planning classroom lessons

Summer

- Review your social media for appropriate content
- Brainstorm essay topics and write initial essay draft
 - Start college applications
 - Continue college visits
- Create calendar or spreadsheet for deadlines
 - Complete *Counselor Recommendation Questionnaires* (Student and Parent/Guardian)
 - Update résumé
- Develop résumé, portfolio, or other reflection of special talent, as advised
- For prospective Division I or Division II student-athletes, register with NCAA

SENIOR PLANNING CALENDAR

September

- College application procedures and information delivered in Connections groups
- Parents/Guardians attend *College Application Procedures and Information Presentation*
- Students schedule individual post-high school planning meetings with school counselor
- Register for SAT and/or ACT if appropriate
- Meet with college representatives in the College & Career Center
- Schedule remaining college visits and interviews
 - Finalize college list
 - Attend *Financial Aid Application Night* presentation
- Write personal essay and seek feedback from school counselor and/or teacher
 - Review your transcript for accuracy
- Request transcripts 4 weeks before application deadlines
- Request teacher recommendations at least 4 weeks before college deadline
- For prospective Division I or Division II athletes, register with NCAA and send official transcript and test scores

October

- Complete early applications and essays (if applicable)
- Request official SAT and/or ACT scores to be sent to the colleges you're applying to (if applicable)
- Finalize résumé, portfolio, or other reflection of special talent as advised
- File FAFSA online (use prior-prior year taxes already submitted to IRS last year)
- Check if your colleges require *CSS/Profile Form* for financial aid and complete if required
- Attend *FAFSA Day Connecticut* for assistance completing FAFSA
- Check with colleges regarding scholarships

November

- If required, request 1st quarter grades to go to Early Decision/Early Action/Rolling colleges
 - Write thank you notes to Staples staff who have written your letters of recommendation
- Early applicants: confirm colleges have received all of your application materials
 - Explore scholarship opportunities
- Access College & Career Center for assistance with financial aid applications
 - Register for May AP exams



Follow us on social media (Instagram: [stapleshighschool_counseling](#), Twitter: [SHS_Counseling1](#)) and visit the [SHS Counseling Website](#) and Schoology for the most up-to-date calendar of events and other resources.

SENIOR PLANNING CALENDAR

December

- Complete regular decision applications
- Inform your school counselor of early admission decisions
 - Update your admission decisions
- If admitted to your early decision college, withdraw other applications

March/April

- Review your admission decisions and financial aid offers with parents and school counselor
 - Decide where you wish to revisit
- If you have been placed on a waitlist, follow up appropriately
 - Make final decisions; send deposit by May 1
 - Inform colleges that you will not be attending
- Access College & Career Center for assistance with reviewing financial aid awards

January/February

- Check Schoology, the SHS Counseling Website, and the *PTA Weekly Planner* for information about local scholarships
- Attend College & Career Center *Scholarships Workshop*
- Attend *Spark Your Future* career exploration webinars

May

- Take AP exams and have scores sent to the college you will be attending
- Complete *Post-High School Information Survey*
 - Confirm admissions decisions with your counselor
 - Participate in *Senior Internship Program*

June

GRADUATION ~~~ GOOD LUCK!



IMPORTANCE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

It is most important for every student to take an **appropriately** rigorous and personally challenging academic program. One reason is that the high school transcript is the single most important factor in the college admission process.

Admission committees assess a student's transcript based on the course selection, level of courses, grades earned, and the GPA (grade point average).

When researching colleges, be aware there are specific requirements that students must follow. Some colleges may require additional courses in performing, fine, practical and human arts, which provide an important dimension to a student's educational experience. For example, the University of California system requires a full year course (two semesters) of Theater, Music, or Visual Arts, and several of the southern public flagship universities have structured requirements to consider.

Admission standards vary based on the type of institution and its level of selectivity. Generally, the more selective an institution, the more that institution will demand from its applicants. Colleges may change admission requirements from year to year; obtain specific information directly from the college about its standards and policies.

STAPLES TRANSCRIPT AND GPA

The transcript contains two GPAs (Grade Point Averages): Unweighted GPA and Weighted GPA. Both GPAs are calculated on a 4.0 scale. Full details can be found on in the [Student Handbook](#) or [Program of Studies](#).

Through the end of junior year, the GPAs are calculated based on final grades for completed courses. Courses in progress are also listed on the transcript, without a grade. After first semester of senior year is completed, a seventh-semester GPA is calculated for seniors only and reported to colleges on the mid-year transcript. Staples does not assign class rank.

Students and families can view all previous courses and grades on the "Grade History" page in the PowerSchool student/parent portal. All students and families are sent a copy of their unofficial transcript at the completion of each semester. If you need an official transcript sent prior to the college application process in senior year, visit the Transcripts page on the [SHS Counseling website](#) or contact Mrs. Susan Fugitt, Registrar.

STAPLES SCHOOL PROFILE

The School Profile is a comprehensive document describing the Westport community, Staples statistics, our grading system, and course offerings. Below is a sample of the Staples High School Profile, which is updated each fall and, along with your transcript, is sent to colleges by the School Counseling Office. The School Profile can also be downloaded from the [SHS Counseling Website](#).



70 North Avenue
Westport, Connecticut 06880
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CEEB / ACT Code 070-920

COMMUNITY

Westport is a shoreline town in Fairfield County one hour from New York City with a population of 28,000 and median household income of \$206,466. The community is 86% white, 6% Asian, 4% Hispanic, 1% Black, and 2% Other, including American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. Families and the community demonstrate strong support for the school system, which also includes two middle schools grades 6-8, five elementary schools grades K-5, and one pre-school. Per pupil expenditure for 2020-21 was \$23,348.

SCHOOL OFFICIALS

Thomas Scarice, Superintendent of Schools
Stafford W. Thomas, Jr., Principal
Christine Cincotta, Assistant Principal
James Famen, Assistant Principal
Patrick Micinilio, Assistant Principal
Penny Proskinitopulos, Assistant Principal
Rosemarie Amphie, Assistant Principal for Special Education

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Aerial photo courtesy of Brandon Malin, Class of 2021

Staples High School | 2022-23 School Profile

Staples High School, founded in 1884, is a comprehensive public high school grades 9-12 with an enrollment of 1,700 students and 200 faculty members. The single public high school serving the town of Westport, Staples is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and consistently ranked as one of the top high schools in Connecticut. Thirty-eight varsity athletic teams compete in the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference (FCIAC). There is active participation in vibrant art, music, theater, and media programs and over 100 extracurricular activities. While the majority of graduates ultimately attend a four-year college, Staples honors all pathways to success and offers a range of programs to meet the academic and personal needs of students.

TRANSCRIPT + GRADING

Staples High School does not rank students. Two grade point averages are calculated: Unweighted GPA and Weighted GPA, as detailed below. Both include grades in all courses taken, including academic, elective, and Health & Physical Education courses. GPAs are calculated based only on courses taken at Staples High School. For the Class of 2023, accelerated Math and World Languages courses taken at the middle school are listed on the transcript, but not eligible for credit or included in the GPAs. Transfer transcripts are attached to the Staples transcript as separate documents; previous school grades are not included in the Staples GPAs.

Unweighted GPA

	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	RWF
All Courses	4.33	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	0.67	0.00

Weighted GPA

	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	RWF
College Level	5.00	4.67	4.33	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	0.00
Honors	4.67	4.33	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	0.00
College & Career Prep	4.33	4.00	3.67	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.33	2.00	1.67	1.33	1.00	0.67	0.00

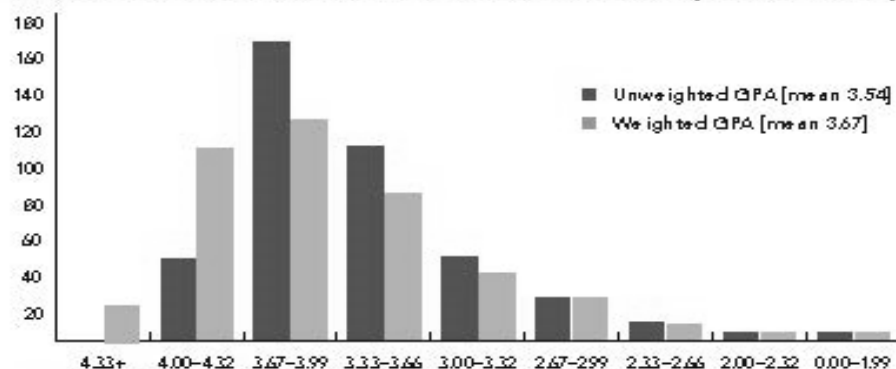
College Level Weight: Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment courses, Calculus BC Plus, Multivariable Calculus, and Differential Equations

Honors Weight: Honors courses

College & Career Prep Weight: All other courses from all subject areas, including A (advanced college prep), B (college prep), and C level academic, non-leveled elective, and Health & Physical Education courses

2019-20 Grading: Staples students had the option of pass/fail grading in any or all of their courses for the fourth quarter of the 2019-20 school year. Students who elected pass/fail for fourth quarter received a traditional letter grade as a final grade on the transcript based on performance in prior terms. Traditional letter grading resumed for 2020-21.

CLASS OF 2023 6TH SEMESTER GPA DISTRIBUTION [439 STUDENTS]



Highest Final Overall (Unweighted) GPA / Class of 2022 4.21

Highest Final Academic (Weighted) GPA / Class of 2022 4.54

STAPLES SCHOOL PROFILE

Staples High School | 2022-23 School Profile

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

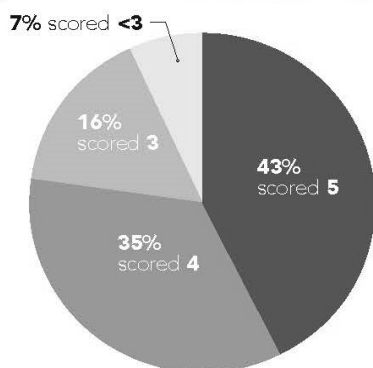
<i>Humanities</i>	
English	4.0
Social Studies	3.0
Visual + Performing Arts	1.0
Open Humanities	1.0
<i>Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math</i>	
Math	3.0
Science	3.0
Open STEAM	3.0
World Languages	2.0
Health + Physical Education	2.5
Mastery-Based Diploma Assessment (MBDA)*	1.0
Additional Credits	2.5
Total Credits	26.0

*Students create a portfolio to demonstrate skill mastery and reflection in four domain areas (Collaborators, Communicators, Critical Thinkers, and Creators) through learning experiences embedded in their courses.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Advanced Placement Exam Results

In spring 2022, 524 students took a total of 1,168 AP exams. The **mean score** was **4.1**.



ACT Results (Class of 2022)

	Middle 50%	Mean
Composite	26–32	29.0
English	26–34	29.9
Math	26–31	28.3
Reading	25–33	29.3
Science	25–31	28.0

SAT Results (Class of 2022)

	Middle 50%	Mean
Total	1090–1370	1224
ERW	550–680	615
Math	530–700	609

Class of 2022 Recognitions

National Merit Scholars	2
National Merit Finalists	7
National Merit Commended Students	31
National Hispanic Scholars	5
AP Scholars	31
AP Scholars with Honor	30
AP Scholars with Distinction	92

PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Advanced Courses (25 AP, 38 Honors)

English

English 9 Honors
English 10 Honors
Mythology & Bible Honors
AP English Language
AP English Literature

Math

Geometry Honors
Algebra 2 Honors
Pre-Calculus Honors
Calculus Honors
AP Calculus AB
AP Calculus BC
AP Statistics
Calculus BC Plus*
Multivariable Calculus*
Differential Equations*

Science

Biology Honors
Chemistry Honors
Physics Honors

AP Biology
AP Chemistry
AP Computer Science A
(starting 2022-23)
AP Computer Science Principles
AP Environmental Science
AP Physics 1
AP Physics C

Social Studies

Global Themes Honors
U.S. History Honors
AP European History
AP Macro/Microeconomics
AP U.S. Government & Politics
AP U.S. History
AP World History: Modern

Visual + Performing Arts

Digital Design Honors (Motion)
Digital Design Honors (Print)
Honors Option For All Music
Ensembles (starting 2022-23)

Photography Honors
(starting 2022-23)
Studio Portfolio Honors
AP Art & Design
AP Music Theory

World Languages

French 2, 3, 4, 5 Honors
AP French Language
German 2, 3, 4, 5 Honors
AP German Language
Italian 2, 3, 4 Honors
Latin 2, 3, 4 Honors
AP Latin
Mandarin Chinese 2, 3, 4, 5
Honors
AP Chinese Language & Culture
Spanish 2, 3, 4, 5 Honors
AP Spanish Language
AP Spanish Literature
*college level weight in
Weighted GPA

- For course descriptions, refer to: shs.westportps.org/teaching-and-learning/program-of-studies.
- Accelerated Science is a rigorous two-year college preparatory course that approaches science from a multidisciplinary perspective. Aligned with Next Generation Science Standards, students learn fundamental principles of physics, chemistry, biology, and Earth and space science through phenomena-based experiences.
- College credit is available through the University of Connecticut Early College Experience (ECE) program for students taking AP French Language, AP German Language, Contemporary World Studies, Italian 4 Honors, and Popular Music and Diversity in American Society. These courses are weighted at the college level in the Weighted GPA.
- Students may take courses at Norwalk Community College through the High School Partnership (HSP) program. NCC HSP courses are weighted at the college level in the Weighted GPA.
- Students may focus on an area of interest beyond the traditional curriculum through an Independent Learning Experience (ILE). A significant personal investment and independence are expected from the student. ILEs are graded pass/fail and noted on the student's transcript.
- Advanced art and media courses may be taken multiple times for credit with teacher approval.
- Through the Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy, students are recognized who have attained an Intermediate Mid or higher level of proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading comprehension in two or more languages (including studying four years of English).

CLASS OF 2022 FUTURE PLANS

443 graduates attending 162 different post-secondary institutions

93.0% Four-year Colleges

1.8% Two-year Colleges

1.4% PG / Vocational / Other Higher Education

2.0% Gap Year

1.8% Employment / Other

The mission of the Westport Public Schools is to prepare all students to reach their full potential as lifelong learners and socially responsible contributors to our global community.

TYPES OF POST-HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS

Two-Year Colleges

You may choose to earn an associate's degree at a two-year institution, which is designed to prepare you for a job in fields such as business, health, technology, or public service, or to transfer after your first two years to a four-year institution. The Connecticut State Community College is a public, two-year degree granting institution consisting of twelve campuses located throughout the state. Local campuses include Gateway (New Haven), Norwalk and Housatonic (Bridgeport). Students will select a "home" campus, but may take classes at any campus, based on convenience and course availability.

Transfer Programs

Through the [Guaranteed Admissions Program](#) (GAP), graduates of Connecticut State Community College who earn an associate's degree and have at least a 3.0 grade point average (3.3 GPA for business) are guaranteed admission to the University of Connecticut's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources; or The School of Business.

Additional transfer options are available through the [Connecticut Guarantee](#). In this program, students with an associate's degree from Connecticut State Community College and a qualifying GPA receive guaranteed transfer credits and junior standing to nine different independent institutions including Albertus Magnus College, Goodwin University, Mitchell College, Quinnipiac University, Sacred Heart University, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, University of New Haven, and University of Saint Joseph.

Funding

[Pledge to Advance Connecticut](#) (PACT) funding covers the gap between the federal and state grants a student receives, and the community college tuition and mandatory fees. To be eligible, students must be first time college students (ECE and dual enrollment programs do not affect standing), who have graduated from a Connecticut high school and are enrolled in a degree or credit-bearing certificate program (carrying at least six credits). To be considered for PACT funding, students must also complete the FAFSA.

Four-Year Colleges and Universities

Four-year colleges and universities lead to a bachelor's degree in a specific area of study, which can prepare students for a profession or graduate study. There are generally more extensive admission requirements than two-year colleges. Some four-year institutions are focused on visual and performing arts or technical areas.



For more information related to each of these post-high school options, visit the Post-High School Planning page on the [SHS Counseling website](#).

TYPES OF POST-HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS

Private Vocational Trade and Technical Schools

A number of privately-owned schools provide vocational training. Areas of specialization include automotive, culinary, plumbing, electrical, cosmetology, and medical and technical training. These schools help students develop skills for a specific career.

Postgraduate (PG) Year

A PG year is a transition year between high school and college that allows a student access to the resources and academic preparation of a boarding school. It can be beneficial for strengthening academic skills, participating in sports and other co-curricular activities, preparing for admission testing, and providing a chance to mature. Over 150 schools worldwide offer PG programs. Admission standards vary, as do the objectives of the programs themselves.

Gap Year

A gap year allows students another opportunity for personal growth after high school. Successful gap year experiences start with a well-developed plan and include personal goals. Some exciting and valuable programs include internships in the community, leadership training, and structured travel/education. It is advisable to complete the college application process and defer matriculation for one year.

Armed Services

Opportunities in education and training are available in all branches of the Armed Services. Your options include the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard, and U.S. Merchant Marines.

Employment/Apprenticeships

Some students may choose to go directly into the work force. Resources for pursuing this path are available through College and Career Center.

RESEARCH AND SELECTION OF A COLLEGE

The most important part of this process is researching and ultimately selecting an institution that offers you the best opportunity to achieve your goals and is the right match for you.

One of the most common misconceptions held by students is that there is one “perfect” college. This is not true. There are many colleges or universities that may be right for you.

The experience is made more manageable if you collaborate with your school counselor and use the resources available through the School Counseling Office and the College and Career Center.

Steps in selecting a post-secondary school are:

1. Evaluate your goals.
2. Determine your selection criteria.
3. Discover your best fit, academically, emotionally, and financially.

On the following page is a sample of an organizational chart that you may find useful in your college search process. This chart can also be downloaded from the SHS Counseling website.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART SAMPLE

This document may help you to organize the college search and application process. It can be downloaded (and altered to a student's specifications) from the Forms page on the [SHS Counseling website](#).

[illegible]

NAVIANCE AND SCOIR

[Naviance](#) and [Scoir](#) are web-based programs for college and career planning for students and families. Students and families are able to:

- Perform a college search and create a college list
- Access college profiles and websites
- Compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to actual historical data for Staples students who have applied in the past
- Take personality/career inventories
- View college representative visit schedules
- View scholarship information
- Complete required School Counseling Department surveys

Staples is introducing Scoir to students in the class of 2024 starting junior year. Students and families in the classes of 2023, 2025, and 2026 will continue using Naviance only for the remainder of the 2022-23 school year. For 2023-24, we will transition to using Scoir for all students and families.

Scoir will be used to send school materials to colleges (transcripts, counselor recommendations, teacher recommendations, etc.).

SCOIR



COLLEGE VISITS

The purpose of the college visit is to assess whether that institution is a good fit for you. Visit as many of the colleges on your list as realistically possible. Students are permitted two days per school year to visit colleges or other post-high school options. Check the college website or call the admission office for instructions regarding scheduling a visit, including tours, information sessions, and interviews. In addition to the official admission visit, we encourage families to leave time to explore the nearby area and talk informally with students on campus. If visiting in person is not possible, utilize virtual tours and other online resources to explore colleges and demonstrate interest.

Aspects to Consider When Visiting

- Academic programs
- Accessibility of the teachers
- Availability of support services
- Career services
- Class size
- Cost and financial aid
- Dining options
- Distance from home
- Diversity
- Extracurricular activities and sports
- Graduation rate
- Housing
- Location and setting
- Percentage of students from out of state
- Percentage of students living on campus
- Percentage of students who remain on campus on the weekends
- Retention rate of freshmen (percentage of freshmen returning for a second year)
- Study abroad opportunities
- Weekend activities and social life

If You Cannot Visit

Sometimes it is not realistically possible for you to visit a college campus. You can still get the feel of a college by talking to recent graduates or current students who are from this area. The School Counseling Department keeps a database of recent Staples graduates attending college; visit the College and Career Center for help with connecting with one of these students. You can also inquire about alumni interviews, college fairs, regional events, and meet college representatives during meetings in the fall of senior year. Be mindful of any colleges that track a student's demonstrated interest in the admission process, and if you cannot visit campus, take advantage of other opportunities to learn about the college and demonstrate interest.

Online Research Tools

There are numerous other tools for investigating colleges and gathering information to determine which may be the right fit for you in lieu of a visit to campus. Take notes as you go along, as those will come in handy for your applications and essays down the road. Here are some tips:

- Take virtual campus tours using [Google Images](#), [The College Tour](#), [YouniversityTV](#), [YouVisit](#), or [CampusReel](#).
- Explore majors and classes you are interested in pursuing. Contact professors or department representatives for more information.
- Read college newspapers and alumni newsletters.
- Check colleges' social media accounts, particularly ones not operated by the admission office, to see what's on students' minds and learn about campus culture and organizations you are interested in joining.

TYPES OF APPLICATION PLANS

Colleges and universities have varying admission practices. Current information pertaining to the policies of an individual college are found on its website and in its publications. Application plans include the following:

Early Action

Early Action is an application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Application deadlines are typically in October, November, or December. Students who are admitted under Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1. Under Early Action, a student may apply to other colleges.

Restrictive Early Action (Single Choice Early Action)

Restrictive Early Action, offered by only a small number of institutions, is an application process in which students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Application deadlines are typically in November. Institutions with Restrictive Early Action plans place restrictions on student applications to other early plans. Institutions will clearly articulate these restrictions on their applications and websites. Students who are admitted under Restrictive Early Action are not obligated to accept the institution's offer of admission or to submit a deposit prior to May 1.

Early Decision

Early Decision is an application process in which students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. While pursuing admission under an Early Decision plan, students may apply to other institutions, but may have only one Early Decision application pending at any time. The institution will notify the applicant of the decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time after the Early Decision deadline. If accepted to an Early Decision college, the student must withdraw all other pending applications. There are some colleges that offer Early Decision I and Early Decision II. The only difference is deadline dates; Early Decision I deadlines are typically in November, and Early Decision II deadlines are typically in January.

Regular Decision

Regular Decision is an application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction. Many Regular Decision deadlines are in January or February, but could be earlier in the admission cycle.

Rolling Admission

Rolling Admission is an application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are completed on a first come, first served basis and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle. A student may apply to other institutions without restriction.

Open Admissions

Students are accepted upon application in Open Admissions (usually community colleges).

TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS

Visit the [SHS Counseling website](#) for information and required forms related to requesting transcripts and recommendations in senior year. Instructions are updated in the summer each year.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The college application process often requires one or two letters of recommendation from academic teachers. Read each college's application instructions carefully to determine recommendation requirements. The purpose of the teacher recommendation is to describe their experience with the student in their class and give colleges an idea of how a student is likely to perform academically. Colleges are interested in various qualities including a student's work ethic, motivation, creativity, and capacity for growth.

Teacher recommendations are confidential and not shared with students, parents, or counselors.

Junior Year:

Any student planning to apply to a four-year college should ask one or two teachers for a recommendation in spring of junior year. Choose teacher(s) who know you well to write recommendations for you, preferably junior year teachers. Take the time to schedule an appointment and ask the teacher in person.

By the end of the school year, students should complete for each teacher either the *Teacher Recommendation Questionnaire* from the Forms page on the [SHS Counseling website](#) or the teacher's own questionnaire. The student's college list does not need to be set until senior year; only background information about the student and his/her experience in the class is provided through these questionnaires.

Senior Year:

Instructions will be provided later this school year and early in senior year.

COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The college application process often requires a letter of recommendation from your school counselor. Whereas the purpose of the teacher recommendation is to focus on your individual experience in a specific class, the counselor recommendation discusses your personal qualities, character, background, activities, and your broad academic profile. Counselor recommendations are confidential and not shared with students or parents. In order to write a thorough recommendation, your counselor will need completed *Counselor Recommendation Questionnaires* from the student and parent/guardian(s) and an updated résumé. *Reference Forms for Counselor Recommendations* are also encouraged and helpful to the counselor.

Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire (Student)

The purpose of the student's *Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire* is to provide detailed information to your counselor that he/she can utilize when writing your college recommendation. This document must be completed prior to the transcript request. Only your school counselor will access this document. The *Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire* requires students to respond to a series of open-ended reflective questions that take time to complete thoughtfully. Students should also be sure that their résumé is updated with extracurricular activities, employment, community service, and summer experiences and email it to their school counselor.

Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire (Parent/Guardian)

The purpose of the parent/guardian's *Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire* is to provide a description of your child that the counselor can refer to when writing his/her college recommendation. Any specifics you can offer including examples and anecdotes are extremely useful. This document must be completed prior to the student making a transcript request. Only your child's school counselor will access this document. The *Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire* requires the parent/guardian(s) to respond to a series of open-ended reflective questions about their child, experiences in school, and family background, and it takes time to complete thoughtfully.

Reference Form for Counselor Recommendation

Reference Forms are helpful to your school counselor in writing your letter of recommendation. This form is not sent to colleges and is not a substitution for teacher letters of recommendation. Students are encouraged to distribute this form to a coach, club advisor, employer, or any other pertinent outside reference. This form can also be used for teachers other than those already writing a college recommendation letter. *Reference Forms* are available on the [Forms](#) page on the SHS Counseling website, and completed forms are returned to Staples registrar, Mrs. Fugitt, to be passed along to the student's school counselor.

SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Most admitted students submit only what is required of them. Some colleges will accept a supplemental recommendation beyond what it has required. This extra letter should provide different or additional context beyond what is required and is rarely from a third Staples teacher. A supplemental letter might come from a coach, employer, club advisor, or anyone who might know you as a result of a unique talent or from an outside activity. Students may assign a recommender through the [Common Application](#) or the recommender can email or mail a hard copy of their recommendation directly to the colleges.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Standardized testing is only part of the information that represents you and your accomplishments. Many colleges and universities are now test-optional; however, some still require applicants to submit scores from either the [SAT](#) or the [ACT](#). Test titles and descriptions are shown below.

PSAT/NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

The PSAT/NMSQT test is administered by College Board and given in October to juniors nationwide. The PSAT is a useful indicator of scholastic aptitude as well as the basis for eligibility toward the National Merit Scholarship program. Also, the PSAT is the source of some college mailings that you will receive. Students receive scores in Evidenced-Based Reading & Writing and Math, a total (sum) score, and Selection Index, which is used exclusively for National Merit competition. PSAT scores are not used in the college admission process.

ACT

The ACT consists of tests in the academic areas of English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. The ACT offers an optional writing test, which colleges may require. Students receive a separate score for each section plus a composite score (average of the four required sections, rounded to the nearest whole number). ACT recently announced changes to take effect allowing students to retake selected sections and submit “superscored” score reports to colleges that list the strongest section scores across multiple test administrations. Check with individual colleges to understand their policy in relation to these changes.

SAT

The SAT consists of tests in the areas of Evidenced-Based Reading & Writing and Math. Through Score Choice, students may be able to choose which test administration date to send to colleges. Each individual college has its own policy and may require all scores to be submitted. Check with individual colleges to understand their policy.

Advanced Placement (AP) Tests

AP Tests are three-hour exams given at the high school based on college level courses. AP Tests are given once a year in May. Registration takes place in the fall. In most cases, there is no need to send official AP scores from College Board to the college until after the student has made his or her final decision where to enroll. The scores are primarily used for college placement, credit, or advanced standing. Students may choose to self-report scores on their applications. Check with each individual college regarding their policy.

English Proficiency Testing

Colleges and universities may require international students and English language learners to demonstrate English language proficiency. The three most commonly accepted proficiency tests are:

[TOEFL](#) (Test of English as a Foreign Language) : The TOEFL is taken on a computer in a test center, consists of four sections (reading, listening, speaking and writing) and lasts three hours with a ten minute break.

[IELTS](#) (International English Language Testing System): The IELTS Academic test can be taken in a test center on paper or on a computer and can also be taken online at home. The listening, reading and writing sections are completed on the same day with no breaks. The speaking section may be scheduled up to one week before or after the other tests. The total test time is two hours and forty-five minutes.

[Duolingo English Test](#) : The Duolingo English Test is taken on a computer, on demand, from anywhere with a reliable internet connection and is one hour in length.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Which Tests to Take

Early in second semester, every junior should discuss with his/her school counselor which tests to take and the appropriate timeline for each. As a general guideline, if you are planning to apply to college, you should take the SAT and/or the ACT twice. The best preparation for scoring well on college entrance examinations is to read regularly, do your homework, and take a strong high school program.

Test Registration

In order to register for the SAT, go to College Board: www.collegeboard.org. In order to register for the ACT, go to: www.actstudent.org. Be sure you use your full legal name when registering.

2022-23 Test Dates

SAT

August 27, 2022
October 1, 2022
November 5, 2022
December 3, 2022
March 11, 2023
May 1, 2023
June 3, 2023

ACT

July 16, 2022
September 10, 2022
October 22, 2022
December 10, 2022
February 11, 2023
April 15, 2023
June 10, 2023
July 15, 2023

The statewide SAT administration will be held in March 2023. (Students do not need to register for this test.)

For 2022-23, Staples is an SAT test site for November, December, May, and June (standard Saturday administration and 50% extended time). For students with disabilities requiring SAT School-Based Testing, Staples is a test site for only some test dates. Space is limited; priority will be given to students in the class of 2023.

Staples is not an ACT test site for standard Saturday administration or National Extended Time testing. For students with disabilities requiring Special (school-based) Testing, Staples is a test site for only some test dates. Space is limited; priority will be given to students in the class of 2023.

Standardized Testing with Accommodations

Students who receive testing accommodations at Staples through an IEP or 504 plan may request accommodations on College Board exams (PSAT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and APs) and the ACT. There are specific deadlines established by the College Board and ACT for requesting accommodations; requests will not be accepted after the deadlines. More details, a timeline to follow, and required forms can be found on the Standardized Testing page on the [SHS Counseling website](#).

Reporting Scores

During senior year, students request to have their scores sent from the testing companies when required by colleges to which they are applying. Staples does not release official test scores, and they are not reported on the transcript. Colleges set their own testing requirements, which can be found on their respective websites.

Test-Optional Colleges

There are many colleges that do not require standardized test scores in their application process. A complete list of those colleges can be found at www.fairtest.org.

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

There are three main types of applications: The [*Common Application*](#), [*Coalition Application*](#), and school-specific applications. The college's website will list which application(s) it accepts. If a college offers a choice of applications, we encourage students to speak with their school counselor about which to use. Colleges will not differentiate between use of its own application and the *Common Application* or the *Coalition Application*.

Students need to remain organized and be aware of necessary supplements and deadline dates including an Early Decision Agreement if applying Early Decision. More specific and detailed information can be found on the Common Application, Coalition Application, and colleges' websites.

The SHS Counseling Department has developed in-depth guides for students to utilize when completing their college applications, found in Schoology, handouts, and emails from the SHS Counseling Department.

Application Tips

- Begin well in advance of the deadline.
- Set up an appropriate personal email address to be used for college correspondence.
- Follow directions and complete all steps.
- If you have an intended major, you can list it. Otherwise, "Undecided" is an appropriate choice.
- When asked to list activities, remember to also include out of school commitments.
- Describe activities clearly including purpose, commitment, and level of participation.
- If the application you are using does not provide adequate space to thoroughly explain your activities or achievements, you may also wish to use the "Additional Information" section. Consult with your school counselor as to what information, if any, to include.
- Use Google Docs to complete your personal essay and writing supplements, then copy and paste into the appropriate box on the online application.
- Don't rely on spell-check. Proofread yourself, then have the application proofread by an adult.
- Review your entire application before you submit the final version.
- Be sure to send any supplemental material if required.
- After submitting your application, look for email confirmation that your application has been received.

PERSONAL ESSAY

On most applications, students respond to one of several open-ended essay questions. Application essay questions have no right or wrong answers. It is the content of the essay and how you organize and support your thoughts that are most important. Your essay should serve as a reflection of who you are and provide evidence of your personality and experiences that are not reflected in other parts of your application. School counselors and English teachers engage students in an essay brainstorming activity at the end of junior year.

ESSAY DOs

Write in the voice of a teenager. This is what the colleges expect and want.

Answer the question. Write an essay that explicitly addresses the question asked.

Conform to guidelines, including length.

Write about a topic you genuinely care about, not simply one that “sounds impressive.” It will not come across as sincere.

Describe feelings as well as actions. Be thoughtful and reflective.

Use examples, anecdotes, and/or specific details.
Try to tap into all five senses.

Share your essay with your school counselor
prior to submission in a timely manner.

ESSAY DON'Ts

Don't use gimmicks. Gimmicks are risky and often not appreciated.

Don't write about what you think admission officers want to hear.

Don't just write about where you have been or what you have done. Reflect on what your experiences say about you as a person.

Don't complain about your circumstances or make excuses. It is acceptable to write about a challenge or obstacle. However, what is important to your reader is how you were shaped by the experience in a positive manner.

Don't submit an essay that contains any individual college's name. Proofread carefully.

SUPPLEMENTAL AND SCHOOL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

A number of colleges ask for responses to additional questions. Take the time to answer these questions thoughtfully. Carefully proofread your responses. The effort and quality of these responses should be comparable to that of your main essay.

PERSONAL RÉSUMÉ

While it is typically not required to submit a formal résumé as part of your college application, you will provide information regarding your activities, experiences, and accomplishments throughout high school on your application as well as be required to complete a résumé for your school counselor. A strong one-page résumé can be valuable as it provides admission representatives and prospective employers with a concise overview when you interview for colleges, jobs, or scholarships.

We have provided a brief sample below that outlines the information that is important to include. This is one format option; you should develop your résumé according to your individual needs and preferences.

Joe Wrecker

Jwrecker@gmail.com

143 Main Street, Westport, CT 06880

203-454-4333 (h)

203-247-4227 (c)

Education:

Staples High School

Class of 2023

Academic GPA: 3.22

Honors and Achievements:

Honor Roll – 6 semesters

Extracurricular Activities:

Staples High School Swimming

2020-present

Swim backstroke and freestyle for Varsity team

SLOBS (Service League of Boys) Volunteer

2021-present

Work on various community service projects and fundraisers for local programs.

Staples High School Link Crew

2022-present

Support 9th grade students with their transition to Staples H.S. and assist with orientation program.

Employment:

Westport Pizza

2022-present

Work 10-15 hours per week during the school year to help offset personal expenses.

References:

Available upon request

COLLEGE INTERVIEW

The purpose of an interview is to enable you to make a direct personal impression on an admission representative. It is a chance for the college to learn about you and for you to learn about the college. Check with each college to determine if interviews are required or recommended.

Interview Tips

- Research the college before your interview.
- Be prepared to both answer and ask questions. Having a list of questions with you is suggested. Avoid asking obvious questions that have answers contained on the website.
- Bring a copy of your transcript and/or résumé if you have one available.
- Arrive a few minutes early. Manners and appearances matter – dress appropriately.
- Be sure to shake the interviewer's hand and maintain good eye contact.
- Be yourself at all times.
- Follow up with a thank you note or email to your interviewer.

Questions You Could Be Asked:

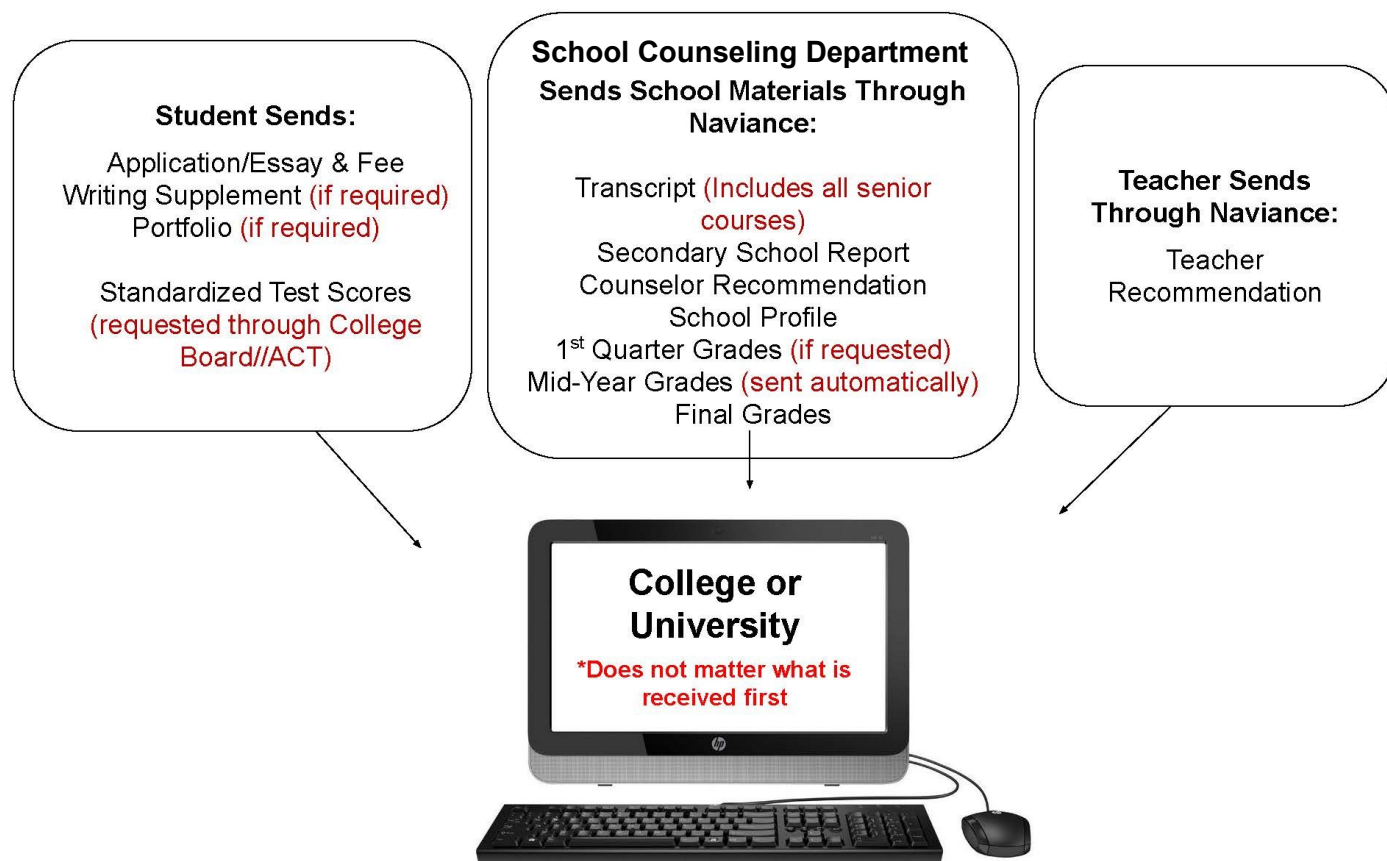
1. Why are you interested in this college?
2. What do you do for fun?
3. What are your academic strengths and weaknesses?
4. Which one of your activities has given you the most satisfaction?
5. What would you say your three best qualities are?
6. Where do you see yourself in five years?
7. What have you enjoyed most about your high school years?
8. What would you change about your school if you had the chance?
9. What book have you enjoyed the most in the last year and why?
10. Which academic course has been your favorite? Your least favorite? Why?
11. Is your academic record an accurate gauge of your abilities and potential?
12. Have you ever had a job? For how long and what were your responsibilities?
13. Describe the community in which you live.
14. What do you plan to study?
15. Are you involved in any community service/volunteer activities?

Questions You Could Ask:

1. Does social life revolve around the campus?
2. What do your students do on the weekends?
3. What are the living arrangements for first year students?
4. How do you help freshmen get adjusted to your college?
5. How would you describe the classroom environment?
6. What is the availability of professors to students?
7. What are the opportunities for undergraduate research?
8. Is there a core curriculum of classes or distribution requirements that students must take?
9. Do you have internship programs available?
10. Are there community service opportunities?
11. Tell me about your study abroad program.
12. At what point do I have to declare a major?
13. Describe the advising system, before and after you declare your major.
14. If you need help, where do you go?
15. How would you describe the social climate on campus?
16. What do the majority of your graduates do?
17. What type of career services exist?

WHO SENDS WHAT?

Application Components



CHECKING YOUR APPLICATION STATUS

Students may submit their application when completed even if other materials haven't yet been sent.

It is ultimately the student's responsibility to be sure that all application materials have been received by the colleges. In order to allow time for the college admission offices to process materials, we recommend the following protocol **2 weeks after the deadline has passed.**

1. Check student portal (if available).
2. If the college does not have a portal or the portal indicates that materials are missing, call the admission office to verify the information is up to date.
3. If an email is received from the college indicating materials are missing, call the admission office to verify the information is up to date.
4. See your school counselor with any questions.

TYPES OF ADMISSION DECISIONS



Accepted

The student is admitted to the college. Most colleges need a response and deposit by May 1.

Denied

The student has not met the criteria of accepted students.

Deferred

The college determines that more information (including first semester senior year grades) is needed to make a final decision, and the student's application is now part of the regular decision pool.

Waitlisted

The college deems that the student is admissible; however, due to enrollment size, the student cannot be offered admission at that time. It is critical for a student to express his/her interest directly to the institution.

All acceptances are contingent upon successful completion of high school, and colleges expect students to maintain a consistent level of performance throughout senior year.

NCAA ELIGIBILITY

The [NCAA](#) establishes rules on eligibility, recruiting and financial aid. There are three membership divisions: Division I, II and III. Institutions are members of a division according to the size and scope of their athletic programs and whether they provide athletic scholarships. For more information regarding college athletics, refer to the booklet, *Athletics in the College Admissions Process*, which is available on the Athletics and College Admissions page on the [SHS Counseling website](#).

Division I and Division II

If you wish to participate in Division I or II athletics, you must be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center. Students must:

1. Starting in the spring of junior year, register online with the NCAA.
2. In the fall of senior year, submit an *NCAA Transcript Release Form* to Mrs. Fugitt, registrar. This form is available for download on the NCAA or SHS Counseling websites.
3. In the fall of senior year, submit SAT/ACT scores, if required, to the NCAA through College Board/ACT. Check the NCAA website for updates to standardized testing requirements.
4. Your final transcript will be sent to the NCAA automatically once you've made the request in the fall.

All student-athletes must have completed 16 core courses in high school, including:

4 years of English (*Advanced Journalism, Critical Analysis of Film & Literature, Food in Literature, Graphic Narratives & Visual Literacies, and ESOL are not approved by NCAA*)

3 years of Mathematics (*Applied Math, Algebra 1C & 2C, Financial Algebra, Geometry C, Accounting, Personal Financial Management, and Financial Decision Making are not approved by NCAA*)

2 years of Natural or Physical Science (*3-D Design & Engineering, Animal Behavior, Applied Algorithmic Design, Creative Technological Solutions to Real-World Problems, Embedded Systems Programming, Horticulture, Materials & Design Science, Medical Terminology, and Mobile App Development are not approved by NCAA*)

1 additional year of English, Mathematics or Natural or Physical Science

2 years of Social Science (Social Studies)

4 years of additional courses (*from any area above, non-doctrinal religion/philosophy or World Language*)

- *Note: Spanish 1B, 1C, 2B, 2C, 3B, and 4B are approved for .5 units only*

Division III

It is not necessary to be certified by the NCAA if you are playing Division III athletics.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

If you are thinking about applying to be a visual or performing arts major, there are often additional requirements. You may be required to submit a portfolio or perform an audition. Read and follow the specific directions of each institution. Talk with your school counselor and visual or performing arts teachers at Staples for assistance. The following websites also may be helpful to you in your search and application process:

Performing & Visual Arts Fairs: nacacnet.org/pva

National Portfolio Day: portfolioday.net

U.S. SERVICE ACADEMIES

The U.S. service academies represent some of the country's best colleges, and all tuition, fees, room, and board are paid in exchange for five years of active duty upon graduation. If you're considering applying to an academy, there is a thorough procedure you must follow. Because of the extraordinary competition for academy selection, students are encouraged to apply to other colleges as well and inquire about any ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) opportunities.

United State Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO): www.usafa.af.mil

United States Coast Guard Academy (New London, CT): www.cga.edu

United States Merchant Marine Academy (Kings Point, NY): www.usmma.edu

United States Military Academy (West Point, NY): www.usma.edu

United States Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD): www.usna.edu

Starting in the spring of junior year as information becomes available online, fill out the Pre-Candidate Questionnaire for each of the academies to which you are interested in applying. At the same time you begin the application process to the academy itself, request information about a nomination from a Connecticut congressional representative or other eligible nominator. Check the U.S. Service Academies page on the [SHS Counseling website](#) for more information.

STUDENTS WITH AN IEP OR 504

It is a family decision as to whether or not to disclose that their child has special needs. If you choose to do so, it is the responsibility of the student to self-identify, provide accurate and thorough documentation, and request reasonable accommodations.

Documentation requirements and criteria for determining eligibility for services may differ from college to college. Specific documentation requirements should be explored at each college's website.

Accommodations at the college level are based on the colleges' review of documentation, not necessarily what the high school has provided on 504 plans or IEPs.

For more information regarding students with special needs, please refer to the guide, [*College Planning for Students with an IEP or 504*](#).

In order to determine the level of support necessary at the post-high school level, the family may consider the following:

- Student's level of independence completing coursework in school and at home
- Number of Study Skills periods
- Number and level of academic courses in high school
- Modifications provided in the classroom
- Student's independent living skills and emotional maturity

Levels of Services Available to Students with Special Needs Attending College

1. General Tutorial Services: least comprehensive of the three categories and often available to all students on campus.
2. Coordinated Services/Self-Directed Programs: less structured support is available to the student, usually through the office of disability services.
3. Comprehensive/Structured Programs: extensive support is offered to students. A student's disability may be considered and given special consideration during the admissions process.

Some students may not be ready to manage the academic and social expectations of a typical college, even with structured support in place. For those students, a transitional experience that will provide academic and/or vocational skills may be more appropriate. Transitional programs can be based on a college campus or in another setting.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid comes in four basic forms. Most financial aid packages offer a combination of the following:

1. **Loans** must be repaid with interest.
2. **Grants** are need-based and do not have to be repaid.
3. **Scholarships** are merit-based and do not have to be repaid. Most are awarded through the general admission process; some scholarships require an additional application.
4. **College Work Study** allows the student to work on campus to contribute toward expenses.

Follow these tips:

- Discuss your family's financial situation in regards to paying for college with your child early in the post-high school planning process.
- Identify colleges where you might receive aid and make sure to include a range of affordable colleges on your list.
- Check the [FAFSA4caster](#) on the FAFSA website. It is a tool to help students and families estimate their potential eligibility for federal student aid.
- Use Net Price Calculators to estimate the full, four-year cost of attending colleges of interest (found on the financial aid office web site for each college or [College Board website](#)).
- Research the deadlines and required forms for each college to which you are applying.
- Attend the *Understanding College Financial Aid and Paying for College* program in January and the *Financial Aid Application Night* in September.
- Complete the [FAFSA](#) online as soon after October 1 as possible. Use your most recently completed tax returns. For example, if your child is applying for federal aid to pay for college beginning the fall of 2024, you will be submitting your tax returns from the 2022 fiscal year in October of 2023.
- In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges (mostly private) also require the submission of the *CSS/Profile Form*. Go to www.collegeboard.org to learn more and complete the application.
- Ultimately, all financial aid decisions are made by the individual college; therefore, it is necessary for you to work with the financial aid office at each college to which your child is applying.

If the fees for submitting college applications, taking standardized tests, or sending test scores presents a true financial hardship for your family, please have your child see his/her school counselor.

SCHOLARSHIPS

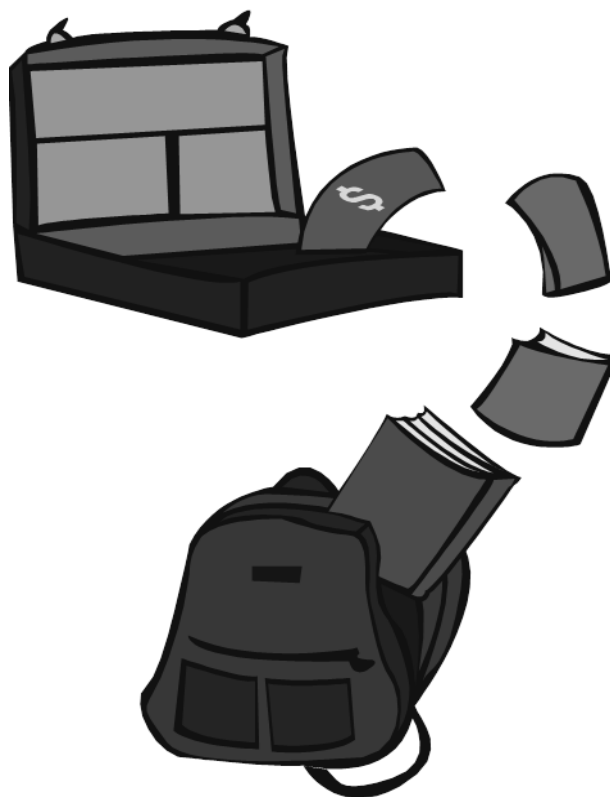
There is no single source for all scholarship information available. Therefore, it is important to reach out to your place of employment, clubs, and organizations, which may also provide awards.

Scholarship notices received by Staples are published regularly in the *PTA Weekly Planner* and posted on the [SHS Counseling website](#). Families need to access these resources on a frequent basis since they are continuously being updated.

Colleges may have an earlier priority application deadline to be considered for scholarships. Check the college's website for such deadlines.

The College and Career Center offers various workshops and individual support on an ongoing basis to assist students with searching and applying for scholarships.

Staples High School Tuition Grants (www.staplestuitiongrants.org) provides financial assistance to qualified seniors and graduates who continue their education. Families must show demonstrated need through a completed FAFSA and federal income tax return. As the single largest distributor of tuition grant dollars in Westport, Staples Tuition Grants is responsible for disbursing funds contributed by over one hundred individuals, PTAs, civic organizations, local businesses, trusts, and private foundations. Information and applications are available online during senior year.



COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER

The College and Career Center is designed to assist students and families with all aspects of the post-high school planning process. It is located adjacent to the School Counseling Office and open every day from 8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Staff will assist you with online college and post-high school options research. To inquire about College and Career Center services, students can stop by any period and parents/guardians can call Sandra Zeigler at 203-341-1886.

College and Career Center Programs and Resources:

- Career inventories and college search
 - *Exploring Post-High School Options*
 - Transition to college programming
 - College representative visits
- Community college and vocational/technical school tours
- Career exploration webinar series
 - Job shadow experiences
 - Common Application/Coalition Application Workshop
 - Personal essay and interview assistance
 - Financial aid and scholarship workshops and information
 - Résumé support
 - Gap year, military, and PG year information
 - Summer programs information
 - Community service information
 - Job Bank
 - Working Papers and labor law information

ONLINE RESOURCES

There is a wealth of information relating to the college search and admission process on the internet. Below are websites that students and/or parents can reference.

Post-High School Planning

shs.westportps.org/departments/counseling: SHS Counseling programs, forms, and information

student.naviance.com/staples: college/career exploration tool and aid through the application process

www.commonapp.org/: The Common Application for Undergraduate College Admission

commonblackcollegeapp.com/: Common Application for HBCU institutions

www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/: Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success

bigfuture.collegeboard.org/: College and career search tools and planning resources for students and parents

www.collegegreenlight.com/: Matches students with scholarships and predicts their college admissions chances based on their grades and standardized test scores

www.collegenavigator.gov/: College statistics generated by the U.S. Department of Education

www.collegedata.com/: Calculates students' college admissions chances based on several criteria

www.collegeresults.org/: The Education Trust database of graduation rates

www.inlikeme.com/: General information on college planning, application, and financial aid processes.

www.knowhow2go.org/: Offers advice on various aspects of the college process

www.ucan-network.org/: Features an advanced college search tool

www.unigo.com/: Extensive college and scholarship search tool

www.collegeconfidential.com/: Interactive forums on a wide range of college-related topics

www.collegeexpress.com: Provides detailed college profiles and scholarship matching

www.collegeweeklive.com: Matches students to colleges and scholarships and hosts live online events

Youniversitytv.com: online college tours

Youvisit.com/collegesearch: online college tours

Unigo.com: student commentary, behind the scenes student videos, campus life ratings

Induck.co: student commentary on colleges

Campusreel.org: student-generated videos to assist with college search

www.bls.gov/ooh: Occupational Outlook Handbook allows students to research hundreds of careers

ONLINE RESOURCES

Standardized Testing

www.actstudent.org/: ACT test information.

www.collegeboard.org/: SAT, SAT Subject Test, AP, and PSAT information.

www.fairtest.org/: List of test-optional colleges and universities.

www.compassprep.com/admissions_req_subjects.aspx/: SAT Subject Test requirements by college.

www.toefl.org/: Test of English as a Foreign Language.

Standardized Test Prep

www.khanacademy.org/sat/: Thousands of practice questions, videos, lessons, and hints plus study and test-taking tips and strategies.

www.actstudent.org/onlineprep/index.html: A comprehensive guide to the ACT, including timed practice tests.

www.number2.com: Free ACT prep.

www.4tests.com: Helps students determine whether the ACT or SAT is a better fit for them and also provides online practice tests.

www.princetonreview.com: Provides online tutoring for the SAT and ACT.

www.majortests.com/sat/: Offers practice questions and helpful tips pertaining to each of the SAT sections.

www.testprepreview.com: Provides practice tests and general overviews of several standardized tests.

www.prepme.com/: Offers online courses and practice tests for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT.

<https://www.kaptest.com/sat/free/sat-practice>: Quizzes, SAT questions of the day, 20-minute practice tests.

<https://blog.prepscholar.com/printable-sat-practice-tests-4-free-official-tests>: Provides printable SAT practice tests with accompanying answers and explanations.

https://www.powerscore.com/sat/help/content_practice_tests.cfm: Offers numerous printable practice tests for the ACT and SAT.

<https://www.test-guide.com/free-sat-practice-tests.html>: Offers SAT practice tests and quizzes with answers and explanations.

<https://sat.magoosh.com/flashcards/vocabulary/decks>: Provides online vocabulary flashcards divided into decks based on level of difficulty.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Financial Aid

www.fafsa.ed.gov/: Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

cssprofile.collegeboard.org/: CSS Financial Aid Profile.

bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college: College Board financial aid information.

www.salliemae.com/: Private student loan database.

www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/: Estimates eligibility for federal student aid.

studentaid.ed.gov/: Offers a multitude of resources regarding the financial aid process.

www.collegegoalsunday.org/: Local assistance with completing FAFSA.

www.ctohe.org/SFA/pdfs/SFABrochure.pdf: CT Office of Higher Education "Paying for College" brochure.

www.wrightslaw.com/info/fin.aid.index.htm: General financial aid information.

www.tuitioncoach.com/collegecost/index.jsp: Tips on the financial aid process.

Scholarships

www.staple tuitiongrants.org/: Staples Tuition Grants.

www.fastweb.com/: Scholarship search tool.

www.scholarships.com/main.aspx: Scholarship matching service.

www.collegescholarships.org/: Scholarship application resource.

www.studentscholarshipsearch.com/ebook/: Scholarship search and financial aid information.

www.questbridge.org/: Scholarships for low-income students.

www.gatesfoundation.org/topics/Pages/scholarships.aspx: Scholarships for low-income students and students of color.

www.uncf.org/forstudents/scholarship.asp: Scholarships for African-American students.

www.scholarships.hispanicfund.org/applications/: Hispanic College Fund scholarships.

www.disaboom.com/scholarships/all-general-disability-scholarships/2/: Scholarships for students with disabilities.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Students with Disabilities

ldaamerica.org/parents/: Learning Disabilities Association of America offers support and resources for parents of students with disabilities.

www.thinkcollege.net/: Lists college options for students with intellectual disabilities.

www.heath.gwu.edu/: The HEATH Resource Center is an online clearinghouse on postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities.

www.ldonline.org/indepth/college/: Offers advice on creating a successful post-secondary education experience for students with learning disabilities and/or AD/HD.

<https://www.ncld.org/>: National Center for Learning Disabilities.

www.greatschools.org/special-education/health/college-resources-for-students.gs?content=798/: Offers resources for students with learning disabilities and/or AD/HD.

autism.lovetoknow.com/Asperger_Colleges: Provides general information and links to other websites on autism and Asperger's syndrome and the college process.

www.chadd.org: An excellent resource for students with AD/HD.

ahead.org/students-parents/transitions: The Association on Higher Education and Disability provides numerous resources to aid with the transition out of high school.

www.ldpride.net/ldlinks.htm%23OnlineResources: Lists links to a plethora of resources for students with learning disabilities and/or AD/HD.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Other Considerations and Special Populations

<https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>: Helpful information regarding NCAA eligibility.

www.d3sports.com/landing/index: Tracks Division III sports including soccer, basketball, football, and baseball.

www.playnaia.org: For students considering playing for a college that is part of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

www.njcaa.org: National Junior College Athletic Association.

www.campusstarter.com/: Canadian colleges and universities.

www.ucas.ac.uk/: The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service is a clearinghouse for attending university in the UK.

<http://hbcuconnect.com/colleges/>: Provides detailed profiles of all historically Black colleges and universities.

www.hillel.org/index/: A guide to Jewish life on college campuses.

www.campusprideindex.org: National tool measuring inclusivity of LGBTQIA youth on college campuses.

www.ctcl.org/: Colleges that Change Lives, an organization devised by Lauren Pope, promotes college access for all students.

www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/supporting-undocumented-youth.pdf: Resource guide for undocumented youth.

ope.ed.gov/security: Explores campus safety issues.

Visit the [SHS Counseling website](#) for extensive information on gap year and post-graduate programs, applying to the U.S. service academies, and athletics in the college admission process.