

SVHS College Application Process Guide

Hello College Applicants!

We are excited to assist and support you in the process of applying to colleges and universities. We have created this document for you as a guide to use as you fill out and submit your applications. You may want to bookmark this document and/or save this link! It is important that you follow all of the steps in order!

To help stay organized and keep track of your progress, we have created a [SVHS College Application Process Checklist](#).

Curious or want to learn more about a particular college? Click [this link](#) to see where some of our SVHS staff members attended. They have volunteered to speak with students about their school and experience!

1. Fill out the [SVHS Required Senior Post-Secondary Interest Form](#)

All SVHS Seniors are required to complete this form to indicate their post-high school plans. This is an important part of the SV college application process in order to help ensure all high school documents are submitted in a timely fashion.

Please note: for students only applying to Montgomery College and no other colleges, many of the following steps are NOT required. Please skip down to [Step #9](#).

2. Research colleges and universities. Here are a few resources to get started.

Naviance has many helpful tools to assist students searching for colleges, including SuperMatch College Search. Click on 'Colleges Home' in your Naviance account.

[Big Future](#)- College Board's site; research and filter by location, major, and more.

Visit the [SVHS College & Career Center Site](#) for more information and resources.

Organization is key! You may want to consider using a spreadsheet to organize your applications: [SVHS College Application Tracker](#)

Determine how each school you are applying to accepts applications. Also make note of the following:

- Application deadlines!
 - How many letters of recommendation do they require or accept?
 - How much is the application fee?
 - *Some eligible students may qualify for college application fee waivers (FARMS, etc). More information on this can be found later in this document.
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3. **Apply** to college(s). Start working on applications with earliest deadlines first! Many schools have their application available on the [Common Application](#). The Common Application works with over 1,000 colleges and universities.

If any colleges you are applying to are on the [Common Application](#), you will need to create an account. When registering for the Common Application, make sure to use a personal, professional email that you check regularly. **DO NOT** use your MCPS email address! Why? MCPS email blocks messages from external, non-MCPS Senders!

Complete the following steps in Common App:

- Add any Common App schools to your Common App account list of schools you're applying to.
 - NOTE: The list of schools you have on Common App should match the list of schools you are applying to in Naviance!
- Sign the **FERPA Waiver** (found on Common App) - [More Information](#)
 - Click on the "My Colleges" tab
 - Click on any of your colleges
 - Click on "Recommenders and FERPA"
 - Click on "Complete Authorization" button
 - Agree to the terms and conditions, and sign your name by typing
- **Match your Common App** account with your Naviance account (found in Naviance)
 - From the Naviance home menu, Click on "Colleges I'm applying to"
 - You will see a large reddish/pink notice banner with a message about matching the Common App. Click on "Match Accounts"
 - Enter your information and agree to the terms.

Resources and notes when filling out the Common App:

- www.commonapp.org/apply/first-time-students - College application guide for first-time students applying to college with Common App. Students can use this as a reference while completing.
 -  Common App first-year application walkthrough | Common App
 - www.commonapp.org/plan/for-families - tips & resources for families to help their students along the journey to college.
 - [2025-26 Common App Essay Prompts](#)
 - [The Common App Activities & Honors Sections](#) - slideshow guide
 - [How to Make Your Common App a Lot Less Common](#)
 - [How to Make Your Common App Stand Out!](#) - recording from Sep '25 workshop
 - [AXS Companion to Common App](#) - tips, videos, and more to help you as you fill out the Common App (including videos in Spanish)
 - **School-related (SVHS) Common App Questions:**
 - Class of 2026 Graduating Class Size: **567**
 - Class Rank Reporting: **None** (MCPS does not rank students)
 - Grading Scale: **5.0**
 - Course Scheduling System: **Semester**
 - Select and enter your Weighted GPA
 - If your school requires you to enter classes and grade information, use your transcript as a guide. The easiest way to do this is to enter your courses and grades exactly as they appear on your transcript! If you need a printed copy of your transcript for this purpose, email your counselor or Mr. Nalda.
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4. **Update Naviance!** Log into Naviance and update your information.

- Make sure all schools you are applying to are listed under the “COLLEGES I’M APPLYING TO” list. For non-Common App schools:
 - Click on the “Colleges” tab at the top of the screen.
 - Click on “Colleges I’m thinking about”
 - Add schools to the list
 - Within this list, you can select schools and click “Move to Application List” if you plan on applying
 - Please review and make sure all application deadlines are correct!
 - It is very important that your deadlines in Naviance match the deadline you plan to apply by! Naviance often defaults to the regular decision deadline. If a deadline is incorrect in Naviance, a staff member may miss a deadline or think they have more time to complete a letter of recommendation for you.
 - For example, if you plan to apply to a school’s Early Action Deadline of November, but you have a January deadline listed in Naviance, that can cause a major issue or delay in a school receiving application materials. Please review below.
 - How to check or change college application deadlines in Naviance:
 - Log into Naviance
 - Click on "College"
 - Click on "Colleges I'm Applying To"
 - Review each of your college's deadlines
 - If a date needs to be changed, click "Edit", make the change, and make sure you save!
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5. If your school requires letter(s) of recommendation, complete the [Student Brag Sheet](#) and submit to your **Counselor** and **teacher(s)** via the [Brag Sheet Google Submission Form](#). If you already have a Brag Sheet (from an IB course or another class), feel free to use that to send instead. A Brag Sheet will assist them in creating your **Recommendation Letter**.

- **To request a letter of recommendation from your counselor, complete and submit your brag sheet using the ‘Brag Sheet Google Submission Form’ link above.**
 - Submitting your Brag Sheet will serve as your Counselor Letter of Recommendation request.
 - Brag Sheets are to be submitted to counselors at least 15 business/school days before your college deadline(s). For example:

If your college application deadline is **October 15**, you must submit your Brag Sheet by **October 1**

If your college application deadline is **November 1**, you must submit your Brag Sheet by **October 15**

If your college application deadline is **December 1**, you must submit your Brag Sheet by **November 15**

- You **DO NOT** need to formally request a letter of recommendation from your Counselor in Naviance.
 - [Click here](#) to see the list of counselors and their contact information.
 - **Teacher Letters of Recommendation** need to be formally requested in Naviance. More information can be found later in this document (Step #6).
 - Again, letters of recommendation requests are due at least 15 business/school days before your college deadlines (see table above). You may want to email your teacher and counselor at the same time if your college(s) require both types of letters.
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6. Formally **request recommendation letters from your teacher(s)** if needed 15 business/school days before your college deadlines. Start by identifying a teacher who you believe could write you a positive recommendation. It is important to reach out to that teacher ahead of time to see if they would be willing to write a letter for you. Once they have agreed, please follow the steps below.

- Send your teacher your Brag Sheet at least 15 school days before your application deadline(s).
 - In Naviance, Click on the “Colleges” tab at the top of the screen.
 - Under ‘Apply to College’ click on “Letters of Recommendation”
 - Click “Add Request”
 - Select the teacher and which school(s) you would like to receive this teacher’s letter of recommendation.
 - Note that each college has a minimum and maximum number of letters they require and accept. Choose carefully.
 - If you cannot find your teacher in the list, please reach out to Mr. Nalda. He can add them to the list.
 - In #3, write a short note requesting the letter.
 - Remember to give your teacher(s) and counselor plenty of advanced notice to write your letter of recommendation. Refer Step #5 for deadlines.
 - If your college does not accept Naviance, then the teacher is typically provided with a school-specific link or email address for upload. This typically occurs for non-Common App schools when the student fills out an online application.
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7. **Request an official transcript** via Naviance.

- In Naviance, Click on the “Colleges” tab at the top of the screen.
 - Click on “Manage Transcripts”
 - Click on the “+” button
 - At this point, we are only requesting “Initial” and “Mid year” transcripts
 - **Make sure you add ALL COLLEGES you are applying to in your list on Naviance.
 - Final transcripts are only sent to the college you decide to attend once you have made that decision! Requesting the Final Transcript typically happens by May 1, which is College Decision Day deadline for many schools.
 - If your college does not accept Naviance, then the Counselor is provided with a school-specific link or email address for upload. This typically occurs for non-Common App schools when the student fills out an online application.
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8. **Application Fee Waivers** - For eligible students who qualify. If a student qualifies for Free/Reduced Meals, you can request an application fee waiver to apply to colleges for free.

You can request a **Common App Fee Waiver** in the “Profile” section of the Common App tab. To apply for this fee waiver:

1. Answer “Yes” to the fee waiver statement.
2. Select all the indicators in the list that apply to you.
3. Enter your signature to certify your request.

More info:

<https://appsupport.commonapp.org/applicantsupport/s/article/What-do-I-need-to-know-about-the-Common-App-fee-waiver>

For non-Common App schools, please reach out to Mr. Nalda for assistance as schools have different processes for requesting application fee waivers.

9. For students solely applying to **Montgomery College** and no other colleges, complete [this application](#).

- Students can typically start applying to Montgomery College midway through October of their Senior year.
 - If you have taken courses at Montgomery College (Dual Enrollment, etc) and already have an M Number, DO NOT submit another application.
 - You should reach out to [Raptor Central](#) for assistance in changing the status of your account to be able to register for classes in the Fall.
 - You do not need to complete and submit a Brag Sheet as Counselor and/or teacher letters of recommendation are NOT required.
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10. Send [SAT scores](#) or [ACT scores](#) or directly from the testing website to colleges you are applying to. Seneca Valley High School does not send test scores. **This is your responsibility!!!** Take advantage of free score reports when registering for these tests!

11. If you took **Dual Enrollment/MC courses** while in high school, request that Montgomery College mail your college transcript to the school you plan to attend. [More information](#).

12. **Submit college applications** once your applications are complete. Once you are ready to submit your applications, please submit! You DO NOT have to wait for your teacher or Counselor to submit their documents to submit your application.

13. **Complete and submit Financial Aid Forms.** Students planning to attend a college, university, or trade school can typically begin to fill out the **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as early as *October 1 of their senior year. This includes students applying to Montgomery College. Go to fafsa.ed.gov for more information and the application. Many colleges require the FAFSA to be completed by January 1.

- Note that many scholarships require a completed FAFSA for consideration. As a result, we recommend that all eligible students complete and submit the FAFSA.
 - [Basic Eligibility Criteria](#)
- Check specific financial aid requirements & deadlines for all colleges.
- **Class of 2026** students should fill out the **2026-27 FAFSA** as that will be their first year of attending college. Accidentally filling out the wrong year's FAFSA could lead to issues or delays in receiving financial aid!
- Each student and contributing parent will need to create an [FSA ID](#) to sign the FAFSA.
- 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 online application to receive state aid. Go to this link to create an account: [MDCAPS login page](#).
 - If you qualify for aid, there may come a point in the verification process for MDCAPS when you will need to submit transcript information to verify your GPA. Email Mr. Nalda for a copy of your transcript and you will be able to upload into your account.
 - Not eligible to complete the FAFSA? You may be eligible to complete the **MHEC One App** (formerly called MSFAA) if you plan to attend a college or university in the state of Maryland. The application for the MHEC One App can be found on the MDCAPS site: [MDCAPS login page](#).
 - [More Information and FAQs](#)
 - [User Guide](#) - Instructions on how to fill out and submit.
 - **IMPORTANT!** If you are offered a financial aid award from MDCAPS, you will be required to log in and accept the award. Monitor your email and/or MDCAPS to ensure you accept the award by the given deadline! If not, you risk losing your financial aid or being placed on a waitlist due to missing the deadline.
 - Some schools may also require students to fill out the **CSS Profile** as part of their financial aid process for some or all of their financial aid applicants. Go to cssprofile.collegeboard.org for more information.
 - The CSS Profile is free for domestic undergraduate students whose family income is up to \$100,000. The fee for the initial application is \$25. Additional reports are \$16.
 - Some students may need to submit documents via [Institutional Documentation Service](#) (IDOC)
 - If you need to submit documents, College Board will email you and you can log in at that time.
 - **Please note:** students must submit their CSS Profile first to get access to IDOC.
 - More information regarding financial aid:
 - <https://sites.google.com/mcpsmd.net/svhscccenter/financial-aid>
 - [2024-25 Financial Aid Guide for Seniors](#)
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14. College Sports and the NCAA - Planning to play a sport in college?

NCAA Eligibility Center

You need to be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center to compete at an NCAA **Division I or II school**. Create a Certification Account and on the NCAA website and they will guide you through the process.

- You need to create a Certification Account to make official visits to Divisions I and II schools or to sign a National Letter of Intent.
- [Create an account](#)
- Students with financial need may qualify for a fee waiver. (See NCAA Eligibility Center Fee Waiver Video)

Create a free Profile Page if you plan to compete at a **Division III** school or are not yet sure where you want to compete.

- You'll get an NCAA ID, and they will send you important reminders as you complete high school.
- [Create a Profile Page](#)

See your counselor or Mr. Nalda for more information.

15. After submitting college applications, you are now waiting to hear back. Good luck! **Keep track of ALL admissions results and merit scholarships** for ALL colleges you applied to in Naviance. Once you hear back from colleges via email or letter, please record your results in Naviance.

- How to update admission decisions/results in Naviance ([video instructions](#))
- If you were accepted and offered a merit scholarship, congratulations! Here is how to add your offered scholarship in Naviance ([video instructions](#))
 - Note: Under \$ Awarded, enter the amount. If you see that your award is renewable, please multiply the amount by four (for four years of college).
 - If you have been offered multiple academic scholarships, you may title them by using the name of the college or the name of the scholarship.
 - For example: “University of Florida - Merit Scholarship” OR “Trustee Scholarship - Purdue U.” (etc.)
- Don’t forget to fill out any required forms from schools! This is especially true for the school you plan to attend in the fall. These may be financial aid, housing, medical or other required forms. Monitor your email so you don’t miss important deadlines!

16. **Search and apply for scholarships.** Students should apply for any and all scholarship opportunities they are interested in and are eligible for. A few resources to search for scholarships:

- The SVHS Scholarships page: <https://sites.google.com/mcpsmd.net/svhsccenter/scholarships>
 - Check this page periodically as Mr. Nalda updates and adds new scholarship opportunities on a regular basis.
- Students are sent scholarship opportunities weekly, through Naviance, to their MCPS email as part of Mr. Nalda’s *Weekly Notes for Seniors*. *Weekly Notes* are also available on the [College & Career Center website](#).
- Students can search using Naviance: Go to “Colleges” and then “Scholarship Match”.
- We also recommend students create an account on the following sites:
 - [Fastweb.com](#). This is a profile-based, scholarship search site that matches students to scholarship opportunities.
 - [GoingMerry](#). Going Merry has thousands of national, regional, and local scholarships. There are also opportunities for every grade level, from freshmen to seniors.

If you have any questions, [Email your Counselor](#) and/or schedule an appointment before school, during lunch, or after school!! You can also email or set up an appointment with [Mr. Nalda](#)!

SVHS CEEB CODE: 210582

SCAN QR FOR THE VIRTUAL VERSION OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS

