



## **Blake High School Class of 2026**

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The following is a list of important tasks you can begin during the summer. Remember, too, that summer is a time to relax and recharge. Many of these tasks can wait until the school year begins. Please get in the habit of reading your emails from me. This is how important information will be shared and how colleges will communicate with you. I will make the subject line as detailed as possible so you know if the email is important to you.

### **To Do BEFORE THE START OF YOUR SENIOR YEAR:**



**Complete your Rising Senior Pre-Survey/Brag Sheet** found in your Naviance account:

- Log In to Naviance ([Link to Steps to Login to Naviance here](#))
- Go to the About Me Section
- Click Surveys from my school
- Click on the Rising Senior Pre-Survey and Brag Sheet



**Counselor College Meeting** → Email your counselor to request a meeting

- Schedule a meeting with your counselor to discuss your post-high school plans. These meetings can be scheduled at the end of your junior year or during the summer after junior year. Parents are welcome to attend. Email your counselor to request a meeting. ([Blake School Counseling Website](#))



**Standardized Testing** → PAY ATTENTION TO DEADLINES

- Please note that many schools remain [test-optional](#) for the class of 2026. If you have questions about whether or not to submit an optional test score, please check with Mr. Marshall. If you use the summer to prepare for a standardized test, check <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/dates-deadlines> or <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html> to find the late summer/early fall administration dates. The best place to study for the SAT is at [KhanAcademy](#)

- **IMPORTANT:** If you plan to apply to the University of Maryland (priority deadline Nov 1) or Early Decision or Early Action to other schools, **October 4th** is the last day you can take the SAT and meet the November 1st application deadline.
- Send ACT scores ([www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)) or SAT scores ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)) directly from the testing website to the colleges to which you are applying by the school's deadline. **Blake HS does NOT send test scores. This is your responsibility!!** If you select your schools when you register you will get four free test reports sent. Additional score reports are \$14 for each school.



### Letters of Recommendation (LOR)

- The standard advice is to request at least one core (English, Science, Math, Social Studies) teacher's letter of recommendation. The second request can be from a core teacher or someone who knows you well. Each college/university will have different guidelines for the number of required or allowed letters. The requirement is clearly stated on each school's website.
- REACH OUT if you have questions about the LOR. Ask your teacher in person if they would write a LOR for you. Follow up with an email thanking your teacher for agreeing to write a letter for you.
- When you are officially a senior in August, you will also make the recommendation in Naviance. Please give your teachers at least **15 school days** before your college deadlines. The following link will show you how to request a LOR in Naviance. [Letter of Recommendation](#). **IMPORTANT:** Select general request for the letter you want to go to ALL of your schools - select specific request for schools that will accept more than one letter.
- This might also provide some helpful information [How to ask for a LOR](#)



### Support

- To stay updated, visit the College and Career Center Website [College and Career Center](#)
- College Readiness Workshops - Held throughout the summer

## 2025 Summer Workshops



### College List

- Create your list using the Supermatch College Search in Naviance [Supermatch College Search](#) or the [Common App](#), [BigFuture](#), [Niche](#), or [Unigo](#).
- Our recommendation is to have a **maximum** of 5-8 schools (no more than 10).
- Beginning the second week of school, admissions reps will begin visiting the College/Career Center to talk with you about their schools. You will sign up for their visits in Naviance.



## Resume

- You will find it very helpful to create a resume. Many colleges allow, and some require you to attach a resume to your application. You can also use your resume as a collection of data to make it easier to fill out applications. You will need a resume for many scholarship applications.
- Example [Resume](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pIfWvim-po>
- <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/high-school-resume>



## College Essay→ Personal Statement

- A vital college process goal is to have at least one completed college essay/personal statement when you return in the fall. Please review the **summer workshops** for the essay writing options
- Personal Statement/College Essay (Common app. Essay that will be sent to all colleges)
- <https://summer.harvard.edu/blog/12-strategies-to-writing-the-perfect-college-essay/>
- <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/college-essay>



## College Essay→ Supplemental Essays

- In addition to the Personal Statement, many colleges require applicants to submit supplemental essays. These supplemental essays ask students to respond to a wide variety of questions: their most meaningful activity, their interest in a particular college or major, an important community they belong to.
- The link below offers help for different types of questions schools will ask:
  - <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/supplemental-essays>
- Common App Essay Prompts-Below is the link to the 2025-2026 Common Application Essay
  - <https://www.commonapp.org/blog/announcing-2025-2026-common-app-essay-prompts>



## The Common Application

- Refer to this resource called [“How to Make Your Common App a Lot Less Common”](#)
- Create an account on [Common Application](#) - This can be done at any time; however, **you cannot add schools to the Common App. until August 1, 2025.**
- More than 1,000 colleges use the Common Application.
- NOTE: The list of schools you have on Common App must all be added to Naviance in the “colleges I’m applying to “ list.
- **\*You must use your personnel appropriate email address on the Common App, not your school email.**
- Match the Common App with your Naviance account (How to video on the homepage of your Naviance account) [Common App Matching](#)
- **Sign the FERPA Waiver** (found on Common App under the “My Colleges” tab [FERPA release](#) → In the application, you'll be asked if you want to waive your right to review confidential letters of recommendation. What should you know about this waiver?
  - Waiving your right lets colleges know that you do not intend to read your recommendations, which helps reassure colleges that the letters are candid and truthful.

- Some recommenders may decline to write a letter for you if you do not waive your rights. Check with your counselor or teachers to see if they follow such a policy.
- **Fee Waiver:** If you are a student who receives Free and Reduced lunch, you qualify for a Common App fee waiver, which can waive your college application fee. You can request a Common App Fee Waiver in the “Profile” section of the Common App tab. To apply for this fee waiver:
  - Answer “Yes” to the fee waiver statement.
  - Enter your signature to certify your request
- You may find more information about fee waivers [here](#)
- For non-common app schools on your list, please contact Mr. Marshall for help with fee waivers



#### For Schools that don't take The Common Application or Coalition Application

- Some schools do not use the Common or Coalition Applications.
- For example, the [University of California schools](#), you must still add the University of California schools to your Naviance account, so we know to send your transcripts and supporting documents.
- Refer to this Guide, [“Inside the UC App: Tips and tricks for a Stellar Application.”](#)
- If you apply to a university using the application found on their website, you must still add these schools to Naviance.



#### English Language Proficiency - Important read for International Students or students who were in school in other countries before coming to Blake HS

- For some schools \*([UMD](#)), if English is not your native language, regardless of your citizenship, you must provide the university with verification of your proficiency in English. **Four years at a U.S. high school or U.S. accredited high school without English as a Second Language (ESL, ESOL, ELL)**
- If you need to take an English proficiency test, you may take [Duolingo](#) or [Toefl](#)
- **VERY IMPORTANT: If you are applying to UMD and have a transcript that is in another language, you must provide not only the original transcript but the English translation as well.** Do you have non-U.S. academic records? | If you have non-U.S. academic records for post-secondary/university work, please review our [international applicant requirements](#) for instructions on submitting these records
- **Potential Waivers for English Proficiency Requirement**→ While a passing English proficiency test score is the only absolute way a student can meet the English language proficiency requirement, we may consider waiving the English proficiency test requirement if a student has completed one of the following:
  - Four years at a U.S. high school without English as a Second Language (ESL)
  - Please have an official report of your Duolingo or Toefl scores sent directly to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions by the **appropriate deadline**. Submitted scores must be less than two years old.
  - For the University of Maryland (UMD) to receive your scores, please use the reporting code 5814.

## TO DO AS A SENIOR



### Request an Official Transcript from the Registrar -

- This will be done about 15 School Days before your first college application deadline. Use this form to request your transcripts. You will follow up on this request by requesting your transcript in Naviance.
- [Transcript Request Form](#)
- Check your school email regularly! This is how you will be informed of rep visits, scholarships, internships, ETC.



Complete and submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for the 2025-2026 school year when it opens in December. Go to <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> to create your account now. Both you and one parent or guardian will need to create an FSA ID. Step-by-step directions for FAFSA can be found here: Whether or not you think you will qualify for aid, many scholarships REQUIRE you to complete the FAFSA

Before October 1 - Create your FSA ID instructions [HERE](#)

- FAFSA Completion Instructional Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PwBalzwuDI>
- [Helpful video](#)

Note that many scholarships require a completed FAFSA for consideration.

- Check specific financial aid requirements & deadlines for all colleges.
- Planning to attend a college or university in the state of Maryland? sign up for an account on [MDCAPS](#).
  - Depending on your FAFSA information, you may also qualify for aid from the state of Maryland. You must complete this application to receive the aid. Go to this link to create an account: [MDCAPS login page](#).
- Not eligible to complete the FAFSA? You should complete the [MSFAA](#) if you plan to attend a college or university in the state of Maryland. The application for the MSFAA can be found on the MDCAPS site: [MDCAPS login page](#).
- Some schools require the CSS profile as well. Go to [cssprofile.collegeboard.org](https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org)
- Search for scholarships using Naviance: Go to “Colleges” and then “Scholarship Match”. Also go to the: [Blake HS Scholarships](#)

## Other helpful information for senior year:

- After applying, check your portals regularly to make sure no new information is required
- Discussion around test-optional:
  - <https://www.collegevine.com/questions/34928/does-going-test-optional-hurt-my-application>
  - <https://www.appily.com/guidance/articles/college-admission-tests/test-optional-really-test-optional-should-i-submit-my-scores>
  - <https://talk.collegeconfidential.com/t/does-test-optional-hurt-strong-applicants/2097143>
- Some schools require the SRAR → Self-Reported Academic Record
  - You input your own courses & grades
  - <https://srar.selfreportedtranscript.com/>
- If you get deferred, the school may ask for a letter of continued interest or self-reported updated

**Important for students not going to college:** I can help with this as well! Please schedule a meeting with me so we can discuss possible options: Gap year, trade school, career, apprenticeship, and military

## College Resources

[How to Choose a College That Is Right for You!](#)

[Colleges that track demonstrated interest](#)

[Colleges that meet 100% need](#)

[College Checklist](#)

[Step-by-step guide to completing the FAFSA](#)

[Federal Student Aid Handbook](#)

[Net Price Calculator](#)

[Limited Enrollment Programs at UMD](#)

[Scholarship Database](#)

[Colleges with the Highest Graduation Rate](#)

[Colleges for students with learning disabilities](#)

[Navigating homesickness your first year of college](#)

[How to not use Chat GPT for your college essay](#)

[Tuition Tracker](#)

[The Best Trade Schools in the US](#)

**EARLY DECISION:** A binding agreement in which a student applies in October or November, learns if they are accepted in December or January, and is obligated to matriculate to that college. This is suggested only for students who are academically very strong and know positively which college they want to attend, regardless of the cost.

**EARLY ACTION:** This differs from early decision in that students are not required to accept admission or withdraw other applications if accepted by the college early. Students may apply to more than one college for early action.\*

**PRIORITY or Early Notification:** A program in which a student files his application before the regular decision deadline, usually by November 1, in order to receive an admission decision by early February. Students have until May 1 to decide whether or not they will attend the college.\*

**REGULAR ADMISSION:** A program used by most schools. Typically, January 1st is the deadline for applications, and the student is notified before the first week of April.

**RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION:** Restrictive Early Action (sometimes Restricted Early Action) is another non-binding option. You aren't obligated to attend if you are accepted. However, if you apply for Restrictive Early Action, you may *not* apply to any other schools in the early rounds. Applicants are expected to sign a statement that they agree to file only one early application.

**ROLLING ADMISSION:** A program in which applications are evaluated upon receipt, and applicants are notified quickly of the admission decision (usually within 3-4 weeks). Applications are considered until spaces are filled. Submitting your college application early is encouraged.

**OPEN ADMISSION:** Most community colleges offer open admission. All students who apply are accepted but must take a placement test before scheduling classes. The test scores are used for college course placement purposes.

*\*Many colleges accept the majority of their applicants by the early action, priority or early notification deadlines. Early action or priority deadlines are encouraged for students who hope to be considered for merit scholarships awarded by colleges. Be sure to check with each college to determine if there are separate applications to be completed for scholarship consideration.*