

*The Sharon Academy
College Guidance Handbook*

2009-2010

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Forms for your use are found at the end of this handbook.

A note to our students...

Please use this as a guide to help you through the college search and application process. We suggest you scan the table of contents to get an idea of what is in this document and look for arrows along the margin throughout that indicate key points. Wherever possible, we refer you to further sources to assist you. We also have tried to be as accurate as possible, but be sure to check with the relevant institutions to verify the information. Check the college newsletter regularly for updates and changes. Please let us know if you have any corrections or suggestions for this handbook.

Timelines for Junior and Senior Year

Junior year:

September

- College fair. Visit the college representatives and practice the interview.
- Visit with representatives who come to the school.

October

- PSAT/NMSQT test administered at TSA.

December

- Parent college night at TSA. Check school calendar for details.

January

- Start college search. Create a list of colleges in which you might be interested.
- Organize college information and brochures.
- Plan visits to colleges. Take advantage of February and April breaks, or in-service days. Visit a variety of schools, whether you are interested in them or not. Schedule interviews with admissions personnel.

February

- During February break, visit a few colleges, if possible. These do not need to be colleges in which you are interested. (see College Visit section below)

March

- Identify standardized test requirements for the schools in which you are interested.
- Register for the May or June SAT, ACT and/or SAT Subject Tests, as needed

April

- Visit colleges. Review college expectations in the admissions process, so you know what you will need to do.

May/June

- Take the ACT, SAT or SAT Subject Tests (see Standardized Test section). Plan when you will take tests next year.

Summer

- Internship, summer job, or travel. If you have done all the steps above, take a step back and don't stress over the college application process. You will have plenty to do in the fall.

Timeline for senior year

September

- **Make a calendar**, with major dates for this year that you and your family refer to regularly. There will be a lot going on, including application deadlines for colleges, financial aid, and standardized tests, not including your regular school work and the school play in November! Every year, many otherwise qualified candidates are not accepted to colleges because they missed deadlines.
- Register for the ACT and/or SATs. If you are applying early action or early decision, you may need to take them by the October date.
- Visit with representatives who come to the school. Don't just come to the ones that interest you. PRACTICE talking with admissions representatives.
- Senior Parent Night at TSA.

Very helpful
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- Begin to narrow college search to a list of five to eight institutions.
- Polish resume. You will give it to those from whom you are requesting recommendations as well as to the guidance office.

October

- Most popular testing date for seniors for the ACT, the SAT or the SAT Subject Tests.
- Decide if you are applying EARLY DECISION or EARLY ACTION. If so, request transcripts and letters of recommendation early this month.
- Parents start financial aid forms: VSAC, FASFA and CSS.
- Annual college fair at either UVM or St. Michael's College. Visit the college representatives and practice interview questions.
- Finalize list of colleges. Visit during NECAP days?
- November
- Ask teachers for letters of recommendations. You will probably need letters from two teachers.
- Work on applications and essays.

December

- Submit requests for transcripts to Kimberly Barnhart. Remember that we are out of school for half of December. **Request transcripts with December 15 or January 1 deadlines no later than December 1.** (Remember that we are not in school from mid-December until after the January 1 deadline.) **January 1 requests that are received much after December 1 are extremely difficult to fulfill in a timely manner.** These requests must be turned in on our transcript request form.

January

- Send VSAC, FASFA, and CSS applications as soon as possible. Initially, you can send estimated financial information, if necessary.

Critical
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Responsibilities in the Application Process

TSA's Responsibilities:

- In PATH class, work with students on many of the elements found in this document.
- Guidance/school letters of recommendation
- Calculating GPAs
- Producing and sending Student Transcripts to schools that the student requests
- Calls to college campuses, if needed
- TSA School Profile, which is sent to schools
- Setting up college visits to TSA
- Organizing college fair trips
- Assisting with student resume and the writing of college essays

The Students' Responsibilities:

- Come to PATH class every week
- Personal biography/resume, including parents' input (and sending it to colleges, if desired)
- Keep grades up
- Sign up for standardized tests, take the tests, and have the scores sent to schools
- Request transcripts and letters of recommendations in a timely manner
- Create and update list of possible schools

- Inform us of any special forms or requirements needed from TSA
- Keep track of user IDs on all online accounts for the college search and application process

The Families' Responsibilities:

- Applications: best if completed in December for regular admissions
- Requesting fee waivers from guidance, if applicable, for applications and testing
- College visits
- Standardized testing sign-ups
- Financial aid forms: FAFSA, VSAC, and CSS/PROFILE (if needed), by the deadlines
- Ensuring that TSA has an accurate copy of other high schools' transcripts to send

The College Search

There are hundreds of schools to choose from; not necessarily one “perfect school” for each student. Some schools sound wonderful on paper and are not at all what students expect when they visit. Other schools feel like “a good fit” only after students visit. Develop a list of possibilities and then go visit some of them. Some students decide not to visit everywhere they are applying, especially if they are in other regions of the country, but be sure to visit any college you are seriously considering once you have been accepted. Students should keep in mind the following:

- Most students at TSA chose it because it has a small, strong community. Here, students know and have access to their teachers, the administration, and each other. We have found that the vast majority of our students are happier at smaller schools after high school, where they have similar access to their professors and the community.
- Some students have chosen to apply to schools outside of the country, as they can often be considerably cheaper than U.S. colleges. It can give you a point of comparison.
- Do not apply to colleges based on price alone, as many of the more expensive institutions can offer substantially bigger financial aid packages.

Online Resources

Most of the following have a registration process that you must use to make full use of the site. Keep a record of your log-on information.

- www.ctcl.com (Colleges that Change Lives) This website has information about 40 schools that generally make a good match for students from TSA. We highly recommend you review these schools. Check out the website for their regional events schedule. There are college fairs with just these colleges, including one in Boston and other areas. They have college search tips here: <http://www.ctcl.org/news/college-search>
- www.collegeboard.com The makers of the SAT have a remarkably excellent “College Matchmaker” on their website. NOTE: Using your log-in from your PSAT score report, students have FREE access to “My College QuickStart”. It uses your PSAT information to help plan your future with these tools: A starter list of colleges based on your location and choice of major. An enhanced report complete with test questions, your answers, and the correct answers with explanations. A customized SAT® study plan based on individual PSAT/NMSQT performance. A personalized lists of majors and careers.
- <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> is the US National Center for Education Statistics, and has a search tool that allows you to narrow your college search by a number of criteria.

- www.collegeview.com This website has extensive tools for searching for colleges, including: financial aid, help with the application process, and in-depth information about college majors, a resource for college planning (including timelines), interactive search tools, full length practice tests for standardized tests, scholarship information, and other college-planning information.
- www.bridges.com/vsac These are tools available through VSAC, including college searches and career exploration.
- www.CollegeBasics.com is a useful and comprehensive college information resource for students and their parents to aid college planning
- www.petersons.com A step-by-step guide through the college application process for students and parents.
- www.nebhe.org The New England Board of Higher Education has lots of information about schools in the six New England states. It also provides information about the RSP **Tuition Break** program. 78 institutions participate in this program. Vermont residents can get in-state tuition at other New England schools for a number of majors. Look at the Apple Book catalog on this website for further information.
- www.princetonreview.com This site offers help with the SAT/ACT, a financial resource center, college search tools, and other assistance with the college process. Some of these services are fee-based.

Print Resources

- Making a Difference College and Graduate Guide, by Miriam Weinstein
- *Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even If You're Not a Straight-A Student*, by Loren Pope
- *The Fiske Guide to Getting into the Right College*, by Edward B. Fiske
- Looking Beyond the Ivy League, Loren Pope
- Harvard Schmarvard, Jay Mathews
- *Cool Colleges: For the Hyper-Intelligent, Self-Directed, Late Blooming, and Just Plain Different*, by Donald Asher
- TSA has a college information bookshelf in the library. Many of the above books, plus others, are available for your use. Additionally, there are numerous college guides and individual college viewbooks/catalogs in «GreetingLine»'s office.

College Visits

Previous seniors highly recommend that you visit and interview at colleges that you are not necessarily interested in prior to visiting your top choices. Before you go, call to make sure classes will be in session when you plan to visit. Also, you should plan on staying overnight, if possible. Tours are mostly propaganda, but if you stay overnight and visit classes, you will have much more of an opportunity to get a feel for the school. This will help you do several things:

- Clarify your criteria for your college. Do you want a core curriculum? Do you want access to a large city? Do you want to be close to home?
- Determine what you do NOT want in a college. For example, you might decide you are not comfortable in a very large school after visiting one.
- Give you practice with interviewing with less pressure than if it “counted”. Many have found that this makes a big difference at later interviews. This last item was highly

emphasized by recent seniors. Some have stated that they made a mistake in interviewing only at schools they really cared about. Thus, they were much more nervous than they would have been if they had practiced first.

Start visiting in your junior year to get an idea of what you are looking for in a school. Don't just visit the schools where you think you want to go. Don't fall for the "there's only one school for me" syndrome. If you cannot visit a college in person before you apply, try a virtual tour at www.ecampustours.com or www.campustours.com

Preparation for the College Visit:

- Review this booklet before you go. Use the College Interview section below to help you organize what you may want to ask while you are there.
- Take copies of TSA's profile with you to give to the representative of the college. (An image of the last published profile is available at the end of this document, or on our website.) Familiarize yourself with the profile beforehand, so you can talk about what makes TSA unique.
- Take your College Guidance Counselor's business cards with you to give to representatives.

Applying to College

Remember our code: **CEEB # 460411**. This is TSA's school code. Anywhere you are asked for TSA's 6-digit number, this is it. Apply to at least three schools that you believe are realistic, considering their requirements and your qualifications.

Parents: Unless you have gone through the application process in the past few years, this process is different from what you remember! There is a big bubble of students projected through 2009. What might have been a realistic school five years ago may be a reach school today. Currently, there are many highly qualified students applying to college, particularly young women, and many colleges want to be sure to keep their female/male ratio under 60/40.

Before you start, get organized

It would be very helpful for you to keep all of your information in one place. Make a file. We suggest you keep the following in it:

- Your name. This may seem like a silly item, but many students have wound up applying for college under slightly different names, and the colleges have thought they were a different student. This is especially true if you are commonly called a nickname or by your middle name. Make sure you put the same name on everything and that your teachers who are writing letters of recommendation know what that name is.
- Your Social Security number. If you are using your SSN as your identifier in applications, make sure you copy it correctly everywhere. Similar problems occur here as with your name when you reverse numbers or mistype them. If you do not use your SSN and a college assigns you a number, make a note of it and don't lose it. You **MUST** provide your social security number to schools if you are requesting financial aid or needs-based scholarships.
- A chart or calendar with all of the colleges where you are applying, their mailing addresses, their application deadlines, their financial aid deadlines, information on supplemental forms, and other requirements that are important for you. Make sure you note whether the deadlines are "DUE BY" or "POSTMARKED BY"! There is a sample form for your use at the end of this booklet. You might also put major dates on

a calendar that you and/or your family refer to regularly. (Examples: your assignment notebook or your family's calendar of events.)

- Online account logins: Write them down! Some families find it helpful if both the student and parents have a copy of this information. If you are using the common application online, you may save it and return to it later, but you will need to have your login and password.
- Determine what college-specific forms or other important information you will need. Many colleges have supplemental forms that you need to complete, and some have several.
- Copies of TSA forms, such as the Transcript Request and the Letters of Recommendation forms.
- Business cards or notes about the people from your colleges that you have met or spoken with. It can be impressive if you are able to refer to previous contacts you have made.
- Thank you cards. You can buy these or make them yourself. Either way, use them whenever you have a significant contact with a college. These thank you notes are important. Be prompt!

On what do colleges base their decisions?

Admissions officers look at a variety of factors, and every college weighs these items somewhat differently. Some do not rely heavily on test scores. Smaller schools will spend more time looking at your application and give more weight to factors other than grades or test scores. Your application essay is the only variable you have control over during the application process, and is becoming increasingly important with the common application. The following is roughly the ranking of the factors that colleges consider:

1. Grade point average/difficulty of curriculum (Have you taken four years of classes in all content areas.)
2. Standardized test scores
3. Class rank (Not applicable at TSA)
4. Application essays
5. Extracurricular activities
6. Letters of recommendation
7. Interviews
8. Intangibles, such as family legacy (my grandfather/cousin/sister went there), etc.

Communicating with Colleges

If you are interested in a college, let them know.

- Even before you apply, call them up and ask them thoughtful questions about the school or the application process. Write down the name of the person to whom you spoke and send a thank you card or note. Note that some colleges have different mailing address for their application materials than for other communication.
- Visit the college... and send a thank you.
- Set up an interview (see below). Don't forget the thank you!

Every significant check-in counts. Many schools keep track of how often and when you contact them. Thank everyone who gave you significant help or information for their time and assistance. This is one of those intangibles mentioned above. Make yourself known to the decision-maker.

The Application

The **Common Application** is accepted at 300 colleges and universities. You fill out one application and then you can send it to as many of these colleges as you wish, with just a few clicks. The Common Application is available online at www.commonapp.org. You can fill it out directly online, or you can use a hard copy and mail photocopies. **We highly recommend that you complete the Common Application online, if available.** Whether using the Common Application or not, keep the following things in mind.

Important
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- Check to be sure you have the minimum computer system requirements. Otherwise, you may find you have filled in all the information, but are unable to save it or send it to colleges. If this happens, you will have to re-do everything.
- Read application instructions thoroughly for each of your colleges well before the application deadline. Those that accept the Common Application often have supplements. Others have “pre-applications” with due dates prior to the application due date. If you are unclear about any of the requirements, contact the college or ask the guidance office to help you.
- Plan on applying to five to ten colleges.
- If you qualify for an application fee waiver, see Kimberly Barnhart.

Letters of Recommendation:

Requesting letters from Teachers

Most colleges request letters of recommendation from two teachers, in addition to a Guidance Counselor letter. Please use the request form at the end of this booklet or available in the Guidance Office. When requesting letters of recommendation, keep the following suggestions in mind.

- Don't ask a teacher just because you got an A in his or her class. It is important that the teacher knows you personally.
- Ask early. Some teachers will get many requests, and they also have their many other duties. They can put more thought into your letter, and thus do a better job, if they have more time.
- Follow the suggestions on our forms and include all recommended items. (Application deadlines, stamped/addressed envelopes, resume)
- To make writing the letter easier, provide each teacher all of the items for every school listed, in one large manila envelope. Label the outside clearly with your name and due dates clearly marked.
- Waive your confidentiality rights.
- Send a thank you note to each person who gives you a recommendation.
- Give teachers your resume. Resumes should brag about your accomplishments. Have a parent review your resume before you finalize it.

Requesting letters and/or transcripts from guidance:

Please use the forms at the end of this packet, which are also available in the library. If you need assistance, we will help you fill out the “TO THE APPLICANT” section of the School Report and the Midyear Report. If you are applying online via the Common Application, you do not need to provide an envelope. We do, however, request that you **provide a large manilla envelope** for each school that does not accept the Common Application, addressed to that school. Be sure to verify the spelling of the school's name as well as its processing address for admissions. (For example, the seven schools of the

University of Maine system want all applications sent to their Application Processing center in Bangor, Maine.)

For every college you request us to send a recommendation and a transcript, we send a large package of material, including information about TSA. We provide the exact postage required for each package we send out for you. As such, we ask that you **please let us know as soon as possible** if you change your mind and about applying to a college so that we do not waste the photocopying or postage. Do not panic if the school sends you a letter saying that some of your application materials are missing. These letters often are generated automatically when your application arrives and they have not yet received the materials from us. Check with us to see if and when your package was sent.

The College Interview

These may take place at the college, at a regional event, by telephone, or with alumni who live near you. Take advantage of an interview, if available, even if it is merely “optional”. Admissions officers often tell us they are impressed with the eloquence, poise and confidence exhibited by TSA students.

- Take our TSA School Profile form with you, and familiarize yourself with it beforehand. Be prepared to talk about both yourself and TSA.
- Use the interview questions below to prepare for the interview and practice out loud.
- Take a TSA guidance counselor business card with you.
- Take a list of questions to ask.
- Do not chew gum, firmly shake their hand, and look them in the eye.
- If you get stumped by a question, say: “That’s a good question. I’d like to think about that and get back to it later”.
- Bring back a business card from interviews so we can follow up with a phone call if and when we deem the time is right.
- Send a thank you note!

Sample Interview Questions

These are typical college interview questions. You won’t be asked all of them, but be prepared to answer these types of questions.

- Tell me a little about yourself. What are 10 adjectives that describe you?
- What do you want us to most remember about you?
- Describe a typical day in your life.
- Who was your favorite high school teacher and why?
- If you could change one thing about your high school to make it better, what would you change?
- Is there anything you can tell us about yourself that might show you are more qualified than other applicants?
- What is the most recent book you have read?
- What attracts you to our institution?
- What characteristics of a college are most important to you?
- What have you done in your school or community that you are most proud of?
- How have you been recognized for your accomplishments?
- During your free time, what are you most likely to do?
- When are you at your best? Your worst?
- If you could do high school over, what would you do differently? The same?
- How do you see yourself 10 years from now?

- What ways do you have of earning money for college?
- What was your best job, vacation, or class, ever?
- Are you interested in a specific area of study and how have you developed that interest? How do you plan to develop that interest in college?
- What have you done in your life that has required a great deal of patience and persistence and how did you handle that situation?
- Do you have any definite plans/goals for your future and how do we fit in with those plans?
- What aspects of college life do you think will have the most influence on a student?
- Whom do you respect in your community and why?
- What has been meaningful to you in your community service experiences?

Questions YOU may want to ask during an interview

The interview process goes both ways. You need to gather the information you require to decide if this is a college that meets your needs.

- What is the average size for classes in the **freshman** year?
- What makes this college different from other colleges? (Three reasons)
- What types of study abroad opportunities are available?
- What percentage of freshmen return for their sophomore year?
- How accessible is the faculty for individual help?
- Do graduate assistants teach any of the freshman and/or introductory courses?
- What courses do typical freshmen take? Are there any courses which all freshmen are obligated to take?
- Is it difficult to change majors or areas of study after the freshman year?
- What factors do you consider in the admissions process and, of those, which do you give the most weight?
- How important are SAT/ACT scores in the admission process?
- What are my chances for admission?
- What percentage of the student population resides on campus and about how many students is that?
- Approximately how many students go home on the weekends?
- Does the college offer scholarships and, if so, are they need-based, merit-based or both?
- What financial aid forms are required?
- Does the college have a strong and active alumni association?
- What internship opportunities are available for students?
- Does the college offer a career planning and placement program and, if so, how does the program work?
- What percentage of your students has been placed in a full-time job or graduate school within six weeks of graduation?
- What percentage of your students in the major in which I am interested in is placed in a full-time position upon graduation?
- What graduate schools have your students attended?
- Are counseling services available on campus?
- What are the most active clubs or student organizations on campus?
- What religious services are available on campus and in the community?
- Is there a Greek system (fraternities or sororities) on campus and in the community?
- If students choose to live off campus, what are their living options?

Standardized Tests

Almost every college requires either the American College Testing Program (ACT) or the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). Some only accept the scores electronically: for these, it does not matter if your scores are on your transcripts. Some require SAT Subject Tests in addition to either the SAT or ACT. Check with the individual college for its requirements. For more information on these and other standardized tests, see the VSAC handouts. At some schools, the ACT may substitute for the SAT Subject Tests. **Please make sure you are taking the tests early enough for the colleges to receive the scores by when they are needed. Please verify if the colleges will take the scores on your transcript or if you need to request them directly from the College Board or ACT.**

Examples of what schools require:

- Harvard requires the ACT or the SAT plus three SAT Subject Tests.
- NYU requires two SAT Subject tests whether you take the ACT or the SAT
- If you take the ACT plus the writing option, Brown requires no SAT Subject Tests. If you take the SAT, they require two SAT Subject Tests
- UVM requires either the SAT or the ACT, but no SAT Subject Tests
- College of the Atlantic does not require any standardized tests

Do not avoid taking these tests for financial reasons. Please contact us if this is the case.

Waivers

You may qualify, financially, for a waiver to take the following tests. You will need to have filled out a form and filed it with Janice. Then, you will need to obtain a waiver card from «GreetingLine». This form will allow you to register for free, and send your scores to up to eight schools. The waiver is not good for late registration fees, however, so plan accordingly.

PSAT/NMSQT

- The PSAT (a “pre” SAT) is also the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT). You qualify for the NMSQT through your sophomore year scores.
- TSA offers this test to every high school student.
- Practice tests are available online and in bookstores

SAT Reasoning Test (the SAT):

- Formerly known, and sometimes still referred to, as the SAT I
- A free practice test is available online, including a 25-minute writing sample
- Scores do not predict anything except possible college admittance and first semester grades
- If you can show financial need, you may apply for a fee waiver. Ask us for the form.
- You may send scores to 4 schools for free. You may change which schools you are sending these scores to up to one week after taking the test.
- The SAT website is www.collegeboard.com

SAT Subject Tests:

- Formerly known, and sometimes still referred to, as the SAT II
- You can NOT take the SAT Subject Tests on the same day you take the SAT Reasoning Test
- Single subject matter tests. DO NOT take any SAT II without doing extra studying to prepare. For example, do not assume that, simply because you have taken a U.S. History course, you will do well on the History SAT Subject Test. (This is especially

true at TSA, where history courses are not survey courses.) It is also recommended that you take them very soon after taking the class (like chemistry) instead of waiting 6 months later.

- Pre-plan when might be best to take them. Example: If you are taking Chemistry this semester, consider taking the Chemistry SAT Subject Test in June... but not without additional studying and preparation.

ACT:

- Commonly used in western schools and is becoming more accepted now in the East.
- There is an optional writing section that is required by a number of schools.
- Send the scores to four schools for free, but you cannot change your mind later.
- The website is www.act.org

From The Princeton Review The SAT vs. The ACT

What it measures:	“Aptitude” – raw math and verbal ability, like an IQ test	Achievement – what students actually have learned in school.
Scoring	Math: 200 – 800 Verbal: 200 – 800	Overall scores: 1 – 36. Partial scores: 1 – 18
Who should take it?	<u>Verbal</u> : Students who are strong on vocab, weak on usage/grammar and reading. <u>Math</u> : Students who are strong on trick-oriented questions, arithmetic.	<u>Verbal</u> : Students who are strong on grammar and reading, weak on vocab. <u>Math</u> : Students with strong math skills. Trig and coordinate geometry included.

Early Action and Early Decision

Early Action

This is a non-binding application. If you know you are highly interested in a school that offers Early Action, we suggest you take advantage of it. There are only a handful of major colleges that still have an Early Action program.

Advantages:

- You may apply to any number of colleges via Early Action, as you are not bound to attend the school if they accept you.
- You may find out early that you have been accepted, thus reducing your stress when waiting to hear from other colleges.
- You may find out early what the school is willing to offer vis-à-vis a financial aid package, allowing a point of comparison when you begin to receive other package offers.

Disadvantages:

- If accepted, it might be easier for you to procrastinate on your other applications. This would severely limit your options.

Early Decision

When you apply to a school via Early Decision application, you are pledging to attend the school, if accepted. If a school accepts you on an Early Decision application, you must withdraw your application(s) to other schools. Thus, if you have a dream school and you are happy with your grades and test scores, you might consider applying this way. However, if you have any doubts about your college or serious concerns about financial aid, do not use early decision. Only use Early Decision if you are absolutely convinced there is only one school for you and you believe they will provide you with any needed financial aid. Make sure you know what the Early Decision application deadlines are. (Generally early to mid-November.)

Advantages:

- If accepted, you know where you are going for college and are done with the college application process early.
- You may have a slightly better chance of being accepted to a more competitive college if you apply Early Decision than if you apply in the regular pool.

Disadvantages:

- You are committed to go to the college, if accepted. If you were unsure when you applied, you may have made a mistake.
- If the college does not accept you, you won't know until about mid-December. Then, you will be in a rush to get applications, letters of recommendation, and transcripts out to the other colleges in which you are interested.
- Many students grow and change considerably throughout their senior year, and early November is much too soon for most to have made a definitive decision. We find many of our students change their mind about where they would most want to attend college throughout their senior year. For most, it is helpful to delay the final decision until as late in the spring as possible.
- The financial aid package offered to you may be inadequate and you will have no other college offers to compare it to.
- You will have had to have taken your SAT/ACT early, certainly at least once during May or June of your junior year.

Rolling admissions

If you are applying to a college with rolling admissions, indicate on your request forms to guidance and your teachers the approximate date you intend to send in your application. Thus, your transcripts and recommendations will arrive at approximately the same time as your application materials. Your colleges will not make a decision on your application until your file is complete.

Paying for College/Financial Aid

NOTE: Apply for financial aid when you apply for college, even if you plan to defer (to be eligible for certain scholarships that **can be deferred**)

VSAC – Vermont Student Assistance Corporation:

Free assistance to Vermonters! If you want money to help pay for college, apply with VSAC. They will also provide quite a bit of help and information in the process. We will give students the VSAC guides to applying for financial aid. VSAC also provides a list of a number of local, regional and state scholarships available. The deadlines vary considerably. Apply online or get further information at www.vsac.org or 800-642-3177

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid:

This is the Federal equivalent of VSAC. You must apply with them as well. You may apply online or by mail, but the online and paper versions of these forms are very different. It is not very helpful to fill out the paper version prior to filling out the online version, but there is a worksheet available to collect your data prior to applying online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> There are benefits to applying online because you can check and revise information quickly.

College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid PROFILE

If you are seeking needs-based financial aid, some private colleges and universities will require you to submit the CSS/PROFILE, which is administered by a division of the College Board. There is a fee associated with filling out this form, and if the school requires it, it must be done **in addition** to the FAFSA form. Read more about this at www.fafsa.com/profile.htm Always check with your college/university for its requirements.

Print resources:

Don't Miss Out: The Ambitious Student's Guide to Financial Aid (Leider and Leider/Octameron Press)

Financing College (Kristin Davis/ Kiplinger-Random House)

Paying for College (Kalman Chany/ Princeton Review Press)

Additional online resources:

www.fastweb.com

www.collegeboard.com

www.financialaid.com

www.finaid.com

www.salliemae.com

www.studentaid.ed.gov

Scholarship file at TSA

We get information about scholarships from specific organizations, such as your local Lion's Club. All this information is kept in a file at TSA. Students interested in financial aid for college should familiarize themselves with this file and check it periodically. Abbreviated information on these scholarships will be listed in the newsletter.

Once you have been accepted

- If you have been accepted to more than one college, you have to make a decision. Go visit! Students say they are much less nervous once they have been accepted, and can make a better judgment about the school.
- Be sure to get your deposit and acceptance in to your chosen school before the deadline.
- Once everything has been decided, don't slack off! Colleges will receive your final transcripts, and if these indicate you are suffering from "senior slump", you may receive a letter from your chosen college. This letter may ask you write a detailed explanation of your performance, it may put you on probation, or it may withdraw your acceptance. Don't let this happen to you!

Taking time off before college

For some students, it makes sense to defer for a year. During this time, the student may travel, work, or attend an additional senior year at a boarding school or a school in another country. If you choose to do this, we recommend you apply to college and for financial aid during your senior year. It is much more difficult to get accepted to college once you have graduated, and there are scholarships that you will only be eligible for if you apply then, as well. For additional information, read *Time Out*, by Robert Gilpin and Carol Fitzgibbons or *Taking Time Off*, by Colin Hall and Ron Lieber.

TSA Alumni have applied and been accepted to ...

Amherst College	Grinnell College	Roanoke College
Ballet Magnificat	Guilford College	Sarah Lawrence College
Barry University	Hampshire College	Savannah College of A&D
Barnard College	Haverford College	Simmons College
Bates College	Hawaii Pacific University	Skidmore College
Beloit College	Hobart and William Smith	Smith College
Bentley College	Hofstra University	St. Marys of Maryland
Boston University	Ithaca College	Stanford University
Bowdoin College	Johnson and Wales	State Univ. of New York, Buffalo
Brooks College	University	Sterling College
Brown University	Johnson State College	Temple University
Bryn Mawr College	Juniata College	Touro College
Bryant University	Lewis & Clark College	Trinity College
Burlington College	Lyndon State College	University of California, Santa Clara
Castleton College	Manhattanville College	University of California, Santa Cruz
Carleton College	Marlboro College	University of Chile
Champlain College	Middlebury College	University of Colorado, Boulder
Clark University	Mitchell College	University of Edinburgh
Clarkson University	McDaniel College	University of Liverpool
Claremont College	McGill University (Canada)	University of Maine
College of St. Joseph	Montana State University	University of Massachusetts, Amherst
College of the Atlantic	Mt. Holyoke	University of New England
College of Wooster	New England School of	University of New Hampshire
Colorado College	Communication	University of Rhode Island
Connecticut College	New Hampshire Community	University of Vermont
Dartmouth College	Technical College	Ursinus College
Denison University	New York University	Vermont Technical College
Dickinson College	Northeastern University	Wagner College
Drew University	Oberlin College	Waynesburg College
Earlham College	Occidental College	Wells College
East Carolina University	Ohio University	Wesleyan University
Eckerd College	Paul Smith College	Western Kentucky University
Elmira College	Penn State	Wheaton College
Emerson College	Pomona College	Wesleyan University
Endicott College	Prescott College	Westminster College
Evergreen State College	Purdue University	Wheelock College
George Washington University	Queens University (Canada)	Whittier College
Goucher College	Rensselaer Polytech Institute	Willamette University
Green Mountain College	Rider University	

Teacher Evaluations/Recommendations Request Forms

Dear _____:

Thank you for agreeing to write a recommendation letter for me for my application for college. Please let me know if you need anything further.

Sincerely,

Date:

Resume: In addition to the items indicated for the individual schools below, I have attached one copy of my resume for your reference.

Common Application schools: I am applying to at least one school via the Common Application online. I request that you submit your online recommendation by the earliest of my Common Application deadlines. I will enter your email address at www.commonapp.org. You will receive an email with a link to submit your recommendation.

My earliest Common Application deadline: _____.

Your email address (please let me know if this is wrong): _____.

NON-COMMON APP. SCHOOLS/PROGRAMS: I am applying to the following school(s)/scholarship(s)/program(s) that do not accept the Common Application:

1. School/scholarship name: _____ Deadline: _____

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR THE ABOVE SCHOOL:

- This school/program requires a letter of recommendation using the attached form.
- This school/program requests a letter of recommendation, but does not have a specific form.

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR THE ABOVE SCHOOL:

- Please mail the recommendation by the above date in the attached addressed, stamped envelope.
- I need to include your letter with my recommendation. Please seal your letter in the attached envelope and return it to me by the above date.

2. School/scholarship name: _____ Deadline: _____

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR THE ABOVE SCHOOL:

- This school/program requires a letter of recommendation using the attached form.
- This school/program requests a letter of recommendation, but does not have a specific form.

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR THE ABOVE SCHOOL:

- Please mail the recommendation by the above date in the attached addressed, stamped envelope.
- I need to include your letter with my recommendation. Please seal your letter in the attached envelope and return it to me by the above date.

School/scholarship name: _____ Deadline: _____

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR THE ABOVE SCHOOL:

- This school/program requires a letter of recommendation using the attached form.
- This school/program requests a letter of recommendation, but does not have a specific form.

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOR THE ABOVE SCHOOL:

- Please mail the recommendation by the above date in the attached addressed, stamped envelope.
- I need to include your letter with my recommendation. Please seal your letter in the attached envelope and return it to me by the above date.

It would help the teacher writing your recommendations if you were to give them this form with all attachments in a large envelope or folder with your name and due dates written clearly on the outside. Also, you may want to check in with them several days before the deadline to see if they have everything they need to mail your evaluations.

Revised March 2007

**TRANSCRIPT and/or GUIDANCE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION REQUESTS
For SCHOOLS that take THE COMMON APPLICATION:**

(Please allow at least 10 school days to process. Review each college's requirements carefully. All schools are different.)

Name: _____

Date: _____

A.) RESUME: You must check one of the following:

- I have attached a current copy of my resume, including a statement of purpose, updated to reflect recent activities. (or)
- You already have a current, up-to-date resume for me.

Regarding your resume: We will **NOT** be sending a copy of your resume to **any** colleges. You may do so, if you like. Many colleges encourage a more detailed explanation of activities than there is room for on the Common Application.

B.) Standardized Testing:

- I understand that I need to arrange for my test scores to be sent directly from the ACT or SAT testing agency.

C.) Application and release of information. You must check EACH of the following:

- I am applying **electronically** via the Common Application to the following colleges/universities.
- I understand that, in addition to this form, I also need to enter Kimberly Barnhart's name and email address (kbarnhart@sharonacademy.net) on the www.commonapp.org website as Counselor to complete this request.
- I give The Sharon Academy permission to upload my information to the schools that I designate on the Common Application website.

Signature of student: _____

List of Common Application colleges, *in order of due date*:

Application Due Date (Earliest on top)

1.) _____	_____
2.) _____	_____
3.) _____	_____
4.) _____	_____
5.) _____	_____
6.) _____	_____
7.) _____	_____
8.) _____	_____
9.) _____	_____
10.) _____	_____
11.) _____	_____
12.) _____	_____

Other comments/notes:

TRANSCRIPT and/or GUIDANCE LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION REQUESTS

For Colleges, Universities, Scholarships, or other Organizations that **DO NOT** accept The Common Application

(Please allow 10 school days to process. Read each organization's requirements carefully.)

Name: _____

Date: _____

RESUME: You must check one of the following:

- I have attached a current copy of my resume, including a statement of purpose, updated to reflect recent activities. (or)
 - You already have a current, up-to-date resume for me.
 - This is not a college application and there is no need for a letter of recommendation, so I do not need to attach a resume.
- Regarding your resume:* We will **NOT** be sending a copy of your resume to **any** colleges. You may do so, if you like.

1.) COLLEGE OR SCHOLARSHIP'S NAME: _____

Deadline: _____

For this organization, indicate which of the following apply: (Please read carefully and double-check the requirements.)

- Please mail my transcript, letter of recommendation and school profile by the above date. I have attached an envelope addressed to the organization, and have verified the mailing address and the spelling of the institution's name. (Pay attention: Many students misspell the school's name on the envelope! Some schools have a processing center for admissions!).
- Please return the transcript, letter, and profile sealed for me to mail with my application.
- This school will want my mid-year grades as soon as they are available. I have attached a #10 (business-sized) envelope addressed to this college with a first-class stamp.

Test Scores: The student needs to arrange to have the scores sent directly from the testing agency.

Choose one of the following for the above school/organization

- I have attached this school's required School Report or other guidance form with my relevant information filled in.
- I have checked my school's website thoroughly, and it does not have a specific form for the Guidance Counselor.

Other requested information:

2.) COLLEGE OR SCHOLARSHIP'S NAME: _____

Deadline: _____

For this organization, indicate which of the following apply: (Please read carefully and double-check the requirements.)

- Please mail my transcript, letter of recommendation and school profile by the above date. I have attached an envelope addressed to the organization, and have verified the mailing address and the spelling of the institution's name. (Pay attention: Many students misspell the school's name on the envelope! Some schools have a processing center for admissions!).
- Please return the transcript, letter, and profile sealed for me to mail with my application.
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Test Scores: The student needs to arrange to have the scores sent directly from the testing agency.

Choose one of the following for the above school/organization

- I have attached this school's required School Report or other guidance form with my relevant information filled in.
- I have checked my school's website thoroughly, and it does not have a specific form for the Guidance Counselor.

Other requested information:

3.) COLLEGE OR SCHOLARSHIP'S NAME: _____

Deadline: _____

For this organization, indicate which of the following apply: (Please read carefully and double-check the requirements.)

- Please mail my transcript, letter of recommendation and school profile by the above date. I have attached an envelope addressed to the organization, and have verified the mailing address and the spelling of the institution's name. (Pay attention: Many students misspell the school's name on the envelope! Some schools have a processing center for admissions!).
- Please return the transcript/letter to me to mail with my application.
- This school will want my mid-year grades as soon as they are available. I have attached a #10 (business-sized) envelope addressed to this college with a first-class stamp.

Test Scores: The student needs to arrange to have the scores sent directly from the testing agency.

Choose one of the following for the above school/organization

- I have attached this school's required School Report or other guidance form with my relevant information filled in.
- I have checked my school's website thoroughly, and it does not have a specific form for the Guidance Counselor.

Other requested information:

Student:	DOB:	Grad Year:	Advisor:	Date:
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Four-Year Plan Worksheet

<i>24 credits needed to graduate</i>	English (4 credits)	History (3 credits, incl. 1 US History)	Math (3 credits)	Science (3 credits, incl. lab science)	Arts (1 credit, incl. ½ visual art)	Foreign Language (Min 2 credits)	P.E.	Elective	Outside or independent coursework
9th Grade									
10 th Grade									
11 th Grade									
12 th Grade									

	Co-Curricular Activities	Best Work	Community Service	Travel	Other
9 th					
10 th					
11 th					
12 th					

Junior Exhibition:	Senior Exhibition:
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College Application Tracking

Full College Name (check spelling!)						
Application Deadline						
Admissions contact person						
Financial aid deadline						
Standardized tests needed						
Early Action/ Decision?						
Common App?	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
<i>Supplement to Common App?</i>						
<i>Supplement essay required?</i>						
How many recommendations? From whom?						
If Non-Common App: Forms required. Online or print. Mailing address.						
Other school-specific information						