

# FISHERS HIGH SCHOOL

## COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE



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FHS

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## FRESHMAN and SOPHOMORE ACTION PLAN

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Start your college and career planning before senior year. Here is a checklist of items that will help students lay the foundation to their career pathway. Your school counselor can help you with any details with the items listed below. Plan to attend any information presentations provided by FHS.

- ❖ Visit the College Board – it offers several resources for students and parents [College Board](#)
- ❖ Create a four-year high school plan
  - Explore the Fishers HS Course Guide. FHS offers a variety of courses and pathways to meet a wide variety of student interests [FHS Course Guide](#)
  - Counselors will meet with students to help them design their four-year plan.
  - Know what courses are required – Students are encouraged to challenge themselves by pursuing an Academic Honors Diploma.
  - Explore the various levels of courses and pathways including Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Credit, etc.
- ❖ Begin career searching – In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, you are given access to Naviance which is an excellent career searching tool. Access Naviance through the Fishers website at [www.clever.com/in/hse](http://www.clever.com/in/hse) - Login in with Active Directory
  - Make a list of interests, talents, and favorite activities – start matching them with occupations [Exploring Careers](#)
- ❖ Set goals for yourself and look for support
  - FHS offers several options for academic help as well as support in guiding you through challenges that you may encounter
  - **Work to get the best grades possible**
  - Develop good working relationships with your teachers, coaches, etc.
- ❖ College Admission Standardized Tests
  - During the fall of 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade, students will take practice tests to prepare for college admissions standardized tests. These tests are the PreAct which is practice for the ACT([ACT](#)) and PSAT which is practice for the SAT([College Board](#)).
  - Once students take the PSAT, they can access an individualized, customized test preparation for the SAT from a partnership with the College Board and Khan Academy. This is a **free** service for students and is highly recommended for test preparation. Consider taking SAT Subject tests after you have completed the relevant course. For example, take the History Subject Test after you complete AP US History.
- ❖ Get involved in extracurricular activities
  - A list of clubs and activities can be found on the FHS website – if you don't find your interests, consider starting your own club!!! [FHS Clubs/Activities](#)
  - Colleges would rather see a strong involvement in a few activities than a loose connection to several activities.
  - If you are interested in collegiate athletics, research the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility requirements at [NCAA](#). Make your counselor aware of your goals.

Explore [Finding Your Best Fit College](#) for tips on finding the “best fit” college for you.

- ❖ Take advantage of summer opportunities
  - Summer is a great time to explore interests, learn a new skill, or volunteer
- ❖ It is never too early to visit colleges – utilize your vacation time or you can take 1 day out of school if needed. Arrange this with the attendance office ahead of time.
- ❖ Get the facts about college costs.
  - Read [College Costs](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/) at <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>
  - Read about financial aid at [7 Things You Need to Know About Financial Aid](#)



HAVE PRIDE

## JUNIOR ACTION PLAN

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Your college/career planning should kick into high gear this year. Attend any information presentations provided by FHS. Make an appointment with your College/Career Counselor for help laying out your college plan. **Early! Early! Early! – It is very important to apply early to give yourself the most competitive edge. Sign up for a summer College Bootcamp offered at FHS!! We will help you through the whole process so that you enter senior year ready to go!!!!**

- ❖ Meet with your counselor
  - Discuss the timeline for taking SAT and/or ACT – test in the second semester of junior year. FHS offers SAT prep classes after school for a minimal cost. Compare SAT/ACT at [SAT vs. ACT](#)
  - Review your four year plan – challenge yourself appropriately
- ❖ Take advantage of opportunities to earn college credit either through AP/IB testing or dual credit courses
- ❖ Stay organized – create lists, charts, and timelines to help you accomplish tasks
- ❖ Continue to explore colleges and careers
  - Utilize Naviance [www.clever.com/in/hse](http://www.clever.com/in/hse), College Board [SAT](#), ACT [ACT](#), and <http://learnmoreindiana.org/>
- ❖ Visit Colleges – Fall Break is a great time to do this. You do get 3 days from school for college visits if need be. Arrange this with the attendance office ahead of time.
- ❖ Attend college fairs – FHS and HSE host the Hamilton County College Fair in the fall. The Northside College Fair is in Westfield in the spring.
- ❖ Nearly 100 college representatives visit FHS – sign up in Naviance to attend these presentations. Choose a few carefully so you don't miss too much class time.
- ❖ Take the PSAT in October. Prepare by taking the practice test and reviewing materials provided to you at school prior to the test. Consider attending a Saturday workshop provided by FHS. The PSAT score from the junior year testing is used to determine National Merit status which can lead to tremendous scholarship opportunities. Learn more about National Merit at <http://nationalmerit.org/>
- ❖ Review your PSAT scores and use the Khan Academy free practice tools at <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice/khan-academy>.
- ❖ Seek out summer enrichment opportunities. These experiences can enhance your college applications.
- ❖ Create a resume in Naviance. Counselors can utilize this, and you can easily provide it to teachers who may provide letters of recommendation.
- ❖ If you are interested in collegiate athletics, research the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility requirements at <http://ncaaclearinghouse.net/>. Make your counselor aware of your goals.
- ❖ Pay attention to school announcements. We announce several opportunities and scholarships that you will want to consider. **Visit individual college websites to explore scholarships.**
- ❖ Create your Common Application account at <http://commonapp.org/> if your colleges use this process. You can apply to several different colleges with this one core application.
- ❖ Explore financial aid
  - There is an extensive list in Naviance – Create a “short list” of scholarships that you can revisit and actually apply for in senior year.



SHOW CHARACTER

## SENIOR ACTION PLAN

6 Now it's time to put your plan into action. Continue communication with your counselor. Check in with them occasionally so they can help you stay on track.

- ❖ Register for college credit for your dual credit courses and AP exams.
- ❖ Create a calendar of application deadlines.
- ❖ Consider carefully who you will ask to provide letters of recommendation – ask them in person (not email) and give them at least 3 weeks to prepare your letter. Provide them with a resume. Follow up with a thank you note!!! If the college does not require a letter, you do not have to send one.
- ❖ Begin filling out college applications!!!
  - Be aware of all deadlines. November 1<sup>st</sup> is a deadline for several colleges.
- ❖ Complete the CSS/Financial Aid Profile, if required. Make sure you submit it by the priority date set by the college. This deadline may be in early October so be aware of deadlines
- ❖ Write drafts of application essays. Ask teachers, parents, and friends to read them.
- ❖ Decide if you should retake the SAT and/or ACT.
  - Take SAT subject tests if your colleges require them.
  - Compare your scores to the college profile to see how your scores match up.
  - Higher scores can lead to more merit scholarship dollars from universities.
- ❖ Continue attending presentations by college representatives visiting FHS
  - Sign up in Naviance
  - Some colleges keep track of your “demonstrated interest” in their school.
- ❖ Visit colleges
- ❖ Begin applying for scholarships – Utilize Naviance!!!!
  - Look on college websites for their specific scholarship guidelines.
  - Use the Hamilton Southeastern Foundation “Uniform Application” for local scholarships. This can be found on the FHS website at <http://www.hse.k12.in.us/fhs/home.aspx>
- ❖ Utilize Naviance to request transcripts and letters of recommendation.
- ❖ Fill out the FAFSA beginning in October at <http://fafsa.gov/>
  - We encourage all students to fill out the FAFSA
  - Attend the Financial Aid night offered at FHS
  - Attend College Goal Sunday (<http://collegegoalsunday.org/>) or FAFSA completion night at FHS if you want individual help
  - The deadline for Indiana funds is April 15<sup>th</sup> but most colleges set earlier deadlines
- ❖ Set up college interviews if your college does this. Also, schedule auditions if necessary.
- ❖ Compare your college admissions and financial aid offers.
  - When you are ready, accept a college's offer of admittance by sending a tuition deposit by May 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - Tell other colleges if you will not attend
- ❖ Enter your college choice in Naviance so we know where to send your final transcript.
- ❖ Complete the senior survey in Naviance.
- ❖ Send your housing request, schedule college orientation and placement tests.



BUILD TRADITION

# Fishers High School Guidance Office College Application Process Using Naviance

- Complete the actual college application on each college's website or use the Common Application
- To see if your college requires the Common App, visit <https://www.commonapp.org/explore-colleges>
- If you are applying via Common App, fill it out on <https://www.commonapp.org/>
- All SAT and ACT scores should be sent to the colleges via their respective companies: <http://www.collegeboard.org/> (for SAT) and [www.act.org/](http://www.act.org/) (for ACT).

## To Request your Transcript:

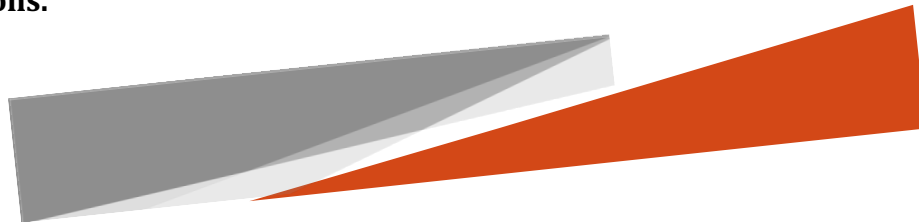
1. Log into your Naviance account at <https://student.naviance.com/fishershhs>
  - a. If you don't remember your password, please use the "forgot your password?" link on the sign-in page or contact the FHS Guidance Office.
2. Click on **Colleges I'm Applying To**
3. To add a college, click on the **Red Circle with the White Plus Sign** on the right side of the page.
4. Type the college name in **Which College are you applying to?**
5. Choose the **Application Type** (Regular Decision, Early Decision, Early Action – ask your counselor about these options if you need help)
6. Choose how **I'll submit my application** - select either via Common App, Direct to Institution or I'm not sure yet
7. Check the box **I have submitted my application**
8. Click **Add and Request Transcript** – this will send the request to the FHS Guidance Naviance account. When your transcript has been sent, it will be marked "Sent". *Allow two weeks for your application materials to be completed by the Guidance Office and give the college at least two to three weeks to show your Transcript as being "Received" (on their website)*
9. Click on **Initial** for type of transcript requesting
10. Click on **Request and Finish**
11. If you are using Common App, complete the **Common App Account Matching** in the red box at the top of the page.
12. If you need a transcript for the NCAA or NAIA, follow the same steps that are listed above.

## Teacher Recommendations:

1. Click on **Colleges** at the top of the page
2. Click on **Colleges Home**
3. Click on **Letters of Recommendation**
4. Click **Add Request**
5. Click the dropdown menu and choose the teacher from the list (make sure you have personally asked this teacher prior to this request and that your Resume is updated in Naviance)
6. Click on **Choose Specific Colleges** or **All Current and Future Colleges**
7. Add a personal note for the teacher
8. Click **Submit Request** – this will send an email to the teacher stating your request and will add the request to the teacher's Naviance account. It will also record that you have requested it in your Naviance account.

## Important Reminders

- When registering for the SAT and/or ACT tests, please remember to **send your scores from Collegeboard and/or ACT directly to the colleges and universities** of your choice. You receive four free score reports every time you register for a test. Please take advantage of the free reports because score reports requested at a later date are subject to a fee. The FHS Guidance Office will not be sending SAT and ACT test scores with the transcripts to the colleges and universities.
- **Use Naviance to create your resume.** Your counselor and teachers will use the information you provide on your resume when writing recommendation letters.
- **Use Naviance to sign up for college rep visits to FHS,** college searching, career planning and personality/learning style inventories.
- **Scholarships** . . . who doesn't need help paying for college? We encourage you to start looking for scholarships NOW! The guidance section of the FHS website is continually updated with new scholarships. Please check it frequently. Scholarship opportunities are also publicized through the FHS daily announcements and on Twitter. Two great additional resources are [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) and [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com). These two sites alone have over 800,000 scholarship listings! With this many ever-changing scholarships, it is imperative that students do their own scholarship research. The guidance office will provide updated information regarding local scholarships. Searching for scholarships can be a daunting task but is very manageable if you get started early during your senior year. Now, go get started finding money! Of course, your counselor is here to answer any questions you may have.
- **NAIA/NCAA** . . . are you an athlete hoping to play a sport in college? You must be academically eligible. Anyone planning to play at an NAIA college must register online at [www.playnaia.org](http://www.playnaia.org). SAT and/or ACT scores must be sent to the NAIA directly from the testing agency using the code 9876. Anyone planning to play at an NCAA division I or II College must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>. SAT and/or ACT scores must also be sent to the NCAA using the code 9999. In addition, a transcript must be sent to the NCAA and/or NAIA. Eligibility requirements for the NCAA and NAIA are listed in the guidance section of the FHS website. Make sure to let your counselor know your athletic and academic plans!
- **Follow us on Twitter @fishersguidance, on Instagram at fishershscounseling and on Facebook at fishershhschoolcounseling**
- **Please stop by the FHS Guidance Office or contact your counselor if you have any questions.**



## SAT DATES FOR 2020-21

Updated information will be advertised as soon as it becomes available. The testing agencies are working to add additional test dates to the previous schedule and it possible that there will be another SAT school day option in the fall.



# Campus Visit Checklist

Visiting a college campus helps you get a sense of what a college — and life at that college — is like. This can help you decide whether the college is right for you.

## GATHER INFORMATION

Find out what you need to do to apply, and see if the college's class and major offerings are what you want:

- Take part in a group information session at the admission office.
- Interview with an admission officer.
- Pick up financial aid forms.
- Sit in on a class that interests you. If classes aren't in session, just see what the classrooms are like.
- Meet a professor who teaches a subject that interests you.
- Talk to students about what they think of their classes and professors.
- Get the names and business cards of the people you meet so you can contact them later if you have questions.

## EXPLORE THE CAMPUS

Get a feel for student life, and see if this college is a place where you will do well:

- Take a campus tour.
- Talk to current students about the college and life on campus.
- Check out the freshman dorms, and stay overnight with a student, if possible.
- Visit the dining hall, fitness center, library, career center, bookstore, and other campus facilities.
- Talk to the coaches of sports that you may want to play.
- Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.

## CHECK OUT CAMPUS MEDIA

Tune in to learn what's happening on campus and what's on students' minds:

- Listen to the college radio station.
- Read the student newspaper.
- Scan bulletin boards to see what daily student life is like.
- Go to the career center and learn what services it offers.
- Browse the school's website and any campus blogs.
- Read other student publications, such as department newsletters, alternative newspapers, and literary reviews.

## GET THE MOST OUT OF A CAMPUS VISIT IN **6 STEPS**

### **1** DECIDE WHERE AND HOW

See if your school arranges group trips to colleges or if you could get a group of friends together and visit the campus. A family trip is another option and allows you to involve your family in the process.

### **2** PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

Before you set out, get a map of the college campus and pick out places of interest. Call the college's admission office to schedule a guided tour of the campus.

### **3** TAKE YOUR OWN TOUR

Just wandering around the campus on your own or with friends can be the best way to get a feel for what a college is like.

### **4** EXPLORE THE FACILITIES

Find the spots on campus where students gather or ask a student where the best place to eat is to get a feel for the character of the college. Visit the library and check out the gym or theater. Ask an admission officer if you can tour a dorm and a classroom.

### **5** MAKE CONNECTIONS

Talk to current students. Ask the students at the next table or sitting nearby what they like best about the college.

### **6** TAKE NOTES

During your visit, write down some notes about your experience. What did you see that excited you? Are there aspects of the college that you don't like? If so, what are they?

## Questions to Ask During Your Visit:

### ASK TOUR GUIDES/STUDENTS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- What's it like to go from high school to college?
- What do you do in your free time? On the weekends?
- What do you love about this college?
- What do you wish you could change about this college?
- Why did you choose this college?
- What is it like to live here?
- What does the college do to promote student involvement in campus groups, extracurricular activities, or volunteerism?

### ASK PROFESSORS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- Can a student be mentored by professors, graduate students, or upperclassmen?
- How are professors rated by the college? Does the college think mentoring and meetings for project guidance are important?
- How does the college help students have access to professors outside class? Do professors join students for lunch, help with community service groups, or guide student organizations?
- How many students do research or other kinds of projects for a semester or more?

### ASK THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

- How much has your total college cost for each student risen in the past year?
- How much do your students usually end up owing when they graduate?
- What is the average income of graduates who had the same major that interests me?
- Will my costs go up when your tuition goes up, or can we use the same tuition rate I started with so I'll know the costs for four years?
- How many students usually graduate in the major that interests me? How long do these students usually take to get their degree? In what ways does the college help students graduate in four years?

## TYPES OF APPLICATIONS

(Be sure to read the details for each individual college policy)

### Restrictive Applications:

#### Early Decision (ED):

An application process that typically has an application deadline by November 1 or November 15 and decisions are sent to applicants by mid-December. Early Decision is a **binding** plan; students who are admitted are expected to withdraw any outstanding applications, pay the enrollment deposit and commit to attending that school. Students will receive an estimated financial aid package, but a final financial aid package will not be calculated until approximately April. Schools that offer Early Decision include: *Duke, Northwestern, Washington University in St. Louis, George Washington University, and Boston University*

#### Is Early Decision right for you?

You should only submit an Early Decision application if you are 100% sure you want to attend that college. You are making a commitment to attend if admitted. If financial aid is a significant factor in your college-decision, you should talk to your counselor about whether this is the right option. Applying early decision does not allow you to compare financial aid packages.

#### Restrictive Early Action (REA):

A **non-binding** application plan that prohibits an applicant from applying simultaneously to any other institution via an ED process. Students will typically have until the Candidates Reply Date (May 1) to decide if they will enroll. Schools that offer REA include: Georgetown and Boston College

#### Single Choice Early Action (SCEA):

A **non-binding** application plan that prohibits an applicant from applying simultaneously to any other institution via an ED, EA, REA or SCEA process. Typically, schools that offer Single Choice Early Action allow students to apply to public universities as long as they apply under a non-binding (EA or rolling) application process. Schools that offer SCEA include: Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and Stanford (Stanford uses the term "Restrictive" but their policy is more in line with "Single Choice")

### Non-Restrictive Applications:

#### Early Action:

An application process that typically has an application deadline by November 1 or November 15 and decisions are sent to applicants by mid-December. Early Action is a **non-binding** plan; students will not receive a financial aid package until April, the same time as regular decision applicants. Students will typically have until the Candidates Reply Date (May 1) to decide if they will enroll. Schools that offer Early Action include: Villanova, University of Chicago, Tulane, University of North Carolina, and University of Michigan

#### Rolling Admissions:

The practice at many colleges and universities of making decisions on applications *as they are received*. Since, under this plan, colleges are accepting students every day, the later one applies, the more difficult it may become to be admitted. Many state schools operate with rolling admissions. Schools that use Rolling Admission: Indiana University, Purdue University, and Ball State

#### Priority Deadline

Priority deadlines have been instituted by some colleges and universities to indicate a date by which students should apply in order to receive maximum consideration for admission as well as scholarships and selective academic programs.



A great application essay presents a vivid, personal, and compelling view of you to the admissions committee. It rounds out the rest of your application and helps you stand out from other applicants. The essay is one of the only parts of the application over which you have complete control, so take the time to do a good job on it.

Following are some tips to help you as you write your essay:

- Write simply.
- Keep your focus narrow and personal.
- Provide specific evidence (facts, events, quotations, examples) to support your main idea.
- Use vivid, compelling details (show, don't tell).
- Address the topic squarely. For example, if an application asks you to explain any deficiencies in records (e.g., a low grade or bad semester), provide a straightforward, reasonable response.
- Don't repeat information that is found elsewhere in the application, such as lists of courses or extracurricular activities.
- Write about something unique and different—not just what you think the admissions officer wants to hear (they read many essays about the charms of their university, for example).
- Apply principles of good composition (e.g., organize the essay with a beginning, middle, and end).
- Structure your writing in a way that allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.
- Revise and proofread to make sure there are no typographical, spelling, or grammatical errors.

Source: Tips adapted from the *College Counseling Sourcebook* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 2004) based on information from *The College Application Essay*, rev. ed., by Sarah Myers McGinty (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 2004).

## THE COMMON APPLICATION ESSAY

The Common Application requires a 650 word essay. Below are the prompts for the 2020-21 school year.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from *obstacles we encounter* can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a *challenge, setback, or failure*. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you *questioned* or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your *thinking*? What was *the outcome*?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or *realization* that *sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others*.
6. Describe a *topic, idea, or concept* you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.