Sewanhaka Central High School District

PLANNING FOR COLLEGE

www.sewanhaka.k12.ny.us
SEWANHAKA CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
2016-2017

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PLANNING FOR COLLEGE

A Handbook for Students and Families

Elmont Memorial High School
Floral Park Memorial High School
H. Frank Carey High School
New Hyde Park Memorial High School
Sewanhaka High School

SEWANHAKA CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
2016-2017
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January 2017

Dear Student,

You are at a most important point in your life as you begin post high school planning. The decisions that you make now will influence your life for many years to come. The process of looking at and assessing those qualities and skills necessary after graduation requires time, planning and cooperation. Your decisions require a thorough knowledge of the process of college admissions, technical training, and career decision-making.

This guide has been prepared to help you as you go through this process. There are many choices that are available to you and we hope that this booklet will be helpful as you examine all possible options. Some questions that you might consider and reflect upon are:

- Are you ready to commit yourself to challenging academic work at this point in your life?
- Can you handle the social pressures of college?
- Are you ready to leave home or should you consider a local college?
- Do you need financial aid for your education? Are you ready to assume some of the expense for your education?
- Are you considering a four-year or a two-year school?

Your school counselor is committed to working with you throughout this period. There are many programs offered to assist you and your family throughout your junior and senior years and we urge you to take advantage of them all. Some of these are:

- PSAT, SAT and ACT Testing Information
- College Information Evening Program
- Individual Junior and Senior Conferences for parents and students
- Visits with College Representatives
- Senior Parent Program
- Financial Aid Program
- Panel of Recent Alumni Students
- College and Career Fairs

In addition, it is important that you schedule frequent appointments with your individual school counselor. This person is a true expert and is there to help you make the very best decision possible.

Sincerely,

Regina M. Agrusa
Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services
COLLEGE PLANNING

WHAT TYPE OF COLLEGE CANDIDATE AM I?

A. P.S.A.T. scores: Evidence Based Reading & Writing _________ Math _________
   Combined score: ________________

B. I think my GPA will be (three-year average of weighted grades at the end of my junior year – all subjects except physical education will be included):

   [ ] 90 – 100
   [ ] 85 – 89
   [ ] 80 – 84
   [ ] 83 – 79
   [ ] 78 – 74
   [ ] 73 – 65

C. My academic record, reflected on my transcript will include:

   [ ] 1. Mostly Advanced and AP level courses
   [ ] 2. All Regents level courses, 3 years of foreign language
   [ ] 3. Some Regents classes, 7 combined years of math, science and foreign language
   [ ] 4. Occupational Education Sequence (Sewanhaka Vocational Program)
   [ ] 5. The minimum 22 credits required for graduation

D. My extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, work) or volunteer experience:

   [ ] High: 2 - 3 regular activities, sports or clubs, part-time jobs
   [ ] Medium: 1 - 2 occasional activities or employment after school
   [ ] Low: Rare participation and no regular work experience
CRITERIA IN COLLEGE SELECTION

Listed below are factors that should be considered when selecting a college. Check the criteria that is important to you before beginning your actual college search.

A. Geographic Area
   - Local schools/commuter
   - Schools in New York State
   - Schools in the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic area
   - Other Region (specify)

B. Campus Setting
   - Urban
   - Suburban
   - Rural

C. Enrollment Size
   - Very Small (under 1,000)
   - Small (1,000-4,999)
   - Medium (5,000-9,000)
   - Large (10,000-20,000)
   - Very Large (over 20,000)

D. Housing
   - Single-sex dormitories
   - Co-ed dormitories
   - Access for physically handicapped
   - Living off campus permitted

E. Student Body
   - Co-ed student body (check ratio men to women)
   - Single-sex student body
   - Ethnic mix

F. Type of School
   - Two-year
   - Four-year
   - Public (SUNY, CUNY, etc.)
   - Private
   - Religiously affiliated
G. Entrance Difficulty
☐ Most difficult
☐ Very difficult
☐ Moderately difficult
☐ Minimally difficult
☐ Non-competitive/Open Admission

H. Campus Life
☐ Sports
   Particularly: ________________________________
☐ Newspaper
☐ Drama
☐ Music
☐ Theatre
☐ Radio Station
☐ Fraternities/Sororities
☐ Other ________________________________

I. Majors ________________________________

J. Special Programs
☐ Study Abroad
☐ Honors
☐ Work/Study
☐ 3-2 Programs
☐ Tutoring assistance

K. Program for Students with Learning Disabilities
☐ 1. Types of disabilities: ________________________________
☐ 2. How long has the program been in existence? ________________________________
☐ 3. Number of students in program? ________________________________
☐ 4. Services available such as curriculum modifications; individualized instruction; special resource centers.

L. Admissions Policies
☐ Regular Decision
☐ Rolling Admission
☐ Early Decision
☐ Early Action
PLANNING CALENDAR
Junior Year

Fall

- **Work hard Keep your grades up!** This is the last year that your grades will effect your final G.P.A. (Grade Point Average) Take a variety of electives and courses that challenge and interest you. Many colleges require students to take a foreign language and continuing in your junior year can exempt you from this requirement. This will also look great on your transcript.

- **Get involved** Join a club or team, volunteer or get a job. Take on leadership positions where possible!

- **Attend College Fairs** Talk to admissions officers about programs & colleges that interest you. Ask questions!

- **Take the PSAT** In October, all 11th grade students should take the PSAT to get practice for the SAT in the spring.

- **Plan Testing Schedule** Will you take the SAT, ACT or both? Do you need to take SAT II’s? Talk to your counselor & create a timeline that best suits your needs.

- **Prepare** Look into prep courses that will help you prepare for the SAT or ACT. There are lots of options & some are FREE! Ask your counselor for help!

- **Think about what you want** Do you want to go away for college or stay home? Do you like city schools or rural settings? What majors interest you?

- **Begin Researching** Start looking into college that interest you and create a “long list” of possible schools.

- **Attend Financial Aid Night** at your high school to familiarize yourself with the FAFSA form, the CSS Profile form and other financial aid resources.

- **Attend the 11th grade Parent Night**

Spring

- **Register** Sign up for the SAT at www.collegeboard.com and/or the ACT at www.actstudent.org. The more selective colleges will require students to take three SAT II subject tests. Be sure to do your research and plan for the SAT II if appropriate.

- **Prepare** Register for a prep course & begin to study for the ACT or SAT. The only way to do your best is to put in the time & effort!

- **Meet with your counselor** Stop by guidance & make an appointment so your counselor can help you begin the college search process. Review graduation requirements and plan a challenging senior academic program.

- **Research** Use Naviance & other search engines to help you narrow down colleges that fit your needs. Attend college and career fairs and be sure to speak to college representatives to get more information about programs and schools that interest you.

- **Create a resume** Make a list of all the activities, volunteer work or jobs you have had since 9th grade.

- **Work on Essay** The Common Application releases their essay topics in the spring. Find out what the topics are & start brainstorming about what you want to write!

- **Teacher Recommendations** Ask 2 teachers if they would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation for college. Request in person and then on Naviance.
- Visit Schools - There is no better way to learn about a college than to visit their campus. Take some time this spring & summer to do visits.

- Use Naviance - Do a college search on Naviance, which is a web-based resource available to all district students. Students and parents receive log-in and password information from the school counselor.

- Begin College Visits - Visit colleges while they are in session to get a feel for the academic and student life. Attend a college class, participate in an activity, and spend the night if possible.

- If enrolled in AP classes, prepare for and take your AP exams.

- File NCAA Eligibility Form if you plan to play sports in college (Div. 1 or 2).

  (www.eligibilitycenter.org)

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**Summer**

- Visit college campuses - There is no better way to learn about a school than by actually seeing the campus in person

- Volunteer, Travel, Work, or Study - Colleges want to see that you accomplished something productive during the summer. This will also enhance your experiences as well as provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate responsibility and maturity.

- Work on applications - Take advantage of your free time this summer by starting to fill out applications. The Common Application can be started after August 1st.

- Finish your essay - Use this time to work on your essay so it is one less thing you have to worry about when you get back to school in September. Have a lot of people read & edit it!

- Research Scholarships and Financial Aid Information - Take advantage of your free time by finding ways to reduce your college costs. Visit your school’s website and Naviance for monthly scholarship newsletters.
PLANNING CALENDAR
Senior Year

Fall

- Keep your grades up - Senior grades are sent to colleges so these grades DO count!
- Be aware of deadlines - Figure out if you will be applying Early Action, Early Decision or Regular Decision. Each school has their own deadline & you need to be aware of them!
  - Early Decision Notifications: See your school counselor as soon as possible if you plan to apply ED. You can only apply to ONE school ED and students must have alternate applications completed for submission if rejected from Early Decision. If accepted, students must write a letter of withdrawal to all other colleges to which students applied.
- Narrow down your list - Finalize your list of schools that you plan to apply to. You should apply to about 8-10 colleges. Make sure to have safe, good fit and reach schools.
- Attend - Senior-Parent Night at your high school and college fairs.
- Meet with your counselor - Your school counselor can help you organize when and how to apply to schools that are appropriate for you to apply to.
- Apply online - Figure out how they want you to apply (Common App, own school app, etc.) Create an account on the sites.
- Revise and finalize your Activity Resume - This resume will give colleges a look at your accomplishments. Give a copy to your school counselor and teachers so they can know more about you when writing a letter of recommendation.
- Check on letters of recommendation - Touch base with your teachers and let them know your deadlines so they can have your letter ready in time for your applications. Make sure you requested them in Naviance after speaking to each teacher in person.
- Take the SAT, SAT II, and/or ACT - Register for the Fall/Winter SAT and/or ACT if you still need to. If necessary and appropriate, register for the SAT II Subject Tests.
- Send scores - You are responsible for arranging and paying for your SAT and/or ACT scores to be sent to the colleges you are applying to. Login to Collegeboard.com or ACTstudent.org to do this.
- Continue - to make college visits, attend college fairs and set up interviews for colleges.
- Finalize essay - Ask teachers, counselors, family, etc to read your essay so you can finalize it.
- Begin filling out your applications - Allow the PPS Department at least ten school days to process applications. You will need to fill out a Records Request Form so your counselor knows you applied and can send your documents to each college you apply to.
- Attend Financial Aid Night - This gives parents valuable information on the financial aid process.
- Consider utilizing www.FAFSA4caster.gov to gain information on your Estimated Family Contribution.
- FAFSA forms: - Apply for FAFSA online after October 1st at www.FAFSA.ed.gov. Some schools may ask you to complete another financial aid form called the CSS profile. Find out if the schools you apply to require it.
- Participate in the On-Site College Admissions Process - See your counselor for schedule and details.
Spring

- Write thank you notes to those teachers who wrote letters of recommendation for you.
- Review Financial Aid Award Packages with your family to help make your college decision.
- Notify the colleges you will not attend and send your deposit to the college you will attend by May 1st.
- Mid Year Reports: Continue to keep up your grades; many colleges will request first-semester grades. Report cards will be sent to colleges.
- College Acceptance/Rejection: You will be receiving notification letters. Let your counselor know of your college decisions.
- Graduation – CONGRATULATIONS!!

Summer

- Take advantage of the orientation programs offered by your new college.
- Plan to take any required placement exams.
- Register for your 1st semester classes. If you have questions, contact your college advisor.

GOOD LUCK!!
COLLEGE APPLICATION OPTIONS

EARLY ACTION vs. EARLY DECISION

What are Early Options?
Early options are application and decision strategies offered by some colleges who wish to attract highly motivated applicants who meet their criteria for selection. Early options are also used by some schools with low yield rates to ensure they have enough students enrolled for the coming school year.

EARLY ACTION
With Early Action (EA), you apply to a school early in your senior year (usually between October 30 and January 15, check application deadlines). The college will provide the student with an admission decision within one month. So what is the catch? There really isn’t one. You are under no obligation to attend, and you can hang on to that acceptance and apply to additional schools during normal spring application rush. You can also apply to other schools under Early Action at the same time and have more than one school eagerly awaiting your enrollment.

SINGLE CHOICE EARLY ACTION
Single Choice Early Action is the newest option, which limits students to applying early to only one college. The college will provide an admissions decision within one month. It is not binding, but restricts you from applying anywhere else under an EA or ED application. You can apply elsewhere during regular admission and do not have to make a decision to enroll until the school’s regular deadline.

EARLY DECISION
With Early Decision (ED), the process is quite similar, but you must agree at the time of the application to attend the college if you are accepted. Many students consider applying to a college or university as an Early Decision candidate if they are certain that this college is their first choice. Students should consider this option if a particular school is a strong first choice. It is important to remember that most early decision acceptances are binding and you must attend that institution. Most students should NOT choose this option.

If you are considering an Early Decision application, please be sure to refer to the items below:

1. _____ Have you visited this college?
2. _____ Have you visited other colleges?
3. _____ Have you taken the appropriate entrance exams?
4. _____ Do you meet the GPA standards of this college?
5. _____ Do you meet the criteria set for SAT I, SAT II or ACT?
6. _____ Is the acceptance binding?
7. _____ Can you explain why this college is your absolute first choice?
COLLEGE SELECTION CRITERIA

Colleges and universities were recently surveyed in order to understand what criteria are most important when a student’s application is being evaluated. The items are listed in order of importance:

- Rigor of Classes
- Student Grade Point Average
- SAT or ACT Score
- School Counselor Recommendation
- Teacher Recommendation
- Student Application Essay
- Depth of Commitment to an Extracurricular Activity
- Student Leadership
- Variety of Activities
- Student Employment
- Volunteerism/Community Service
# SAT vs. ACT: How do the Tests Compare?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>When is it administered?</strong></td>
<td>Seven times per year.</td>
<td>Six times per year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the test structure?</strong></td>
<td>5 long sections (comprising 3 “tests” and an optional essay): Writing &amp; Language; Reading; 2 Math; Essay. Questions have 4 answer choices and total testing time: 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay).</td>
<td><strong>Four-section exam:</strong> English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. An experimental section is added to tests on certain dates only and is clearly experimental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the test content?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Math:</strong> Up to 9th/10th grade basic geometry and Algebra II. No Science. <strong>Reading:</strong> sentence completions, short and long critical reading passages, reading comprehension. <strong>Writing:</strong> an essay, questions testing grammar, usage, and word choice.</td>
<td><strong>Math:</strong> Up to trigonometry. <strong>Science:</strong> charts, experiments. <strong>Reading:</strong> four passages, one each of Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science. <strong>English:</strong> stresses grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is there a penalty for wrong answers?</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How is the test scored?</strong></td>
<td>Combined score: 400-1600. Evidenced Based Reading &amp; Writing: 200-800; Math: 200-800. Essay score reported separately ‘Cross-Test Scores’ report performance on Science &amp; History/Social Studies across entire test.</td>
<td>1-36 for each subject, averaged for a composite score. A 36 is the highest possible composite score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are all scores sent to schools?</strong></td>
<td>No. There is a “Score Choice” option. Students can choose which schools will receive their scores and which scores the schools will see.</td>
<td>No. There is a “Score Choice” option. Students can choose which schools will receive their scores and which scores the schools will see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are there other uses for the exams?</strong></td>
<td>Scholarship purposes.</td>
<td>Scholarship purposes. Certain statewide testing programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best time to register?</strong></td>
<td>At least six weeks before the test date.</td>
<td>At least four weeks before the test date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need more information?</strong></td>
<td><a href="www.collegeboard.org">The College Board</a></td>
<td><a href="www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a> (319) 337-1270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COLLEGE ENTRANCE TESTING

SAT I

The SAT I: Reasoning Test is a three hour and forty-five minute test measuring students’ critical reading, math and writing abilities. Each section is worth 800 points. The writing sample is an essay where students are asked to take a position on a particular issue and support their stand using specific examples from their reading, studies, experience or observations.

✦ Who should take the SAT’s and when should they be taken?
   All four-year college-bound high school students (and some two-year college-bound students) should take the SAT’s at the end of their junior year. Many students take them again during the fall of their senior year in an effort to increase their scores.

✦ When are the SAT’s given and where?
   The SAT’s are given at various area high schools. The schedule of testing dates and sites is published annually online.

✦ How do I register?
   Register online at www.collegeboard.org. Be prepared to upload a passport type picture to your College Board account.

✦ What is the range of scores on the SAT’s?
   Up to 3 scores are reported on the SAT’s – Critical Reading, Mathematics, writing and optional Essay. All scores range from a minimum of 200 to a maximum of 800 on each section (combined 600 – 1200 and optional essay).

✦ SAT Score Choice
   This policy will give students the ability to send the SAT scores that they feel best represent their abilities to colleges and universities. A student can send one, multiple, or all test scores to a college on a single score report. They will be able to send SAT scores by sitting (test date) and scores from individual SAT Subject Tests.
SAT II SUBJECT TESTS

SAT II Subject Tests seem to confuse many students. Some think they are advanced Placement tests, and others think they are just another version of the SAT. SAT Subject Tests are one-hour, multiple choice tests in specific subject areas. The SAT Subject Tests measures a student’s knowledge of a particular subject and his or her ability to apply that knowledge. Usually, more competitive colleges require the SAT II Subject Tests for admissions and/or placement purposes.

* Who should take SAT II Subject Tests?
  Check the requirements of the colleges where you might apply before deciding which tests to take. Whatever you choose, take the SAT II soon after completing the related course work while the material is still fresh in you mind.

* When are the SAT II Subject Tests given and where?
  Information on where and when to take these tests is posted on the College Board website.

* How do I register?
  Register by web at www.collegeboard.org at least 6 weeks before test date.

* What Subjects Tests can I take?
  There are subject tests in Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Literature, Math, Foreign Language, US History, World History, and other areas. The most competitive Schools will probably want a Math (level I or II), and a Science test.

* What is the range of scores on the SAT II Subject Tests?
  Scores range from 200-800 in each test area. Scores will automatically be listed with the Sat I scores.

* How, when and to whom are the scores reported?
  When students register for the SAT Subject Tests, they can designate four colleges where scores will be sent. About 4 - 6 weeks after the testing date, scores are reported to the student’s high school and any colleges indicated. Students may access their scores online approximately 2 weeks after exam date. If a student wants score reports sent to additional colleges, they can go online to complete this order. Sign into College Board account, hit “send scores” and complete required information. They can also be ordered by phone, web or fax.

* TOEFL
  The purpose of the TOEFL test is to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English. The test is taken on a computer at a testing center and costs approximately $190.00. The test uses a multiple-choice format to measure the ability to understand North American English. The test consists of four sections:
  • Reading – Read 3 or 4 passages from academic texts and answer questions (60-80 minutes).
  • Listening – Listen to lectures, classroom discussions and conversations, then answer questions (60-90 minutes).
  • Speaking – Express an opinion on a familiar topic; speak based on reading and listening tasks (20 minutes).
  • Writing – Write essay responses based on reading and listening tasks; support an opinion in writing (50 minutes).

Questions frequently arise as to which SAT Subject Tests a student should take. If you have specific questions as to which tests the colleges are requiring, please consult the College Board website at www.collegeboard.org, the individual college website, or call your child’s subject teacher or counselor.
The ACT Exam assesses high school students’ general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The ACT is a national college admission and placement examination.

The ACT is a multiple-choice exam that covers four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading and science. The writing test, which is optional, measures skills in planning and writing a short essay.

✦ **Who should consider taking the ACT’s?**
Any students applying to four year and two year colleges can take this exam.

✦ **How long does the test take?**
Just over four hours for the ACT, without the writing test, including administration, instruction and breaks. Actual testing time 2 hours and 55 minutes, broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>45 minutes</th>
<th>75 questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>60 questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>40 questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>40 questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ACT Writing Test adds 30 minutes to the testing time.

✦ **What is the range of scores on the ACT’s?**
The results are measured on a scale of 1 (low) to 36 (high) in each subject, in addition to a composite score. Eighteen is the mean (average) score.

✦ **How do I register?**
Send in the application form that is contained in the ACT registration packet available in the PPS Office, or register on-line at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).

✧ The ACT is universally accepted for college admission.
✧ The ACT is curriculum based. It is not an aptitude or an IQ test.
✧ Students can take the ACT as often as they wish, but only once per national test date.
ADVICE FOR IVY LEAGUE HOPEFULS

Olympic medalists. Concert pianists. Teenage mathematicians who complain of the rudimentary banality that is calculus. Ivy League applicant pools are chock full of these students. But there’s one trait those students who are ultimately admitted all have in common; something that when coupled with their perfect GPAs, top test scores and multiple Nobel Prizes makes them that much more appealing to Ivy League admission officers.

Most of them never said the words, “I want to go to an Ivy League school.”


Highly selective colleges like those in the Ivy League don’t want name-brand seekers. They want ambitious, passionate, intellectually curious students who want to make valuable contributions in and out of the classrooms. And more importantly, they want students who are confident enough to select each particular school based on fit, regardless of the school’s inclusion in the Ivy League athletic conference.

If you really want to attend a highly-selective college like an Ivy League school, show them that you’re mature and confident enough to care more about what you’ll experience in college than you do about how famous a college’s name is. Find the schools that fit you best. And when you’re asked, “Why do you want to attend this college?” have a better answer than, “It’s a great school” (they hate that answer, by the way).

If some of the Ivy League schools end up on your list, great. But if they don’t, that’s OK. There are plenty of other leagues out there for you.

THREE TIPS THAT WILL GET YOU A LITTLE CLOSER TO THE HIGHLY SELECTIVE COLLEGES

*In fact, these tips will get you a little closer to any college*

1. **Get past prestige**
   If you want to go to one of these colleges because you think they are the “best schools,” you’re on the wrong track (and you’re probably not going to get in). Highly-selective colleges want students who have thoughtfully considered what they hope or expect to gain from their college experiences and have chosen where they fit.

   When you’re asked, “Why are you applying to this school,” you’ll need to have more than, “It’s a great school.”

2. **Be a high impact player in and out of the classroom**
   Participate in class. Volunteer to organize the dinner for the French club. Run the fundraiser for the soccer team. Colleges like students who make things happen. Don’t just collect titles and hours. Become indispensable and show colleges what a difference you make.

3. **Prove that you love to learn**
   “Grinders”—Kids who don’t enjoy learning but work hard so they can get into a good college—don’t get admitted to highly selective colleges. Think about what interests you, and take some fun steps to learn about it. Music. Art. Cooking. Pottery. It doesn’t matter what the subject is. If it interests you, learn more about it. Don’t do it to look good to colleges—do it because you want to learn about it.
THE ESSAY

How to Write a College Application Essay

Many colleges require an essay as part of the application. This can be an intimidating task. Instead, try to view it as your chance to express yourself. Admissions officers are not looking for a particular “correct answer” on the essay. They want to find out what you are like as an individual. Try to relax and enjoy the task.

Some helpful hints:

➢ Good writing is writing that is easily understood.
➢ Avoid adjectives, adverbs, big words, the word “however”, and exclamation points!
➢ Buy and read a book on writing college essays.
➢ Stick to the length that is required.
➢ Be honest. Be yourself.
➢ Some colleges ask that you present your essay in your own handwriting. The majority of colleges prefer that your essay be typed. In either case, have a good writer critique your essay and another proofread it. Never write an essay, on the required form, in pencil.

Examples of Essay Topics:
This personal statement helps us become acquainted with you in ways different from courses, grades, test scores and other objective data. It will demonstrate your ability to organize thoughts and express yourself. We are looking for an essay that will help us know you better as a person and as a student. Please write an essay (250-500 words) on a topic of your choice or on one of the options listed below. (The following essay questions were collected from various college applications. They might be helpful to you in deciding on a topic for you to write about.)

❖ Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you. (Bucknell University)
❖ If you had an opportunity to interview any prominent person - living, deceased or fictional – whom would you choose and why? (Boston University)
❖ What is the best advice you have ever received? (University of Pennsylvania)
❖ What have you read that has had a specific significance to you? (Dartmouth College)
❖ Identify a person who has had a significant influence on you and describe that influence. (University of Scranton)
❖ Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you. (Fairfield University)
❖ Topic of your choice.
# STUDENT RESUME

**SAMPLE**

**STUDENT NAME**

**ADDRESS**

**PHONE**

**E-MAIL ADDRESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>OFFICE OR POSITION HELD</th>
<th>GRADES PARTICIPATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Club</td>
<td>Secretary (2 yrs.), Vice-President (1yr.)</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theater Guild</td>
<td>Assistant Producer (3 shows)</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Producer (4 shows)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varsity Soccer</td>
<td>All County (gr. 9, 10,11), All State (gr 12)</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazz Band</td>
<td>Alto Sax</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Relations Club</td>
<td>Attending regular monthly meetings, Racial Harmony Conference</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Business Leaders of America</td>
<td>Secretary (gr. 11 and 12), Membership Committee, participated in Thanksgiving Dinner for Senior Citizens and made visits to Holly Patterson Senior Citizens Home, attended State Conventions</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Honor Society</td>
<td>Attendance at all meetings, helping with all school events, including Parent-Teacher conferences and graduation</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Hunger Action Club</td>
<td>Attendance at all meetings, help with all events, i.e. food drive, Soup Kitchen volunteer</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homecoming Committee</td>
<td>Prepared floats and other general work in connection with Homecoming Day</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jet Gazette</td>
<td>Columnist/Reporter</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:**
Sewanhaka Soccer Club, Soccer Camp (summers 9, 10, 11), private saxophone lessons, reading, swimming, and hiking.

**INTERNSHIP:**
Law Clerk Internship- Fitzgerald and Grisham- 9/2010-present

**EMPLOYMENT:**
SEWANHAKA CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
GRADE POINT AVERAGE
CONVERSION CHART

How to Convert Your GPA to a 4.0 Scale

Colleges report GPA (grade point average) on a 4.0 scale. The top grade is an A, which equals 4.0. This is the standard scale at most colleges, and many high schools use it.

To convert your GPA to a 4.0 scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percent Grade</th>
<th>4.0 Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65-66</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E/F</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversion Chart provided by the College Board www.collegeboard.org
STUDENTS’ RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

WHEN YOU APPLY TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Before You Apply:

You have a responsibility to research and understand the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure that you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits that you may be required to make before you enroll.

As You Apply:

You must complete all material that is required for an application, and submit your application on or before the published deadline. You should be the sole author of your application. You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications. It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

After You Receive Your Admission Decisions:

You must notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting the offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college that you wish to attend, but no later than May 1. You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify the college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll, if applicable. If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.
TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Your school counselor will write a letter of recommendation to include in your college application. The recommendation will support your transcript, your extra-curricular activities, teacher evaluations and your self-evaluation. This letter may also include observations made by your school counselor that include your character, maturity, level of responsibility and leadership qualities.

You will also be asked to obtain two teacher recommendations. They should support your candidacy to a college or university.

Some helpful hints:

➢ Begin to consider whom you will ask to write your letters of recommendation in your junior year.

➢ Plan ahead. Your school counselor and teachers are swamped, so give them plenty of time – at least ten working days – to complete their letters.

➢ Give your teacher all the necessary materials, including your application deadlines and a list of your activities and work experiences if applicable. All recommendations should be sent to your school counselor for processing with your application.

➢ Select your recommenders wisely. They should be from teachers from an academic area and from teachers who know you well as a student.

➢ Some colleges request that the letter of recommendation go directly from the teacher to the institution. Teachers should be given the recommendation form and a stamped, pre-addressed envelope. Request that a copy of the recommendation also be sent to your school counselor.

➢ Send a thank you note to those teachers who have written letters of recommendation for you.

➢ When requesting a teacher to write a letter of recommendation, request teacher through Naviance after asking the teacher in person.

“Goals are dreams with DEADLINES”
ADMISSIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a specific learning disability, the college admission process may mean that you will need to provide information to colleges about your particular history and experiences.

Special education students are encouraged to discuss special learning situations with college admissions officers. It will help students and college admissions officers ensure that a good match is made. Your counselor will not divulge any confidential information. It is the student’s decision to discuss any special learning circumstances.

If you decide to make the college aware of your learning disability, the college will expect you to be able to tell them exactly what kind of disability you have, what resources you have used to compensate, and what you think you will need from them. They will ask for supportive documentation in the form of an IEP.

On the other hand, some students do not choose to share with the colleges the fact that they have a learning disability. In either case, your counselor will respect your decision and handle your case accordingly. You and your family should discuss this with your counselor when you meet to plan your college search.

All students who have special needs should be aware that colleges are providing a growing number of services for them. However, students must also understand that it is not automatic and some colleges will not be able to offer the same services received in high school.

If you receive testing accommodations in high school, you may be eligible for testing accommodations for the SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Tests and ACT. See your counselor about completing an SSD Eligibility Form.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK ADMISSIONS

1. Does the institution have a specific program or learning center with personnel who are trained to work with learning disabilities?
2. Is the program remedial, developmental or both?
3. Whom may I contact regarding the program?
4. Is there an added charge for the program?
5. Does the institution offer diagnostic testing, placement and personal counseling?
6. May the foreign language requirements be waived?
7. Does the institution offer a study skills course?
8. May I speak with students/parents who are familiar with the program?
9. May students take a reduced course load?
10. Is untimed testing an option?
11. Is oral administration of examinations available?
12. May students tape lectures?
13. Is the length of the student’s affiliation with the program restricted? (i.e. 1 year, 3 semesters, 2 years, etc.)
14. Are tutors available?
15. Are any lectures/labs available on videotape?
16. What are the hours of the learning center or computer room? May students study there in the evenings?
NCAA – ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

Are you a high school athlete who is looking to play athletics at the collegiate level? If so you must first register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. The NCAA Clearinghouse will use your Core Grade Point Average and your highest SAT or ACT score to determine if you are eligible to play Division 1 or Division 2 college athletics.

The Core requirements are as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division I</th>
<th>Division II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be eligible to compete in NCAA sports during your first year at a Division I school, you must graduate high school and meet ALL the following requirements:</td>
<td>To be eligible to compete in NCAA sports during your first year at a Division II school, you must graduate from high school and meet ALL the following requirements:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Complete 16 core courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Four years of English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Three years of math (Algebra I or higher)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Two years of social science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• four additional years of English, math, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complete 10 NCAA core courses, including seven in English, math or natural /physical science, before your seventh semester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Earn at least a 2.3 GPA in your NCAA core courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Earn an ACT sum score or SAT combined score that matches your core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before August 1, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Complete 16 NCAA core courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 years of English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 years of natural/physical science (including one year of lab science)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 3 additional years of English, math, natural/physical science</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4 additional years of English, math, natural/physical science, social science, foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Earn at least a 2.0 GPA in your NCAA core courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Earn an ACT sum score of 68 or an SAT combined score of 820</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After August 1, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Complete 16 NCAA core courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Earn at least a 2.2 GPA in your NCAA core courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Earn an ACT sum score or SAT combined score that matched your core-course GPA on the Division II sliding scale.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DIVISION III

Division III schools do not offer athletic scholarships. If you are planning to attend a Div. III school, you do not need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

A list of approved NCAA courses can be found at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

To register with the NCAA Clearinghouse visit www.eligibilitycenter.org then click on “Prospective Student-Athletes,” and have a credit card, Visa or Master Card, ready. If a student does not have access to the Web, he/she should visit the Guidance Office for a paper application. Do not wait until the end of your senior year, leave plenty of time for processing and corrections, if needed. If there are any further questions regarding the eligibility or registration process, stop in the Guidance Office to see your counselor.
FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE

Financial Aid Check List

☐ DETERMINE INSTITUTIONAL COSTS – Information about college expenses can be obtained from the college financial aid office, admissions office, college catalog or directory. Don’t eliminate any college because of high costs … look carefully at financial aid.

☐ APPLY FOR ADMISSION – Before a student’s chances for aid can be determined, many colleges require both an application for admission and financial aid. Keep in mind all deadline dates.

☐ INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE SOURCES OF AID - The major sources of aid are grants, scholarships, loans, and work. Most students consider grant and loan applications first. Your high school counselor or a financial aid officer can provide more information about resources.

☐ SECURE THE NECESSARY FORMS – Every college bound student who is interested in Financial Aid must file a FAFSA form. This form is processed by a federal agency in order to determine financial need. It can be obtained on the Internet at www.FAFSA.ED.GOV. If a New York State college is listed by you on this form, you will automatically be sent an E.T.A. (Express TAP Application) to be filled out and returned. The purpose of this form is to determine eligibility for state funded aid. In addition, the CSS Profile may be required by the schools to which you are applying. Check with your school counselor.

☐ SUBMIT APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL AID – Deadlines for the application vary at each institution. It is advisable to develop a calendar of important deadline dates…consult the financial aid office at each college. Be sure to keep copies of all forms submitted in the aid process.

☐ APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS AND LOANS – In addition to applying for the Pell Grant (the major source of financial aid), be sure to inquire about state scholarship, grant and loan program, as well as institutional, community, foundation and corporate programs.

☐ PLAN AHEAD – Monitor information from the college business office regarding fees, payment schedules, etc. Incorporate in your plan information about your award from the financial aid office.

☐ SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER – Virtually all colleges and universities require that students and their parents complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to determine Federal Financial Aid eligibility. However, many colleges also require the separate CSS PROFILE to determine need. You must designate the colleges that you wish to receive the information. Be sure to attend the financial aid night in your home school.
HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

College students may receive money in scholarship, loans and grants administered by the college from state, federal and private sources, as well as from college monies. Students who wish to be considered for financial aid must file the Financial Aid Form (FAFSA). Parents must provide detailed information concerning income, assets, expenses, and indebtedness. Individual colleges also reserve the right to request copies of federal tax returns from the parents and/or student to verify taxable income information listed on the FAFSA. On occasion, verification of non-taxable income may also be requested.

$$$

After the FAFSA and/or CSS PROFILE is completed, the student forwards it for processing to the appropriate processing agency. The College Scholarship Service (CSS), a financial needs analysis service, located in Princeton, N.J. processes the PROFILE. Be sure to list the colleges which are to receive the needs analysis report, and to enclose the appropriate processing fee (indicated on the CSS PROFILE; there is no fee for FAFSA since this is done by the federal government).

$$$

The CSS makes no recommendation concerning financial aid; it simply processes the information listed on the form, provides a copy of the form itself, and a needs analysis report to colleges listed by the student. Colleges use the needs analysis report as a guide in determining financial aid.

$$$

The FAFSA should be filed AFTER OCTOBER 1ST of senior year, and must be filed annually thereafter so that the college can review your eligibility for assistance each school year. Some colleges require their own financial aid forms in lieu of, or in addition to, the FAFSA. Your family’s estimated family contribution will be calculated.

$$$

1. Ask the college if it has any other sources for financing your education, such as a tuition budgeting plan that will let you spread out your payments. Maybe, the college has a loan program designed for students or parents who don’t qualify for federal loans.

2. Check with banks to see if they offer special programs for families who wish to save or borrow for college expenses.

3. Look at your personal costs to see if you can save money by cutting expenses. You might be able to live at home and commute to college, or perhaps you can attend a lower-cost college for a couple of years and then transfer later on.

4. Investigate the possibility of working Some colleges have “cooperative education” programs that let you work one semester and go to college the next. Many students work part-time while attending college full-time and find that a job does not hamper their studies.

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SCHOLARSHIPS, FINANCIAL AID, LOANS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Most money given to college students comes in the form of financial aid, given on a “need” basis. However, there are some scholarships available which do not depend upon providing financial need information. Most colleges will set aside a certain amount of money to attract a particular type of student to that campus. The criteria varies among the colleges, but, a solid academic record is usually a common characteristic. In addition, colleges may award these scholarships to students with evidence of outstanding leadership qualities, a special interest in music, art, or theater, or above average athletic skills.

SCHOLARSHIP WEBSITES

www.fastweb.com  
www.scholarships.com  
www.collegenet.com

www.niche.com  
www.unigo.com  
www.petersons.com

FINANCIAL AID WEBSITES

www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/netpricecalculator  
www.HESC.ny.gov  
https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa

Net Price Calculator—college cost calculator  
Step-by-step planning tips for college bound students  
The official FAFSA site

www.finaid.org  
www.collegeview.com  
www.css.collegeboard.org

Great source for financial aid info, advice & tools  
Career, college & financial aid information  
CSS Profile site

www.ed.gov  
www.hesc.gov  
www.salliemae.com

US Department of Education site for financial info  
State financial site  
Government loan information
TEST REGISTRATION & PREP WEBSITES

www.collegeboard.com  Register for the SATs, send official score reports to colleges & more

www.actstudent.org  Register for the ACT & send official score reports to colleges

Castle Learning Accounts – Method Test Prep  Free interactive, online SAT prep course for students. Each student in district has an account for Castle Learning

www.kaptest.com  Test Prep company

www.princetonreview.com  Test prep company

www.ttprep.com  Test prep company

COLLEGE RESEARCH WEBSITES

www.cappex.com  Gives admissions chances, compare schools & more

www.collegeboard.org  College search engine & SAT registration

www.collegenews.com  Online magazine for college students

www.eligibilitycenter.org  NCAA registration site

www.campustours.com  Virtual campus tours

www.ecampustours.com  Virtual campus tours

www.usnews.com/education  US News