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About the Process of Applying to College

Preparing for post-secondary education beyond Eastside Catholic is an exciting time for students and families. The process of exploring and applying to college will look different for every student and family.

The college counselors at EC are here to answer any questions students and families have, provide information, resources and assistance to make the process smooth for all. This process has become more competitive over the past 10 years with higher education institutions receiving record numbers of applications each year for a limited number of spaces at their institutions. This is especially true for Ivy League institutions, highly selective institutions and even state institutions such as the University of Washington.

We encourage students to undertake a healthy balance of academics, service and extracurricular activities. It is easy for students to overcommit themselves, leaving little time for them to enjoy this period in their lives or dedicate enough time to their health and well-being. Institutions do not require students to participate in athletics or extracurricular activities, but they do want to see students getting involved in areas of interest. Colleges and universities have noted that a desired candidate possesses quality activities and involvement, over quantity.

EC College Counseling supports finding the best post-secondary option for each individual student. We recognize that every student has different aspirations, career goals, interests, strengths and weaknesses and preferences. There are over 4,500 higher educational institutions within the U.S. We desire to find the best fit for every student and want every student to have a plan after graduating from high school.

We hope that you will find this handbook beneficial and encourage you to contact the college counselors or Student Services Department at Eastside Catholic with any additional questions.

Naviance/Naviance Student

Naviance is an online college and career platform that many high schools have chosen to use as a means of helping students prepare for college. High schools use it as a vehicle to submit documents (transcripts, letters of recommendations and reports) electronically to all colleges and universities. Upon enrolling at Eastside Catholic High School, all students and families are provided with registration codes to login and begin using their Naviance/Naviance Student accounts. Every student has their own account. Families who have more than one student attending EC may have their accounts linked so that they may view their students’ accounts. While parents access their student(s) account, parents and students have different login information, usernames and passwords.

There are three ways students and parents can access Naviance Student:

1. Use the link: student.naviance.com/ec

2. Log in through the Naviance website directly by visiting: naviance.com, select “Sign In,” select “Students and Families,” type in ZIP code 98074 to select Eastside Catholic as the school, then proceed to login with information provided by EC.
3. Navigate to the link through the eastsidecatholic.org website, by selecting: Parents in the uppermost menu > then Naviance > Click on “Log in to Naviance”

There are a variety of tools in Naviance/Naviance Student that can be accessed and utilized for students in grades 9-12. Some of these tools include:

- Career and interest inventories (Strengths Explorer, Career Interest Profiler and Cluster Finder)
- Resume
- College search engines
- Scattergrams and other comparison tools that predict likeliness of admission
- Schedule of colleges visiting Eastside Catholic
- Parent questionnaire
- Scholarship info

*Naviance is required for all ECHS college applicants.*

All electronic documents are submitted through Naviance to colleges and universities. These documents include, but are not limited to:

- Letters of recommendation from teachers
- Letters of recommendation from counselors
- Transcripts (initial, mid-year, final and transfer)
- School report
  - Current courses
  - School profile
  - Transcript
- Common Application Teacher Evaluation (if student is applying through Common Application)
- Common Application School Report (if student is applying through Common Application)

Colleges and universities are not able to view any information in Naviance/Naviance Student. This software is used only by the high school. Documents can be sent through Naviance to colleges and universities, but they can only view the information that is submitted. The resume and parent questionnaire are only viewed by teachers and counselors for the purpose of writing letters of recommendation.

**Important Notes About Submission of Transcripts**

High school transcripts are sent to the colleges and universities on a student’s list in Naviance.

**Initial Transcript:** An initial transcript will be submitted at the time a student sends an application to a school.

**Mid-Year Transcript:** During senior year, once first semester grades have been posted, a mid-year transcript will automatically be sent to every college and university on a student’s list in Naviance. Some colleges and universities will admit students based on their performance during the first and second semester of senior year so it is important that students do their best the entire year.
**Final Transcript:** A final high school transcript will be automatically sent to the college or university a senior chooses to attend. This school must be marked as school of attendance in Naviance.

Naviance is also used for data collection purposes to keep accurate records of all college data for students that attend Eastside Catholic. Therefore, it is very important that seniors keep their Naviance Student account information up-to-date and that they accurately reflect admission decisions and note any scholarships offered by the schools.

**Students:** It is strongly recommended that you complete the “Resume” located in the “About Me” section in Naviance Student. This section is viewed by your counselors and the teachers you select to write a letter of recommendation on your behalf. It is beneficial to be able to use the resume as a reference when writing letters of recommendation as it serves as a reminder of involvement in activities, awards and achievements, work and other areas of interest.

**Parents:** It can be beneficial to complete the “Parent Questionnaire” during your student’s junior year. This document provides great insight and is beneficial for counselors to refer to when composing letters of recommendation.

If at any time students or parents have trouble accessing Naviance/Naviance Student, contact a college counselor or the registrar for assistance.

**Exploration/Selection Process**

The college exploration and selection process can vary greatly from student to student. Some students may have a clearly defined educational path early on because they have decided on a major they would like to pursue, know which institution they would like to attend or are being recruited for athletics. Many students may not know what field of study they would like to pursue in college or which institution they would like to attend, which is perfectly acceptable.

**Interest and Career Inventories**

It is recommended that all students take a few interest and career inventories to understand what career fields and majors they might be best suited for. Interest and career inventories are short surveys or quizzes where questions about strengths and weaknesses and areas of interest are evaluated. A couple of these inventories are in Naviance/Naviance Student under the “About Me” tab, listed under “My Assessments.”

Another method of identifying potential college majors or future careers is to evaluate courses and reflect on personal interests. What subjects has a student enjoyed taking while at EC? What subjects did they not enjoy? What subjects did a student understand naturally? What subject(s) is a student weak in? Identifying which subjects a student dislikes is as important as identifying subjects they like. It is important to note that a subject a student is naturally strong in may not always be the subject they are interested in and vice versa.

**Participation in Activities**

Participation in activities is not mandatory for college admission but is encouraged. Colleges and universities have indicated that they prefer to see a student participate in fewer activities continued over longer periods of time rather than see an applicant with a long list of activities of short duration.
Participation on or with athletic teams is not required for college admission. Higher education institutions recognize that all types of individuals make quality students and not everyone is athletically inclined or interested in sports. Colleges want to see students pursue activities they are interested in.

It can sometimes be advantageous to be a student-athlete and may be highly desirable to colleges if they are seeking talented athletes for their teams. Students that are interested in participating in Division I or Division II athletics should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and ensure they are academically eligible to play in college.

Higher education institutions are increasingly interested in applicants who possess leadership qualities and community service experience. Any activity inside or outside of school where students can gain experience in roles of leadership or participate in service-oriented opportunities are beneficial. Leadership opportunities can come in many forms, from being captain of a team to leading a group project.

**College Visits**
It can be beneficial throughout the college exploration process for students to visit different college and university campuses. Even when on vacation, we encourage visiting schools outside of the U.S., out-of-state, in-state or local. We recommend visiting campuses that range in setting, environment, size and type. For example, it is great to visit an urban campus located in a big city, a suburban campus and a rural campus to get a feel for the different locations.

Additionally, having the opportunity to visit different types of schools can be beneficial (big state schools, private schools, liberal arts schools, vocational). Size (student population) is another aspect to consider when visiting schools. When students visit schools, it can help motivate and develop specific preferences. If there are specific schools a student is interested in, we encourage campus tours if possible since it helps the student gain an understanding of the institutions and may help narrow down their selection.

**College Visits at Eastside Catholic**
Every fall, Eastside Catholic hosts on campus visits from colleges and universities across the country. These informational visits are in Student Services. It is Eastside Catholic School policy to only allow not-for-profit educational institutions to visit our school.

The list of colleges and universities visiting Eastside Catholic in the fall is posted in Naviance. Students can sign up to attend these visits through their Naviance Student account.

**Admission Criteria: What are Colleges Looking For?**
Every post-secondary educational institution has their own criteria and method for selecting students to attend their school. Some are more specific about the selection process and some are less forthcoming. It is always important to consult the institution or visit their website to get a better understanding of what is being considered. The components listed below are what institutions typically consider for admission:

- GPA
- Academic rigor (level of difficulty of courses taken in comparison to courses offered at EC)
- Test scores (ACT/SAT and/or SAT Subject Exams and sometimes AP scores)
- Grade trends (does the student’s GPA go up (preferred), stay the same, go down)
- Writing ability (essay section on ACT and SAT exams and college application essay)
- Activities (incorporating leadership or service activities is especially beneficial)
- Letters of recommendation (typically one or two from teachers and one from a counselor)

It should be noted that not all colleges and universities use the above criteria when considering admission. For example, the University of Washington does not require nor read letters of recommendation, nor do all colleges and universities place equal weight or importance on the components above. There are “test-optional” schools that do not require test scores to be submitted. To view a list of these schools, visit fairtest.org. Many schools will state that they take a holistic approach when evaluating applications. This means that they take everything into consideration to get an overall picture of a prospective student. When applicable, if a student’s grades are affected by an event or occurrence, institutions encourage students to address such circumstances in the college application or essay. Examples include, but are not limited to, a death in the family, divorce, depression, concussion, injury, personal struggle or anything that may have impacted academic performance while at EC. Please only address such circumstances if warranted.

**College Preparation Timelines**

**Freshman Year**

**Fall:**

- Work hard and keep grades up (seems obvious, but it is important)
- Evaluate your courses and plan ahead
- Become aware of subject preferences (what courses do you like or not like?)
- Become aware of your strengths and weaknesses (what subjects are you naturally good at? Are you more artistic, analytical, good with computers?)
- Take two or three interest, career or personality inventories online or in Naviance
- Explore and participate in activities (sports, clubs, associations, organizations)
- Take practice college entrance exams (PSAT and/or practice ACT exam)

**Spring:**

- Attend Freshman College Planning Night at EC

**Summer (before sophomore year):**

- Participate in activities, get a job, volunteer, take some courses, participate in workshops, explore different activities that interest you
Sophomore Year

Fall:
- Work hard to keep your grades up
- Evaluate your courses and plan ahead
- Take practice college entrance exams (PSAT and/or practice ACT exam)
- Attend PNACAC Fall College Fair in October
- Explore and participate in extracurricular activities

Spring:
- Attend PNACAC Spring College Fair in April

Summer (before junior year):
- Participate in activities, get a job, volunteer, take some courses, participate in workshops, explore different activities that interest you

Junior Year

Fall:
- Take PSAT/NMSQT exam
- Attend Junior College Planning Night at EC
- Start researching colleges and making a list of ones you are interested in
- Attend college information sessions from colleges and universities that visit EC (juniors can attend three college info sessions)
- Attend PNACAC Fall College Fair in October
- Think about college entrance exams and test prep if necessary

Spring:
- Take first ACT or SAT exam
- Create a list (in Naviance) of colleges and universities you would like to apply to
- Take SAT Subject tests if applying to schools that require or recommend them
- Approach teachers to request Letters of Recommendation for senior year
- Schedule a meeting with your college counselor
- Attend PNACAC Spring College Fair in April
- Visit college campuses

Summer (before senior year):
- Create a Common Application Account and look at essay questions
- Work on college application essay
- Visit colleges
- Participate in activities, get a job, volunteer, take some courses, participate in workshops, explore different activities that interest you
Senior Year

Fall:
- □ Meet with your college counselor
- □ Formally request Letters of Recommendation from teachers (if you haven’t done so already)
- □ Finalize college application essay
- □ Make sure you are familiar with ALL application requirements of the schools you are applying to
- □ Attend college information sessions from colleges and universities that visit EC
- □ Send ACT and SAT scores to all colleges and universities on your list that require them
- □ **Be aware of application deadlines**
- □ Start applying for financial aid; FAFSA opens in October

Spring:
- □ Wait for decisions from colleges and universities – early applicants tend to hear back from schools in December and regular applicants tend to hear back from schools in March
- □ Visit colleges that you have been accepted to (if you haven’t visited them already)
- □ Take AP exams
- □ Make final decision on future plans after EC
- □ May 1 is the deadline to commit to a college or university

Summer (before starting college or plans after EC):
- □ Participate in activities, get a job, volunteer, take some courses, participate in workshops, explore different activities that interest you

Services Offered by College Counseling

EC college counselors are a part of the Student Services Department at Eastside Catholic, which is located on the main floor of the school, directly under the Chapel.

College support services are available to all students. However, priority is placed on meeting with seniors in the fall to ensure they are well prepared and have assistance throughout the college application process. College advising at Eastside Catholic aims to make the college exploration and application process less overwhelming for students and families by providing them with current information and resources, while also equipping them with the tools necessary to make informed decisions about post-secondary education. College support services include but are not limited to the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual meetings</td>
<td>Mandatory meetings with all juniors and seniors, meetings with freshmen and sophomores when requested by student or parents/guardians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade level meetings</td>
<td>College information sessions held in the evenings throughout the year for each grade level (9 - 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings with college representatives</td>
<td>Every fall, EC hosts 70+ representatives from colleges and universities from U.S. and international schools to meet with students and provide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
them with information about their schools. Students can sign up to attend visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information sessions or workshops</th>
<th>Information sessions are typically held in the evenings on a variety of topics: PSAT exams/results, NCAA, financial aid, learning disabilities, financial planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special events</td>
<td>College panel, essay workshop, Jesuit Excellence Tour “JET Tour,” Case Studies Program with Puget Sound Catholic Schools and other events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email communications</td>
<td>College related information is regularly sent out via Naviance to students and parents containing information and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Handouts and information are readily provided on a variety of college topics. Some resources are provided in individual meetings, info sessions or upon request. Naviance also serves as a valuable college tool for students and parents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**College Entrance Examinations**

Scores on college entrance exams (ACT, SAT and SAT subject tests) are often taken into consideration when determining college admission. While some higher education institutions have decided to go “test-optional,” meaning institutions don’t require students to submit college entrance exam scores for admission, the clear majority of colleges and universities still require submission of college entrance exams in order to be considered for admission.

The good news is that all colleges and universities in the U.S. accept either the ACT or SAT exams; no preference is given to one exam over another. Even if a student chooses to submit test scores from both types of tests, it is important to note:

1. Most schools require the essay portion of the exam to be completed (the essay section is optional on both the ACT and SAT exams); therefore, we recommend that all students register for the optional essay section of the ACT or SAT exams.

2. Some highly selective colleges require SAT subject tests to be considered for admission. Typically, schools request two SAT subject tests to be completed. The subject test requirements vary from school to school and may be dependent on the department/major a student is applying to. Check with the individual school to see if these are required and if so, which ones they prefer a student to submit.

**Practice College Entrance Exams**

At Eastside Catholic, high school students in grade levels 9 - 11 take practice college entrance exams (PSAT 8-9 or PSAT) provided by the school. Early exposure and repeated practice allow for better performance on the actual exams.

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) is a College Board exam given during junior year of high school that is of special importance because it determines student eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Program. If students receive an index number (populated by their scores on the PSAT/NMSQT) high enough to be in the top 50,000 scorers in the country, they will be notified by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) as being eligible to become a National Merit Scholar.
Merit Scholarship Semifinalist. Semifinalists are notified of their status and then encouraged to complete an application to become a National Merit Finalist and be awarded scholarships. Notifications are typically sent in early September.

**ACT and SAT Exams**

Students can choose whether they would like to take the ACT, SAT, both or neither (if the student plans to apply to only test-optional schools) but taking one exam is recommended to keep options open. It is also recommended to take either exam twice. Students may do better taking an exam a second time, but many colleges and universities “superscore,” which is when a school accepts multiple score sets and takes the best score from each individual subject from different score sets to populate a more generous test score. A superscore cannot be created from only one score set. More schools superscore the SAT exam than the ACT and some schools do not superscore at all. Colleges cannot superscore the old SAT exam and the redesigned SAT exam.

It is recommended that students take a practice or shortened version of both the ACT and SAT to determine which exam might be a better fit for them. If a student scores higher on one practice exam over the other, it may be beneficial to select that exam. While the two exams resemble each, there are still slight differences in the format and curriculum tested. The table below outlines the two exams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>SAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
<td>2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay)</td>
<td>3 hours (without essay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)</td>
<td>3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Writing and Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Essay (Optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essay (Optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>Four passages</td>
<td>Five passages and 12 additional questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math</strong></td>
<td>One section with calculator</td>
<td>Two sections, one without a calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math Content</strong></td>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Very little geometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Algebra 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>More Algebra 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trigonometry</td>
<td>Trigonometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td>Seven passages, 40 questions total</td>
<td>No distinct science section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing (Essay)</strong></td>
<td>Optional, 40 minutes to complete, analyze three viewpoints then argue for own perspective</td>
<td>Optional, 50 minutes to complete, must analyze author’s argument</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Registration and more information about the ACT exam can be accessed at [act.org](http://act.org).
Registration and more information about the SAT exam can be accessed at [collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org).

**SAT Subject Tests**

Highly selective colleges and universities will sometimes require SAT Subject Tests to be submitted to be considered for admission to their schools. SAT Subject Tests demonstrate knowledge in specific subject areas. Schools that require subject tests often want students to take two subject tests. The specific subject area required can depend on a student’s intended major. There are 20 different subject tests.
available to take through College Board. Students register to take the SAT Subject Tests through collegeboard.org.

While some colleges and universities require these exams for admission, others may “recommend” submitting these exams. If a student does well on the SAT Subject Tests, then it may be in their favor to submit them to schools that “recommend” the exams. Most schools do not require SAT Subject Tests, but it is always best practice to consult the individual school’s admission policies to confirm. It is the responsibility of the student to submit SAT Subject Test score reports to colleges and universities. The score reports can be requested from collegeboard.org.

Advanced Placement Exams (AP Exams)
At Eastside Catholic, high school students that take Advanced Placement (AP) classes are required to sit for the corresponding AP exams. These exams are taken at the end of the school year when students have completed the course. AP exams are taken to gain college course credits. Most colleges and universities accept AP scores of a 3 or higher, but more selective schools and highly selective schools require scores of 4 or 5 (5 being the highest score attainable on an AP exam). AP score reports can be submitted to colleges and universities to be considered for admission, but most schools allow students to self-report the scores on applications and request students to send official reports once they have been admitted.

Please note: It is the responsibility of the student to send AP score reports and transcripts to the college or university that a student decides to attend so they can receive college credit. All AP score reports can be requested through collegeboard.org.

Test Preparation Options
There are many ways to prepare for college entrance exams, from books, to tutors, to hiring college preparation companies that offer exam preparation programs. While EC works with a couple of private individuals and test preparation companies, it is important to note that we do not endorse any specific person or company to work with for test preparation.

Free Test Preparation Resources:
- Books on the different exams are available at the public library
- Online test preparation such as khanacademy.org or satpractice.org
- Online ACT practice services offered by Eastside Catholic through TutorMe.com

Affordable Test Preparation Options:
- Purchasing books and references for students to study and practice
- Practice ACT and SAT exams offered by the EC girls lacrosse team. All proceeds go to fundraising for the team
- ACT and SAT test preparation courses offered by Mazor Test Prep at EC or Bellevue College. Courses are offered at a reduced rate for Eastside Catholic students

Other Test Preparation Options:
- Corporate test preparation companies like Kaplan, The Princeton Review or Huntington Learning Center
- Private test preparation company like Prep Northwest
- Hiring a private, one on one tutor
An additional tip for preparing for college entrance exams is to encourage students to read more. There is a lot of reading comprehension on the SAT exam and the more a student reads, the better and faster they should become. It can also help to improve vocabulary. When students are reading, they should always aim to be able to summarize what they read and quiz themselves afterward on different aspects of the reading to improve recall.

**College Applications**

College applications are typically completed during the fall of senior year in high school. The number of applications completed varies per individual student. College Board recommends students complete five to 10 college applications and encompass a range of safety, probable and reach schools. Every student is different and for some students, it may not be necessary to complete as many applications and for others, it may be beneficial to apply to more. On average, students at Eastside Catholic tend to submit six college applications. However, there are always students that apply to only one school—typically these students are athletes that have been recruited by a specific school or perhaps applied with early decision (ED). The counselors meet with every senior and ensure that the students are submitting the appropriate number of applications.

It is important to keep in mind that there is a fee for submitting a college application. Some colleges may offer to waive the fee and others offer “fee waivers” to students who qualify, but most schools expect the fee to be paid in order to consider the applicant for admission. These fees can add up as students apply to more schools. It is beneficial to double check with the schools to see if they ever waive application fees or if they offer fee waivers and what the criteria for the fee waivers are.

Students complete college applications on their own but are welcome to meet with their counselors any time they have questions, need clarification or need additional assistance when completing the applications.

Below is a breakdown of items Eastside Catholic will submit to colleges and universities as well as the items students are responsible for submitting to schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Student Responsibility</th>
<th>EC Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Application</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Transcripts</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation</td>
<td>Student must request them</td>
<td>EC sends them to colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT or SAT Score Reports</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT Subject Test Scores</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Exam Test Scores</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWHS &amp; Seattle U. Transcripts</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Current Courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- School Profile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Counselor Letter of Rec.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X
Counselors will be in contact with seniors throughout the duration of the application process. Students are responsible for letting the counselors know which colleges and universities to submit transcripts and supporting documents to. It is recommended that students either tell counselors in person or through email. Formal transcript requests can be made through Naviance, but counselors are not sent notifications about these requests.

Students can confirm if documents were submitted by EC under the “Office Status” in Naviance. Students can also view the status of their applications through individual portals/accounts that colleges request students to set up. Schools notify students if they are missing documents that will potentially hold up the admission decision. They do this through portals, email or physical letters. If a student is notified by a school that they are missing an item to complete their file or application for admission, it is important for them to identify the item and submit it as soon as possible. If it is an item that Eastside Catholic is responsible for sending, we encourage students to contact their counselor so that the missing item can be submitted in a timely manner.

Higher education institutions receive record numbers of applications and documents which are sent electronically, and at times errors can occur. If an error does occur, as Eastside Catholic keeps track of when all documents are submitted to schools and submits all information within application deadline, we will be able to verify that the documents were submitted on time and in full on our end.

**Admissions Options (ED, EA, REA, RD and Rolling)**

College application deadlines have been occurring earlier over time, so much so that students are often admitted to schools based on their academic performance from freshman, sophomore and junior years only. Seniors typically apply to colleges and universities during the fall before first semester grades have been issued. Students that apply later or apply to schools with later application deadlines may have to submit their first semester grades of senior year for admission. Students have different options regarding the timeframe of applying to colleges. Many schools allow students to apply early, have different options for early applicants and have separate application deadlines for regular applicants that do not apply early. A description of each application plan is listed below.

**Early Application Options/Plans**

**ED (Early Decision)** – A binding agreement is made with the college/university that if admitted, the student will attend the school they applied to with early decision. Students who apply to schools as ED applicants have a clear, first-choice school.

**REA (Restrictive Early Action)** – A non-binding agreement that prevents the applicant from applying to other schools early (with ED or EA). Stanford allows students to apply REA, which prohibits students from applying to Ivy league schools or private colleges/universities early.

Under REA, students can apply to public colleges and universities early, but not private colleges and universities. However, students can apply regular decision (RD) to private colleges and universities.

**EA (Early Action)** – A non-binding agreement, an early application is submitted to a school within an earlier deadline. These applications are submitted earlier than the institution’s regular response date.
There are pros and cons of applying early to colleges and universities.

### Pros of Applying Early

- Higher acceptance rate of applicants (depends on the college)
- More scholarships awarded to early applicants
- Demonstrating high level of interest to a specific school or a few schools
- Earlier notification of admission decision, usually by mid-December
- Earlier notification of financial aid package
- Peace of mind earlier in senior year

### Cons of Applying Early

- More competitive applicant pool
- More work to be done during the beginning of senior year

### Regular Application Options/Plans

**RD (Regular Decision)** — A non-binding agreement, an application is submitted within the regular timeframe designated by an institution, which could be anywhere from November to July, most of which are due around January.

**Rolling** — A non-binding agreement, applications are typically accepted any time throughout the year and are reviewed upon being received.

### The Common Application

The Common Application (referred to as “the Common App”) is an online application that can be completed and submitted to many different schools. There are nearly 700 colleges and universities that utilize the Common App. By completing this one application, students can apply to more schools in very little time as opposed to having to complete individual applications for each school.

In the Common App, there is an essay that students complete and submit. The essay has a limit of 250 - 650 words and has four different prompts students can choose from. These prompts are often available for students to view early in the year, so it is possible to begin composing the essay before senior year.

It is important to note that while most schools require an essay to be submitted, there are some schools that have supplemental essay questions and schools that have their own applications with essay questions. If a school uses the Common App and has supplemental essay questions, this is typically noted in the Common App and students can answer them accordingly through the application. The University of Washington does not use the Common Application, they use the Coalition Application.

### Frequently Asked Questions about the Common Application

**Q: How do I know if a school uses the Common Application or not?**

**A:** There are three ways to determine whether a school utilizes the Common App or not.
1. The Common App has a list of schools that utilize the application, so students are able to explore schools by viewing the list: commonapp.org/files/component/step/files/Common_Application_Current_Members_0.pdf

2. Students can visit individual school websites and view their admissions page. On the admissions page, schools describe their application process and will often note whether they accept the Common App, Coalition App or have their own application.

3. Students can create a Common App account for free and then look up the schools in the application itself.

Q: Can a college/university see what other institutions I am applying to through the Common App?

A: No. Schools do not have access to students’ Common App accounts and therefore cannot view what other schools a student chooses to apply to.

We recommend that all students create a Common App because the probability that one or more of the schools they apply to will accept this application is high. The Common Application is a user-friendly application and the college counselors at Eastside Catholic are readily available to assist students with any questions they may encounter when completing this application. For more information on the Common App, please view their website at commonapp.org.

The Coalition Application
The coalition for access, affordability and success was created to improve the application process for students and provide an application platform that allows students to organize and apply to many different schools. The Coalition is composed of over 90 institutions that graduate at least 70 percent of their students within six years.

The Coalition has created a single application which students can create and access to apply to the institutions within the Coalition. For a complete list of schools that are part of the Coalition, please visit their website: coalitionforcollegeaccess.org.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Coalition Application

Q: Why is this application important?

A: Any student that is interested in applying to the University of Washington, University of Florida or University of Maryland-College Park will have to use this application.

Q: How is the Coalition Application different from the Common Application?

A: The “Locker” and “Collaboration Space” are the two key components that differ from the Common Application. The “Locker” is a space where students can compile essays, stories, art, videos, awards, etc. that they have completed in high school and keep them all in one place when applying for scholarships and applying to colleges. The “Collaboration Space” is where students can talk with “mentors” about the items they put in the “Locker.” Colleges and universities do not have access to the locker. However, students can choose to share items with others.
It is important to note that not all the institutions on the Coalition Application are on the Common Application, but some of them are on both or will have the Coalition Application in addition to their own application. It is always best to consult the individual institution to know which type of applications they offer and use.

Q: How does one know if a school uses the Coalition Application or not?

A: The Coalition App provides a list of schools that are members of the Coalition and utilize the application at coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/members.html.

Application Essay
Most colleges and universities require an essay to be submitted as part of the application to their school. As mentioned in the previous section, the Common App contains four essay prompts that students can choose from to submit to schools that accept the Common Application. Even schools that do not use the Common App can require an essay to be submitted in consideration for admission. Students can often compose one essay and modify it as needed to apply to various schools. Some schools have supplemental essays which are typically shorter in length. Supplemental essays can vary in topic and should be regarded as an important piece in college admission.

Colleges use application essays to gauge writing ability and to learn more about a student. Students are encouraged to write about topics that are important to them and showcase their unique character. Sometimes there are supplemental questions that ask the student if there is any additional information that a school should know about them. This question is an opportunity for students to address any hardships they may have encountered throughout high school. If a student had a particularly difficult semester or year and their grades went down, this supplemental essay is a place for them to address this occurrence. Other occurrences such as a death in the family, illnesses, depression and others are also items that can be addressed in this section. Anything that may have hindered or been a potential obstacle for a student that affected academic performance or impacted a student during high school is appropriate to address in a supplemental question that asks for additional information.

It is important for students to take the application essay seriously as a factor in deciding college admission. It is always a good idea to have an adult proofread an essay, such as a parent, teacher, counselor or trusted advisor. However, adults need to remember that essays should accurately reflect a student and their writing ability, therefore it is best to avoid over editing an essay. Lastly, allow students to be creative. People are reading college essays and people enjoy reading unique pieces of work.

Letters of Recommendation
Colleges and universities can require letters of recommendation to be submitted as part of the college application. Most schools will require at least one letter of recommendation to be submitted, however some schools do not require or wish to receive letters of recommendation and there are schools that request more than one letter to be submitted.

FAQ: How do we know if a school requires a letter of recommendation as part of the application?

A: Visit the admissions page of the individual college or university to see if they require a letter of recommendation to be submitted and check how many letters of recommendation they require. The Common App and Naviance both indicate how many letters of recommendation the various schools
require. Also, some schools will specify who the letters of recommendation should be from. Often schools will request a letter from a counselor and/or a teacher in a core subject.

We recommend that students identify and request at least one letter of recommendation to be written by a teacher, preferably in a core subject. When identifying an individual to write a letter of recommendation, students should consider the following aspects:

- How well does the teacher know the student?
- How long has the teacher known the student?
- Would the teacher be able to give an accurate or favorable account of the student’s abilities?
- Does the teacher teach a core subject?
- Does the teacher teach a subject that the student is potentially going to major in?
- How long has it been since the teacher taught the student?

It is in the best interest of a student to seek an individual that knows them well and has taught them in a subject area the student may pursue in the future. For example, if a student wants to pursue the field of engineering in college, it would be beneficial to get a letter of recommendation from a math or science teacher. If a student wants to study performing arts in college, then it would be best to request a letter of recommendation from a teacher who teaches drama or music.

When requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher or other individual, it is most important to request letters in a timely manner. We encourage students to verbally ask a teacher in person if they would be willing to write a letter of recommendation on their behalf. We also encourage students to give the individual ample time prior to application deadlines to compose letters of recommendation. Some teachers have a formal request process and it is important to approach them in a timely manner to learn if such a process is in place and leave enough time to complete the process. Teachers reserve the right to deny a student a letter of recommendation if they do not request a letter in a timely manner. Every teacher is different and therefore may have different policies and processes for writing letters of recommendation.

One letter of recommendation will be submitted by a school counselor on the student’s behalf, but this letter is not guaranteed if a student does not put forth any effort to meet with their college counselor. College counselors at Eastside Catholic also reserve the right to deny a student a letter of recommendation if the student has not met with them often enough, did not request a letter in a timely manner or failed to complete tasks in a timely manner.

Students can request letters of recommendation to be submitted from people in their community or outside of their school if it is beneficial. However, it should be noted that schools often put limits on the number of letters of recommendation to be submitted and that they discourage letters of recommendation that are composed by family, friends or peers. Please consult the college counselors about how to submit outside letters of recommendation to various schools.

Financial Aid Information

Financial aid is monetary assistance students receive to help pay for college. While most people think of loans as being the main form of financial aid, financial aid consists of grants, scholarships and loans. There are two main types of financial aid: need-based aid and merit-based aid.
**Need-based aid:** Financial aid is awarded to students that demonstrate financial need. This need is determined through information provided on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

**Merit-based aid:** Scholarships awarded by colleges and universities and/or outside organizations that give money based on academic achievement, high scores on college entrance exams (ACT and SAT) or exceptional performance in activities.

**FAFSA**
Applying for financial aid is often the most misunderstood part of the college application process and is also the most important.

- Students and their families can file for financial aid on October 1
- Applicants can now use prior-prior year (PPY) tax information when reporting person and family income.

Completing the FAFSA is essential for securing most types of financial aid for college. In addition to federal grants and loans, many colleges, states and scholarship programs use the form to assess eligibility for their financial aid programs.

We encourage all families to complete the FAFSA even if they do not think they will qualify for aid because students and families can always decline all aid awarded, but it is difficult to get aid if needed when the FAFSA is not completed or after the application has closed. Also, most colleges and universities award need-based grants and scholarships based on information from the FAFSA. The FAFSA can be completed at fafsa.ed.gov.

While the federal deadline for completing the FAFSA is June 30, colleges and universities may have earlier deadlines. It is best to consult the websites of the individual schools a student is applying to and verify financial aid forms and deadlines required by the school.

**CSS Profile**
In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges and universities also require applicants to complete a College Scholarship Services Profile (CSS profile). The CSS profile is an online form through College Board that examines a family’s income, but it goes into more detail than the FAFSA. This form is also used to determine financial aid eligibility. Private colleges and universities that cannot rely on state funding to assist with financial aid often require the CSS profile to be completed in order to understand more about the amount of aid a student needs. The CSS profile can be completed at student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile

Eastside Catholic offers financial aid informational sessions each year.

**Scholarships**
Scholarships are awarded to students through a few different means. Students automatically qualify for some scholarships by completing a college application, FAFSA, CSS profile, receiving a high score on the PSAT/NMSQT or receiving high scores on college entrance exams (ACT and SAT). These scholarships are the easiest for students to apply for because they don’t require an additional application, essay or
supplemental work to be completed in order to qualify for them. Students are notified of these scholarships by the institution or organization that collects the information mentioned above.

Other scholarships offered by institutions may require a separate application. While most colleges and universities have tried to make it easy for students to qualify for scholarships by including them in the main application, some schools still have separate applications for scholarships at their schools. It is important to consult all websites of the individual schools a student applies to know if a school has a separate application required for scholarships.

Aside from scholarships offered by individual institutions and organizations like ACT and College Board, there are many scholarships available to students from outside organizations. All students at Eastside Catholic have access to a list of scholarships in Naviance. Student Services notifies students of scholarship opportunities once they are made aware of them. There are many databases and search engines online that can also help students search for scholarship opportunities they may be eligible for. Below are a few good search engines for scholarships.

studentscholarships.org
unigo.com/scholarships
scholarships.com
thewashboard.org/login.aspx
dosomething.org/us/about/easy-scholarships
bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search

NCAA Information

The NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) is a non-profit organization that regulates and organizes the athletic programs of colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Additionally, it supports student-athletes that compete in college sports.

All students who desire to play a sport at the Division I or Division II level in college must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at eligibilitycenter.org.

The NCAA Eligibility Center reviews the academics and amateurism of all prospective student athletes. There is a fee to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center; $75 for students from the United States and $130 for international students. Students that received a waiver fee for either the ACT or SAT exam will be able to receive a waiver fee for registration. To qualify for a waiver fee, students must meet the same criteria as listed for ACT or SAT fee waivers.

It is recommended that students register with the NCAA Eligibility Center by the end of their junior year in high school.

There are different eligibility requirements for Division I, Division II and Division III athletics. Division I athletics have the strictest requirements of the three divisions and Division III does not have any requirements of athletes. See descriptions below of the different divisions per the NCAA website.
Division I
Division I schools generally have more students, larger athletic budgets and more athletic department support than schools in Division II or III.

Division II
Schools in Division II emphasize a life balance in which academically and athletically gifted students can compete at a high level while maintaining a traditional collegiate experience.

Division III
Academics are the primary focus for Division III student-athletes. They experience shorter sports seasons which reduces their time away from academic studies and other campus activities.

No athletic aid is granted to students who play for a Division III school, but merit and need-based aid can be offered by the institutions.

NCAA academic eligibility relies on GPA in core courses, such as English, math (Algebra I or higher), natural/physical science, social science, foreign language and/or comparative religion or philosophy.

It is important to note that not all high school courses are NCAA core courses, including courses in non-core areas and fine arts or vocations such as driver education, typing, art, music, physical education or welding.

Division I Requirements for Student-Athletes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Qualifier</th>
<th>Academic Redshirt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete 16 core courses</td>
<td>Complete 16 core courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.20</td>
<td>Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the GPA/Test Score match on the Sliding Scale</td>
<td>Meet the GPA/Test Score match on the Sliding Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate from high school</td>
<td>Graduate from high school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Division II Requirements for Student-Athletes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Qualifier</th>
<th>Partial Qualifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete 16 core courses. Ten of 16 must be completed before the start of senior year. Seven of 10 must be math, English and science.</td>
<td>Complete 16 core courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.30</td>
<td>Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the GPA/Test Score match on the Sliding Scale</td>
<td>Meet the GPA/Test Score match on the Sliding Scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A student that is considered a “full qualifier” for Division II sports can practice their sport in college, receive athletic aid and compete their first year of college. A student that is considered a “Partial Qualifier” for Division II sports can practice their sport in college and receive athletic aid but cannot compete.

**Division III Requirements for Student-Athletes**
Consult the individual college or university for admission and eligibility requirements. See the official NCAA Division III website for additional information at [ncaa.org/d3](http://ncaa.org/d3).

**Recruitment**
Some student-athletes are recruited by colleges and universities to play a sport for their school. If a student is recruited by a school for athletics, the college application process differs from students applying to schools that aren’t planning on participating in sports or are only planning to play a sport at the Division III level.

Student-athletes in particular sports can be recruited as early as sophomore year. It is not recommended for students to commit to playing for a specific college or university this early in high school, but for students to keep an open dialogue with schools that may be looking at them. The table below gives an idea of the frequency and timeline in which recruiters may contact student-athletes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Phone Call</th>
<th>Email/Text</th>
<th>Written Recruiting Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td><strong>One call</strong>: April 15 – May 31 of junior year</td>
<td>September 1 of junior year</td>
<td>September 1 of junior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>One call per week</strong>: September 1 of senior year and unlimited calls during contact period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys basketball</td>
<td>Unlimited calls starting June 15 of sophomore year</td>
<td>Unlimited starting June 15 of sophomore year</td>
<td>June 15 of sophomore year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls basketball</td>
<td>Unlimited starting September 1 of junior year</td>
<td>Unlimited starting September 1 of junior year</td>
<td>September 1 of junior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other sports</td>
<td>September 1 of junior year</td>
<td>September 1 of junior year</td>
<td>September 1 of junior year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources

ACT
Information about the ACT college entrance exam can be found at act.org.

SAT and SAT Subject Tests
Information about the SAT college entrance exam and SAT Subject Tests can be found at collegeboard.org.

To view a list of colleges and universities that do not require college entrance exams (ACT or SAT), visit fairtest.org.

AP Exams and Testing
All AP exams are taken onsite at Eastside Catholic. EC registers all students who take an AP class to sit for the AP exam at the end of the year. Information about AP exams can be viewed on the College Board website at collegeboard.org.

The Coalition Application
- The Coalition App: coalitionforcollegeaccess.org
- List of schools that are members of the Coalition App: coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/members.html

The Common Application
- The Common App: commonapp.org
- List of schools that use the Common App: commonapp.org/files/component/step/files/Common_Application_Current_Members_0.pdf

Financial Aid
- CSS Profile: student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile
- FAFSA: fafsa.ed.gov

Naviance
Naviance can be accessed through EC’s direct link at: connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=echs

Naviance can also be accessed from the main website (naviance.com) by selecting “Sign In” and then “Students and Families Sign In.”

NCAA
- NCAA Eligibility Center: eligibilitycenter.org
- NCAA Division III Information: ncaa.org/d3
Scholarships

- studentscholarships.org
- unigo.com/scholarships
- scholarships.com
- thewashboard.org/login.aspx
- dosomething.org/us/about/easy-scholarships
- bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search

Test Preparation

Free test preparation options:

- khanacademy.org
- satpractice.org
- chegg.com