**Applying to College: The Basics**

How do I begin?

* Narrow down our list of colleges to your final choices
* Review applications and begin collecting information needed to complete
* Create a college folder with all your materials
* Create a checklist of all important deadlines and track progress

How many colleges should I apply to?

* 5-8 colleges is the recommended number: target school, safety schools, financially safe school, reach school
* Consider colleges that you will be happy attending
* Visiting colleges which you are applying is strongly encouraged

Do I have to pay for my applications?

* College application fees vary ($30-50 each)
* Fees are nonrefundable
* Many colleges offer fee waivers to students who cannot afford to pay. Ask representatives at the college fair if they offer them. Sometimes they will give you one just for inquiring. See school counselor for additional waivers and assistance

Should I apply Early Decision/ Early Action?

* If you are sure about what college that you want to attend, early decision or early action might be the best choice for you.
* If you are unsure, keep in mind that some early application plans require you to commit early.
* Be sure to confirm the requirements of early decision/early action

Should I apply online?

* Check with the college to see which is preferred. Some give a discount for applying online
* Online is becoming more common. Please continue to proofread before submitting.

What is the common application?

* The Common Application is a stream-lined application that over 500 colleges/ universities use. Instead of filling out eight different applications, you fill out one online.
* Link Common App with Naviance in Naviance
* Some colleges will still require you to submit supplemental materials in addition to the common application.
* You will still need to pay individual application fees for each college you apply.

How do I include my transcript?

* Be sure to put Dr. Dottin’s email address on any online application that it may be submitted electronically.

Who should I request a letter of recommendation from?

* Teachers or adult that know you well and can speak to your strengths.
* Ask your references well in advance. We recommend at three weeks at a minimum.
* Please provide each reference with a copy of your student activity sheet which is on file with Mrs. Berry
* Mrs. Berry will keep letters on file for future reference.

Should I apply to colleges if my admissions/ test scores or grades are below their published ranges?

* Yes. The admissions test scores and grades are averages not necessarily cut offs.
* Colleges consider many factors.

Should I even bother applying to colleges I don’t think I can afford?

* Yes. Remember after financial aide packages are determined, many students pay far less than what is posted online. You can make a better decision if you can afford it after you get accepted. You should have honest conversations beforehand.
* Complete the FAFSA as early as possible after Oct 1st to qualify for the most aide.
* Even if the financial package is not enough, many colleges are willing to work with students they have chosen. Don’t be afraid to call the college.

Are my SAT and ACT scores included on my transcript?

* Your transcript does include your scores.
* Colleges will require that your scores be sent directly from the testing agency
* You can request scores to be sent to specific schools when you take the exams.
* If you need additional scores reports you can request them online
  + Collegboard.org
  + Actstudent.org