

COLLEGE PLANNING PACKET

Radnor High School, 130 King of Prussia Road, Radnor PA 19087
www.rtsd.org (610) 293 - 0855

Class of 2017: Welcome to the College Planning Process!

The junior and senior years of high school require a decision from you that will probably be one of the most important of your lifetime: choosing a form of higher education and making post-secondary plans. Your college choice often impacts many other life choices – lifestyle, values, and occupation– and you should be thoughtful and strategic about this decision.

We recognize that each student begins the college process at a different place, and as your counselor, we hope to meet you where you are. We hope that you will take the lead in researching and applying to colleges, and we will work to support you through every step of the way.

In this packet, you will find a number of resources designed to help you stay on track and be prepared throughout the college application process. However, you are bound to have questions that are not covered in this guide that

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are more specific to you and your career and college choices. Strive to become your best advocate and be sure to seek out your counselor to let us know how we can best support you. You should also feel comfortable talking to the admissions office.

We look forward to working with you and your family during this exciting time. Best of luck!

Class of 2017 Guidance Counselor Assignments

Jeannie Semar	A–Da	jeannie.semar@rtsd.org	ext.3527
Jeri Banta	De–Hi	jeri.banta@rtsd.org	ext. 3526
Amy Wess	Ho–Ma	amy.wess@rtsd.org	ext. 3537
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Radnor High School has served the community since 1894, and boasts the oldest public-school football rivalry in the nation. The current building was renovated in 1999 and serves nearly 1,300 students from St. Davids, Wayne, Rosemont, Bryn Mawr, Villanova, Ithan, Newtown Square and Radnor. Named a Blue Ribbon School in 1996, Radnor consistently ranks among the highest in Pennsylvania for test scores and continues to set the standard for public high schools nationally.

College Planning Timeline for Juniors

Winter

- Make an appointment with your guidance counselor for your Junior College Family Meeting.
- Finalize a testing plan for the SAT I, SAT II and ACT tests. Refer to testing dates located in the College Planning Packet.

Spring

- **Fill out your brag sheet!** Your counselor will write the letter of recommendation only when the brag sheet is submitted. We always welcome additional or updated information at any time.
- Visit schools that you are interested in. Take a tour, go to an informational meeting, sit in on a class, and try to get a feel for what it would be like to go to that school. If you visit a school you are very interested in, consider making an appointment for an on-campus interview, if available.
- Decide what teachers you would like to write your recommendation letters and ask them if they can do that for you. Typically, students ask two academic teachers to write.

Useful Links

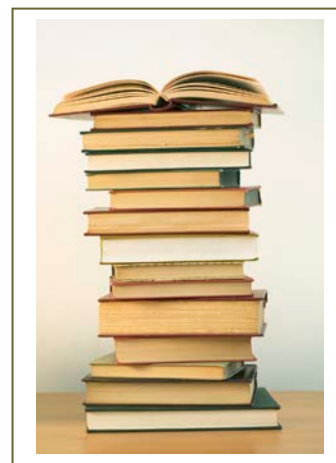
- www.connection.naviance.com/radnor
- www.commonapp.org
- www.princetonreview.com – search tool
- www.collegeboard.org
- www.actstudent.org
- www.fastweb.com – scholarships
- www.unitedway.org – community service opportunities
- www.pheaa.org – financial aid information
- www.finaid.org – financial aid information
- www.secondarytransition.org – student services and transition planning
- www.ncaa.org – college athletes
- www.philadelphiafutures.org – college planning tools available

Summer

- If you know the essay prompt for any of your application, write a draft of your college essay.
- Compile your resume, audition portfolio or other evidence of your talents for college admissions or scholarship applications.
- Continue to visit schools. Set up on-campus interviews, if applicable.
- Narrow your list of potential college choices.
- Begin to research scholarship opportunities.
- Make a Common Application account on commonapp.org and fill it out. The application should be available in early August.

Looking Ahead...

- Many colleges have Early Decision (ED) or Early Action (EA) deadlines on **November 1st**, **November 15**, and **December 1st**. **Check with each individual school for accurate deadlines**
- Many colleges have Regular Decision (RD) deadlines on **January 1st**, **January 15th** and **February 1st**. **Check with each individual school for accurate deadlines**
- Students can apply for financial aid by filling out the FAFSA form beginning **October 1st**.



ACT vs. SAT: Which One Should I Take?

<u>ACT</u>		<u>SAT</u>
Four required separate sections – Reading, English, Math, Scientific Reasoning; one optional section – Writing with an essay	CONTENT	Three parts –Reading, Math & Writing; essay is optional
Four separate sections ranging from 35 – 60 minutes, each subject area is completed before moving on to the next content area; 30 minute essay section at end of test	FORMAT	Reading – 65 minutes, 52 questions; Math: 80 minutes, 58 questions; Writing & Language – 35 minutes, 44 questions; Optional Essay – 50 minutes
Each subtest scored 1– 36; composite score also 1 – 36 (not a strict average of the four sections); essay also scored 1 –36 but NOT included in composite score	SCORING	Each section scored 200 – 800; both sections included in overall score for a maximum possible total 1600
ACT (No Writing): \$39.50 ACT Plus Writing: \$56.50 (Fee Waivers are available for eligible students)	COST	\$43 for test \$54.50 for test with essay (Fee waivers are available for eligible students)
Four scores can be sent to colleges along with registration fee; \$12 per school after fourth selection; students not obligated to send scores anywhere, but will pay an additional fee is sending scores after testing (\$12 – \$16 per score per school)	SENDING SCORES	Four scores can be sent to colleges along with registration fee; \$11.25 per school after fourth selection; students not obligated to send scores anywhere, but will pay an additional fee is sending scores after testing (\$11.25 per school)
Each individual ACT test is independent and must be sent separately to schools – scores do not accumulate on test record	TEST RECORD	Each individual SAT test is independent and must be sent separately to schools – scores do not accumulate on test record
Every four year school in the US accepts the ACT (with the exception of the Webb Institute in NY)	SCORE ACCEPTANCE	Accepted by all four–year colleges in the US – preferred by schools outside the US
No Subject Tests or equivalent – however, some colleges allow ACT to be substituted for BOTH SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests in admission	SUBJECT TESTS	One–hour multiple choice Subject Tests available in languages, sciences, math, social studies and literature – completely separate from SAT Reasoning Test
No penalty for incorrect answers – blank and incorrect responses incur the same “points off”	TEST STRATEGY	No penalty for guessing
Six times per year – never on same date as SAT	FREQUENCY	Seven times per year – never on same date as ACT
www.actstudent.org	REGISTER	www.collegeboard.org

SAT Planning

Register at sat.org/register

Test Dates*	2015				2016		
	Oct 3	Nov 7	Dec 5	Jan 23	Mar 5	May 7	Jun 4
SAT	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
SAT Subject Tests					SAT Subject Tests are not offered on this date.		
Literature	•	•	•	•		•	•
Biology E/M, Chemistry, Physics	•	•	•	•		•	•
Mathematics Levels I and II	•	•	•	•		•	•
United States (U.S.) History	•	•	•	•		•	•
World History			•				•
Languages: Reading Only							
French, Spanish	•		•	•		•	•
German, Italian, and Modern Hebrew							•
Latin			•				•
Languages with Listening <small>You may take only one listening test on this date.</small>							
Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish		•					

*Sunday tests are given the next day, except for Oct. 11, 2015.

Please visit sat.org/register for the most up-to-date information.

Be sure to review the test calendar carefully as not all subjects are offered on every test date. The SAT Subject Tests offered on each test date are subject to change. Please check online for the latest test schedule.

Registration Deadlines	2015				2016		
	Oct 3	Nov 7	Dec 5	Jan 23	Mar 5	May 7	Jun 4
Regular Registration Deadline	Sep 3	Oct 9	Nov 6	Dec 20	Feb 5	Apr 8	May 5
Late Registration Deadline, Paper	Sep 18	Oct 23	Nov 20	Jan 8	Feb 19	Apr 22	May 20
Late Registration Deadline, Online and Phone	Sep 22	Oct 27	Nov 23	Jan 12	Feb 23	Apr 26	May 25

Deadlines expire at 11:59 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time.



ACT Planning

2015|2016 ACT test dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline**	Late Registration Period** (Late Fee Required)	Photo Upload Deadline
September 12, 2015	August 7	August 8–21	September 4
October 24, 2015	September 18	Sept. 19–Oct. 2	October 16
December 12, 2015	November 6	November 7–20	December 4
February 6, 2016*	January 8	January 9–15	January 29
April 9, 2016	March 4	March 5–18	April 1
June 11, 2016	May 6	May 7–20	June 3

Register for your test

- ✓ Sign up or log in to your ACT web account
- ✓ Select your test date and test option (ACT or ACT Plus Writing)
- ✓ Select your test center
- ✓ Upload your photo

Choose your college reports

Send up to four score reports free by listing those colleges when you register.

Scores are normally reported 3 – 8 weeks after you test (5 – 8 weeks for the ACT Plus Writing).

Request accommodations

For information about test accommodations for students with disabilities, eligibility, and testing options, visit www.actstudent.org **before** registering.

Change your registration

After registration, you may change:

- ✓ Test date
- ✓ Test option
- ✓ Test center
- ✓ College reports

Scores

See your score report online according to the schedule posted under the “Scores” link.

You may not receive your scores from one test date in time to register for the next test date.

Find a detailed checklist on www.actstudent.org about what to bring to the test center, what not to bring, and requirements for admission.

Getting the Most Out of a College Visit

Being on a college campus, even for a few hours, can tell you a lot about the college and how well you might fit in at that institution. Below are some tips for how to get the most out of visiting college campuses.

Things to Consider Before You Visit:

- While it is tempting to visit only the most prestigious schools on your list, you should make sure you visit colleges that are within the realm of possibility for you.
- Good times to visit:
 - Any school breaks you may have during 11th and 12th grade
 - Summer before senior year – remember that campuses may not seem lively over the summer because the student body is not there. Try not to let this sway your opinion.
- Visit the admissions office website to look at different opportunities for prospective students.

Things to Do During Your Visit

- **Campus Tours**
- **Information Sessions**
- **Class Visits**
Many colleges invite prospective students to sit in on a class or two. Sometimes this needs to be pre-arranged. Contact the admissions office or check the website for specific information.
- **Overnight Visits**
Many colleges arrange for prospective students to stay on campus with a student host. You can eat in the dining hall, visit some classes and spend the night in a residence hall.
- **Meeting with an Academic Department or Professor**
If you have specific questions about the opportunities in a specific major, use this occasion to try to meet with someone in the department. Be sure to arrange this in advance.
- **Meeting with a Financial Aid Counselor**
If you will be applying for financial aid, this is your opportunity to ask about grants, scholarships and student loans. Pick up any forms or applications you may need to apply for aid.
- **On-Campus Interviews**
If you are visiting a school that offers interviews and you are very interested in the school, make an appointment before you get to campus for an interview. Be prepared to sell yourself as a successful candidate for admission. Also prepare some school-specific questions for your interviewer.

Making the Most of Your Visit:

- **Don't get too emotionally involved with your tour guide.**
These students love their college and are trained by the admissions office to be honest, but to say positive things about the school. Their view may not be the most objective.
- **Pay close attention and ask questions of the tour guide.**
Why did you choose College X? What do you like best about the college? What do you like least? What courses have you enjoyed the most and why? What are the big issues on campus right now?
- **Things to consider and observe while you are on tour:**
The appearance of campus; student dress – casual or sophisticated; friendliness of the community; hot topics – pick up a student newspaper to see what's happening on campus; how are students getting around campus; library; residential options; amenities; food.
- **If there is something you want to see that wasn't on the official tour, ask your guide if you can see it!**

Campus Visit Worksheet

College: _____

City, State: _____

Campus

<p>Are the facilities up to date and operating?</p> <p>Is the campus safe?</p> <p>Is the library good for studying and research?</p> <p>Is there a student health facility?</p> <p>What is the surrounding city or town like?</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
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Academics

<p>What is the average class size?</p> <p>What is the most popular major or classes?</p> <p>Are there Teaching Assistants (TA)?</p> <p>What academic supports are available?</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
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Student Life

<p>Diversity</p> <p>Clubs/Organizations</p> <p>Dorms</p> <p>Dining</p> <p>Athletics/School Spirit</p> <p>Social/Greek Life</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
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Overall Impressions

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Making the Best of a College Interview

Relax, prepare and get ready to enter into a great conversation with your interviewer. Take advantage of the chance to get to know your prospective college a little better.

Preparation

- ✓ **Know the basics.** Learn as much about the institution as possible before you go in. Scour the school's brochures and Web site.
- ✓ **Review your application materials (if you have already applied).** The interviewers may use your application materials to strike up a conversation with you. Review your application essay so it's fresh in your mind when you interview.
- ✓ **Practice some generic questions.** There are a few basic questions you can probably count on hearing: Why do you want to go to this college? What do you expect to gain from the college experience? What do you plan to major in and why? You don't need to memorize your answers, but think through the issues ahead of time so you'll have some ideas to discuss.
- ✓ **Practice some specific questions.** You'll also want to prepare for questions that ask you to identify key topics or experiences that are important to you. Think in advance about some of your favorite experiences, activities or plans. If you've identified your own "hit list," you'll find them easier to recall when asked.
- ✓ **Prepare some questions to ask.** Show your interest in the school by asking specific questions, such as, how would you describe the student body? What are the most popular majors (and why)? What are the school's strengths? Where does the school need to improve?

Interview Day

- ✓ Dress appropriately by choosing a more conservative outfit; modest and non-distracting with a minimum of accessories, make-up, jewelry and perfume.
- ✓ Make sure you know exactly where your interview is being held. Call in advance and ask for directions if you're unsure, and schedule enough time get there.
- ✓ You should also plan to arrive several minutes early. The extra time may come in handy if you encounter delays, and arriving early will let you take a few moments to relax and prepare yourself mentally.
- ✓ Introduce yourself and greet the interviewers with a handshake, smile and positive attitude.
- ✓ Remember that this is a conversation, and that the interview wants to know about you. Be yourself and be honest in your answers. And to score points:
- ✓ **Provide more than a "yes" or "no" answer.** Keep your answers as conversational as possible. Try to find specifics that naturally back up your answers.
- ✓ **Be spontaneous.** Though you should practice answering some basic questions, answer honestly, naturally and spontaneously in the interview.
- ✓ **Be positive.** Highlight the good things from your academic past and put a positive "spin" on your background.

Post- Interview

- ✓ Send a thank-you note or thank-you email shortly after the interview. Showing interest and appreciation goes a long way.

A good interview feels like a good conversation!

College Planning Timeline for Seniors

September

- Use a planner to keep track of college-related dates (see Tracking Worksheet)
- Meet with your guidance counselor to finalize your list of colleges.
- Go back to the teachers you asked to write your letters of recommendation for you. Give them any materials they need and let them know of any early application due dates.
- Review the list of college reps visiting RHS on Naviance. Sign up to attend any sessions with colleges that you are likely applying to.
- Visit college campuses, if you have not already been there.
- Register for the fall SAT or ACT if you would like to improve your scores.
- Begin to fill out admissions applications.
- Continue to work on your application essays.
- Attend Senior College Night at RHS for a thorough explanation of the application process.

October/November

- Continue to visit your potential colleges, if possible.
- Continue to meet with college reps at RHS. Also consider attending a college fair.
- Prepare final drafts of your application essay. Visit the Writing Center for help with editing.
- Take the SAT or ACT, if applicable.
- Check all application deadlines and submit your materials on time. Use the College Application Tracking Worksheet to stay organized.
- Request transcripts on Naviance at least 10 days prior to any application deadlines. For November 1st deadlines, requests must be made by October 15th. For November 15th deadlines, requests must be made by November 1st.
- Follow up to make sure all early action or early decision application materials have been received.

- Remind teachers of early deadlines for applications, if applicable.
- Be sure to include any required fees with your applications. If you think you might be eligible for a fee waiver, see your counselor.
- Make copies of all documents you send through the mail or submit online. Keep organized files.

December

- Take the SAT or ACT, if applicable.
- Remind of the deadlines for submitting your college recommendations for regular admission.
- Request transcripts for any regular decision applications. For January 1st deadlines, requests must be made by December 1st.

January/February

- Continue to meet application deadlines.
- Confirm that all of your application materials have been received by each school to which you applied.
- Write thank you notes to the teachers who wrote recommendations on your behalf.

April

- Maintain organized files of all admissions correspondence that you receive.
- Provide a copy of each letter of admission to Ms. Querze.
- Make sure that you accept an offer of admission before May 1st, and send in any required deposits and paperwork.

May/June

- Take AP exams, if applicable, and request that your scores be sent to the college that you will be attending.
- Make sure your counselor sends your final transcript to your selected college.
- Complete the Senior Exit Survey in English class.
- Graduate!

College Application Tracking Worksheet

Name of College				
Preparing				
Decision Type (ED/EA/Regular/Rolling)				
Application deadline				
Institutional financial aid deadline				
# of letters of recommendation required				
Type of Application (CA? Electronic?)				
Supplemental Materials? List items.				
Tests Required: SAT? ACT? SAT II?				
Interview Required?				
Applying				
Requested letters of recommendation				
Requested SAT or ACT scores to be sent				
Requested high school transcript to be sent				
Filled out, signed and submitted application forms				
Filled out signed and sent ED agreement (if applicable)				
Sent supplemental materials, if needed				
Sent application fee or fee waiver				
Scheduled interview (if applicable)				
Verified receipt of all materials				
Completed institutional financial aid app.				
Requested 1 st quarter grades to be sent (if applicable)				
Accepting				
Received admissions notification letter – Provide Ms. Querze with a copy				
Received financial aid letter (if applicable)				
Accepted offer of admission with deposit				
Requested final transcript to be sent				

Quick Guide to Application Plans

There are a number of different admissions plans that colleges and universities offer to students. The type of plan offered can impact the timing of submission for your applications, so it's important to know what plan(s) the colleges you're applying to offer. The possibilities include:

Rolling Admissions

Schools that use a Rolling Admissions plan generally begin accepting applications in the fall, and will make decisions on applicants on an ongoing or rolling basis. Students can improve their chances of acceptance at Rolling Admissions schools by getting their applications in as early in the admissions window as possible. Since these schools fill their incoming spots over the course of a couple of months, the longer you wait to submit your application the less space they have available and the higher the admissions standards become.

Regular or Deadline Admissions

Many schools set a deadline for applications to be submitted. The deadline is usually January 1st or January 15th, though some schools might set a different deadline date. With deadline schools, all application materials must be present in the admissions office before the date set by the school. No decisions will be made on applications until after the deadline has passed and the admissions office has had the opportunity to review all applications. Therefore, the timing of your submission does not impact your admissions decision, as long as you submit prior to the deadline. Generally, decisions for deadline schools go out in the early spring, well ahead of the May 1 deadline to put in a deposit.

Early Decision (ED)

Colleges and universities that offer an Early Decision option require that these applications be submitted early, usually by November 1 or November 15. Students can only submit an ED application to one school. The benefit of applying ED is that students that apply using this option will receive a decision usually in mid December or early January. Keep in mind, ED applications are binding; students are agreeing in advance that if the school accepts their application, they will withdraw applications from any other schools and attend their ED school. Students are required, as part of the ED application, to submit an ED agreement form, which is essentially a contract signed by the student, parent and counselor. Because these applications are binding, it's crucial that students only apply ED if they are fully confident that this is the right school for them.

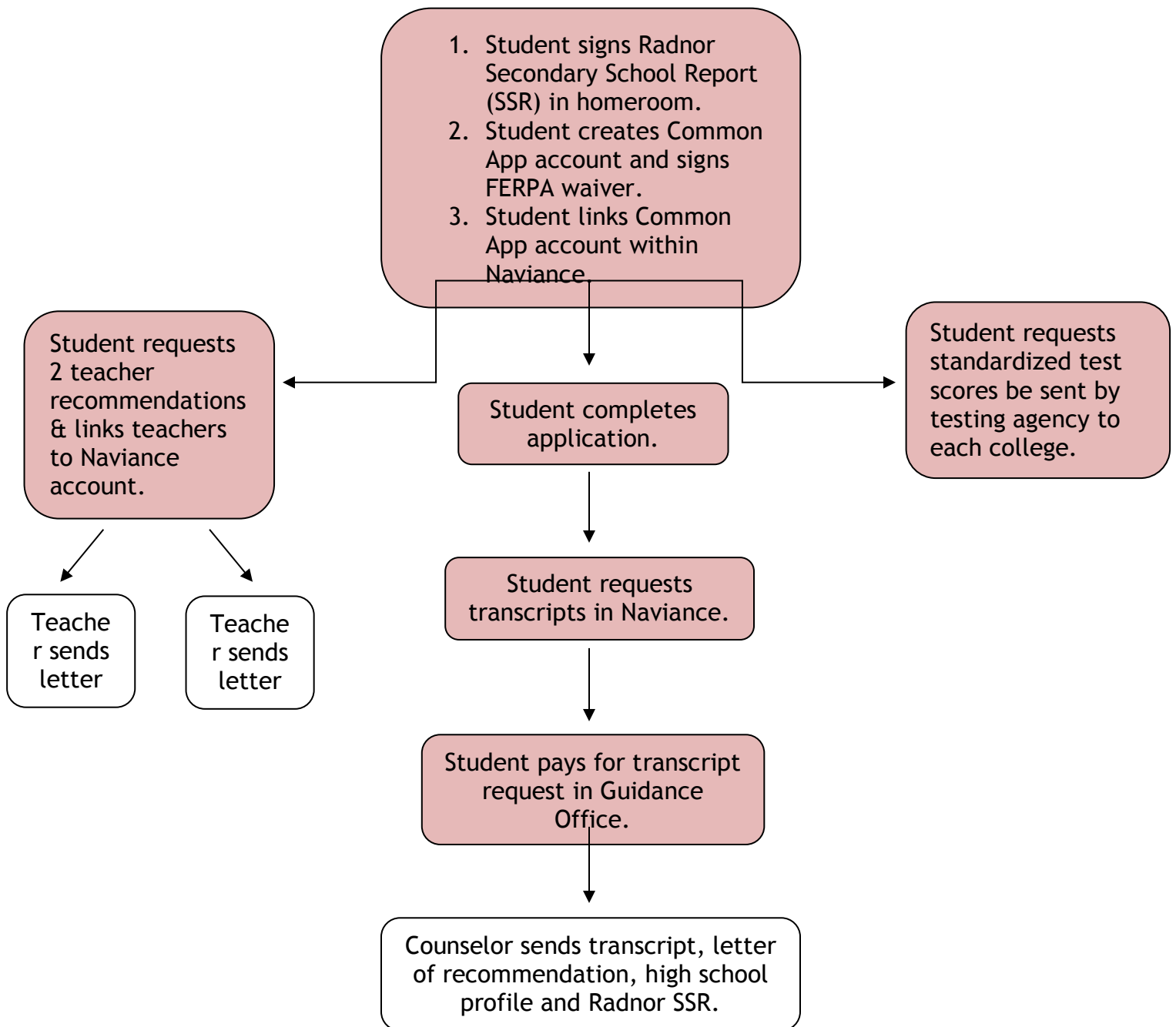
Early Action (EA)

Some schools offer an Early Action option, which provides the same benefits as an ED application (early submission date, early notification of admissions decision) without the binding contract. Students have no obligation to attend an EA school, and may submit multiple EA applications.

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

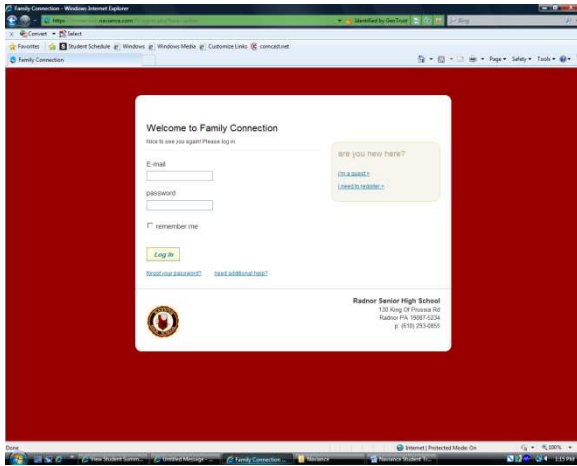
Very few schools offer Restrictive Early Action (REA) plans, but those that do set specific conditions for applicants. Usually, schools that offer REA admissions don't allow students to submit either an ED or EA application to any other school. Be sure you read carefully and follow any restrictions the school places on this program. These applications generally follow a similar timeline as ED and EA, but like with EA applications, students are not obligated to attend if accepted.

Transcript Request Flowchart



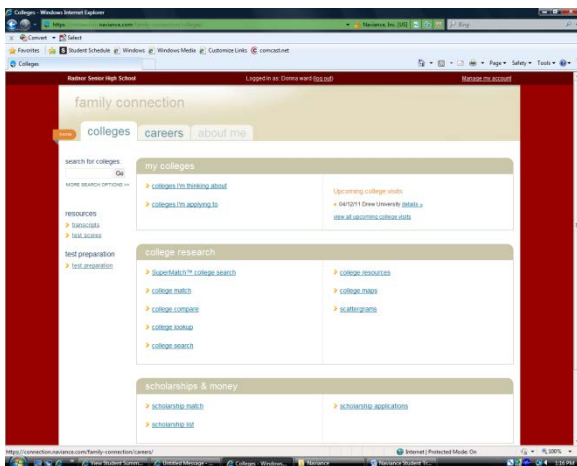
- Student may request **1st quarter grades** be sent to schools. Guidance will NOT send grades unless requested by the student or the school.
- **Mid-Year Grades** will AUTOMATICALLY be sent to any schools that received a student's transcript.
- A **Final Transcript** will AUTOMATICALLY be sent to the school the student plans to attend.

Naviance Help



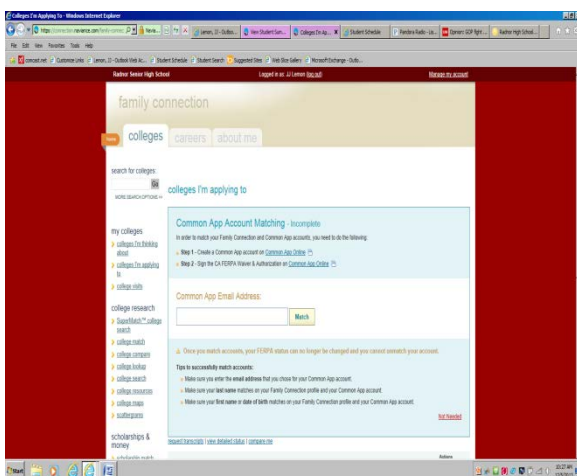
1) Log in to Naviance using your email address and password. If you don't know your account information, or don't have an account, please contact the Guidance Office at 610-293-0855 x 3529. The web address for the log in page is listed below, and can also be found under the Naviance tab on the Guidance section of the High School website.

<https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=radnor>



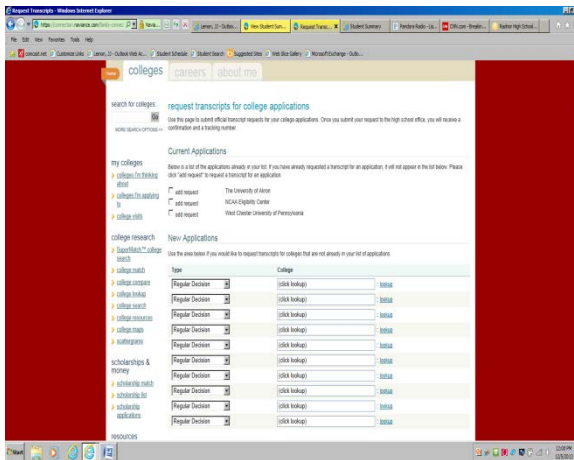
2) After you've logged in, click on the **colleges** tab at the top of the page. That will bring you to this screen.

3) Under the **my colleges** tab, click on the link labeled **colleges I'm applying to**.

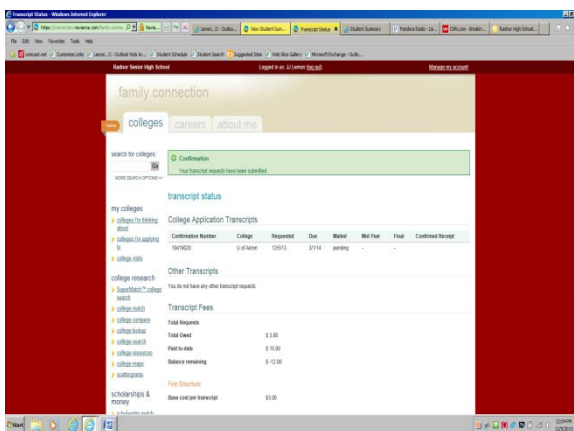


4) This page will appear. Prior to requesting transcripts for any Common Application schools, students will need to have created a Common Application account. Once the account is created, students must complete the FERPA Waiver located on the assign recommenders page on Common App.

5) Once the FERPA waiver has been completed, students must then match their Common App account in Naviance. In the box labeled **Common App Email Address**, please enter the email address that you used to create your Common App Account and hit the button that says **Match**.



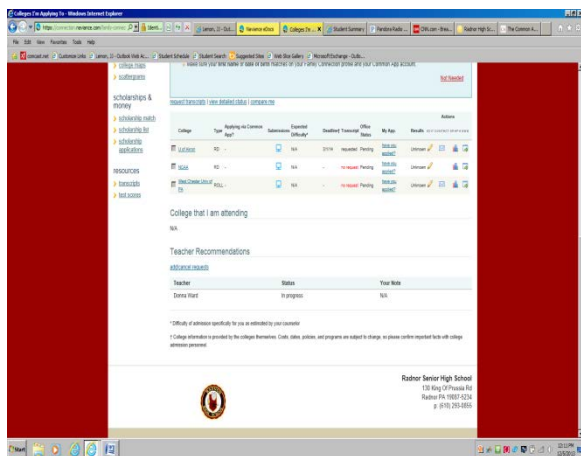
6) Once you've matched your account, you can then begin requesting transcripts for your schools. On the **colleges I'm applying to** page, click on the button labeled **request transcripts**. This page will appear. To choose the schools you'd like transcripts sent to, hit the **lookup** button and choose the school you are applying to. You can request as many as ten transcripts at one time. Once you've selected your schools, hit the **request transcripts** button at the bottom of the page.



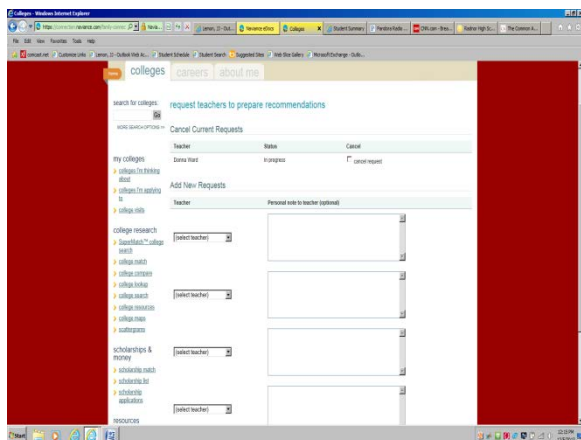
7) Your requests have now been submitted to the Guidance Office. This screen will appear as confirmation of that submission. Please keep in mind that the Guidance Office has 10 school days from the day you submit your request to send out your records. Once you submit your request, you must remit payment to the Guidance Office before any transcripts will be sent. Each request costs \$3, and can be paid for with a check made out to Radnor High School.

8) If you are applying to any schools using the Common Application, please keep in mind that we cannot send your transcripts to those schools unless you've added them into your Common Application account.

9) Students must also request teacher recommendations through Naviance. This request allows teachers to submit letters electronically to schools. Go to the **colleges I'm applying to** page and scroll down to the bottom. You will see a tab labeled **Teacher Recommendations**. Under that tab is a button labeled **add/cancel requests**. Once you click on that button, the following page will appear.



10) Under the heading **Add New Requests**, choose the drop down labeled **(select teacher)**. This will give you access to a list of every teacher in the building. Simply choose which teachers you've already asked to write you a letter, and hit the **Update Requests** button at the bottom of the page. This will allow your teachers to submit your letter electronically to the schools you request. It's important that you communicate with your teachers directly regarding which schools you want their letter to be sent. This responsibility lies with the student.



12th Grade Financial Aid Checklist

September

- Research scholarship opportunities and deadlines, and request application materials, if needed.
- Visit www.collegeboard.org. Check whether the colleges to which you are applying use the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE and register, if applicable.
- Apply for a Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID) at www.fafsa.gov. Keep your ID in a safe place where you can refer to it often.

October through March

- Work with your parents or guardians to gather the financial documents and materials necessary for filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For the class of 2017, you will use the “prior-prior-year” tax return (ie. taxes from 2015).
- Complete and submit the FAFSA form (www.fafsa.ed.gov or www.studentaid.ed.gov/PDFfafsa or 1-800-4-FED-AID) to apply for state, federal, and institutional grants and loans.
- After you have submitted your FAFSA, you will receive your Student Aid Report (SAR). Check it for any errors. Return the SAR only if you need to make corrections.
- Follow the directions in all financial aid correspondence that you receive from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) in a timely manner.
- Continue to complete and submit scholarship applications.

April

- Review and compare the financial aid packages offered in the financial aid award letters sent by the colleges that accepted you.
- Identify a financial aid contact at each college where you have been accepted. Check in with that person about the status of your financial aid package.
- Organize all correspondence that you receive regarding financial aid in a safe place.

May/June

- Work with your parents or guardians to apply for Federal Direct PLUS Loans (Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students) and other private loans, if necessary. If your Federal Direct PLUS application is denied, inform your college’s financial aid office.
- Double-check with PHEAA to make sure that your grant funds are sent to the correct college.
- Visit www.studentloans.gov to complete your Loan Entrance Counseling and Master Promissory Note for any federal loans noted on your financial aid letter.
- Review all bills for tuition, room and board as well as other correspondence from your school’s financial aid office. Follow all directions carefully and meet all deadlines.

Useful Websites:

www.pheaa.org – Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

www.fastweb.org – Scholarship search engine