

Post-Secondary and College Planning Guide

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Great Neck South High School



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Planning Timeline

Freshman year

- Visit your counselor regularly.
- Individual parent meeting with counselor.
- Log into your NAVIANCE account and Google Classroom account during classroom guidance lesson.
- Begin tracking extra-curricular activities on NAVIANCE.
- Check Google Classroom regularly for updates from your counselor.

Sophomore year

- Visit your counselor regularly.
- Individual parent meeting with counselor.
- Take PSAT in October and review with counselor.
- Complete the NAVIANCE interest inventory with counselors.
- Keep track of activities, clubs, awards, etc. on NAVIANCE.
- Create a standardized testing timeline for yourself.
- Research how you will prep for standardized tests, discuss with counselor.

Junior Year

October

- Take PSAT.
- Create a College Board account.
- Continue to prepare for standardized testing.
- Review your transcript.
- Use NAVIANCE to explore career interests and majors.

November

- Explore the differences between SAT and ACT, discuss with counselor.
- Attend college fairs.

December

- Review PSAT scores with your counselor and discuss your testing timeline.
- Use your PSAT score and GPA to begin thinking about schools.
- Track progress on NAVIANCE.

January/February

- Review PSAT scores with counselor.
- Attend Junior College Night.
- Review SAT/ACT schedules and consider a timeline for testing.
- Register for SAT or ACT for the spring.
- Research colleges on NAVIANCE.
- Schedule college visits during February break and Spring break.

March/April

- Take SAT or ACT.
- Schedule post-secondary planning parent meeting with counselor.
- Add to “schools I’m thinking about” on NAVIANCE.
- Visit college websites regularly.
- Schedule college visits during spring break.
- Keep track of your research and reflect on your interests.
- Decide which two teachers you would like to ask for recommendations.
- Look at the Common Application essay prompts.

May

- Take SAT or ACT.
- Request letters of recommendation for two academic teachers.
- Decide on your organizational system for college search.
- Reach out to colleges and request information.
- Take AP exams (if applicable).

June

- Take SAT or ACT.
- Visit schools.
- Prepare a starter list of schools and discuss with counselor.
- Finish guidance questionnaire.
- Begin brainstorming essay ideas, review essay prompts.
- Ask your teachers if they would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation.
- Update your activities list on NAVIANCE.
- Complete your School Counselor Questionnaire and turn in it on Google Classroom.

July/August

- Visit schools.
- Complete essay draft.
- Determine deadlines and application procedures.

- Start filling out common application.
- Check if your schools require supplements and begin completing them.
- Continue to contact colleges and finalize the list of schools you will be applying to.
- Double check all deadlines – remember to check the school’s website, not just NAVIANCE.
- Register for a fall SAT or ACT.

Senior Year

September

- Attend Senior Night.
- Review transcript and promptly address any concerns with counselor.
- Work on applications.
- Have an English teacher review your essay.
- Show your counselor your essay draft.
- Finalize essay.
- Follow up with teacher recommenders and provide them with a list of schools you will be applying to.
- Match common application and NAVIANCE.
- Complete FERPA.
- Visit with college reps at South High (must register on NAVIANCE).
- Work on the CSS profile (if applicable).

October

- Complete the FAFSA.
- Complete the CSS profile if required.
- Make sure to turn in your transcript request forms to your counselor at least 15 school days prior to your application deadline.
- Double check all your application requirements.
- Send standardized test scores.
- Re-take the SAT or ACT, if applicable.
- Visit your counselor frequently.
- Communicate with counselor if you require a fee waiver.

November

- November 1st and 15th EA and ED deadlines.
- Visit with reps.
- Determine the rest of your deadlines and make sure you are keeping up with the requirements.
- Keep your grades up!
- Meet with your counselor regularly.

December

- Make sure to have all transcript requests to your counselor for the January deadlines. Keep in mind that there is a long break and that your counselor/teacher may not be available during break to help you.
- Withdraw applications if you are accepted ED.
- If you are deferred, speak with your counselor about how to proceed.

January

- Continue to complete applications.
- Finish the semester very strong! You may need to send your mid-year grades to your colleges.

February

- Complete your requests for mid-year grades and turn in to guidance.
- Inform your counselor of any admission decision you receive.

March

- Check your email frequently.
- Communicate with your counselor.

April

- Spend time thinking about which school you would like to choose of the schools you were accepted to.
- Review financial aid packages carefully.
- Let schools know if you are sure you will not attend, this will open up spots for students who have been waitlisted.
- Make your decision and submit your deposit by May 1st!
- Let your counselor know so they can send your final transcript.

May

- Make sure to carefully follow the instructions for the school you have been accepted to, i.e. registering for placement exams.
- Take AP exams seriously!

June-August

- Attend orientation.
- Submit AP exams.
- Follow your school's instruction regarding housing, registering for courses, etc.
- HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!



POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Always use your student email address.
- Visit your counselor frequently.
- Stay organized – figure out a system that works for you.
- There are many schools that will be a good fit, make sure you have a balanced list.
- Love your safety school! Spend time researching the school - can you see yourself there?
- Focus on you – not what everyone else is doing around you. You need to be happy at the school you choose.
- Reflect: consider keeping a journal about what is important to you. This is your process, have fun with it and make it an opportunity to understand yourself more.

Questions to Consider

- What are my goals?
- What do I want out of a college?
- Is college for me, or are there other options to consider such as vocational training, military, gap year?
- How do I learn best? Large class size or a smaller, more intimate setting?
- What type of environment – urban, rural, or suburban?
- Size of the school?
- Do I have a career interest? If so, does the school have the major I am looking for to meet my goals?
- If I am going in undecided, does the school offer a variety of majors that I may be interested in?
- How far do I want to be from home? A short drive, a flight?
- How much debt am I comfortable with?
- Does the campus life offer activities that I am interested in? Intramurals, arts, Greek life?
- Will I need financial aid?

Role of the Counselor, Parent and Student

Counselor:

- Aid student in selecting appropriate schools to apply to.
- Carefully review the student's transcript and ensure all requirements are being met.
- Meet with student and parent as needed.
- Help student select a senior year schedule that is balanced, fits the student's goals and meets a level of rigor that is suited to the student.
- Complete any additional school recommendation forms.
- Assist student with determining when to take standardized exams.
- Provide an initial college list at the junior college planning conference.
- Write the counselor letter of recommendation.
- Submit the following application materials:
 - Transcript
 - School profile
 - Counselor letter
 - Secondary school report

Parent:

- Attend parent events hosted by South High School.
- Attend the counselor college planning meeting.
- Take student on college visits.
- Provide support through the process.
- Gather financial information and discuss family circumstances and what the family can or cannot afford.
- Complete financial aid forms with student.
- Maintain careful records and FAFSA pin in a safe place.
- Allow the student to make their own decisions and take the leadership role in their planning process.

Student Responsibilities

- Research schools.
- Create your list of schools you would like to apply to.
- Attend college rep visits at South High.
- Visit colleges.
- Complete applications.
- Complete the counselor questionnaire and activity portions of NAVIANCE.
- Keep materials organized.
- Send test scores to colleges.
- Complete the FERPA.
- Communicate with recommenders.
- Follow up with schools to confirm that all materials are complete.
- Check your email daily during the process, and respond promptly to requests from schools.

yourself by applying to too many schools. You want to put quality time into each application and feel that each school could be a good fit.

Campus Visits

It is highly recommended that you visit as many schools as you can. If you cannot visit schools because of the distance from home, be sure to visit other schools locally that have different sizes or geographic locations. For example, visit a school in Manhattan to get a sense of a city school, visit a school in a suburban area on Long Island.

- Set up the campus tour ahead of time.
- Visit a class.
- Eat in the dining hall.
- Tour a dorm.
- Ask questions of students on campus.
- Gather information materials to bring home.
- Take notes.

When to visit?

It is helpful to visit when school is in session so you can get a true sense of the culture and climate of the school. Avoid visiting schools during exam periods.

You may use two (2) excused absences for college visits.

College Representative Visits to South High

South High offers numerous opportunities to visits with college representatives during the school day.

Why is this important?

1. Some schools track interest and will record that you attended a session in your file.
2. It is a great opportunity to ask specific questions about the school.
3. Networking! You can make a connection with a representative who may end up reading your application.
4. Great way to get more information about a school that you may not be able to visit.
5. Reps may be able to put a face to a name when reading the application.

How does it work?

1. You will be notified of visits through NAVIANCE and on the announcements.
2. You MUST sign up on NAVIANCE before the meeting.
3. You will be excused from class.
4. Communicate with your teacher ahead of time that you will not be in class.

What if I have a test?

1. Ask you teacher if you can stop by just to introduce yourself to the rep and apologize that you will not be able to stay, ask for their card.
2. Take your exam first and if possible report late.

DO NOT USE THESE MEETINGS AS A WAY TO GET OUT OF CLASS!

- Be attentive
- Ask questions
- Introduce yourself at the end of the meeting if possible

Application Types

Common Application

A universal application system that many, but not all, schools subscribe to. The system allows you to enter your information once and apply to multiple institutions. Some schools will ask for **SUPPLEMENTARY** information. Make sure to check your individual school requirements very carefully!

The common application will also provide you with essay prompts, which are available in the Spring of your Junior year.

Coalition Application for Access & Affordability

<http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>

A new application system that some schools are using, but you can still apply using the common application or their individual application.

Allows student to create a “locker”, which holds student artifacts. Student may then choose from their locker, what materials they would like to send to the schools. Colleges cannot view the student’s locker unless they are invited to collaborate.

Students may register for an account as early as ninth grade and begin to store items in their locker for future use.

CUNY Application

https://cunyportal.cuny.edu/cpr/authenticate/portal_login.jsp

The City University of New York has a separate application system for all their schools. You will first need to register for an account, and then follow their instructions to apply.

You will get a “W” number once you have completed your application, which you must provide to your counselor BEFORE they can submit the remaining documents. This number can be found at the top of your completed application.

Individual Applications

Some schools elect to use their own application, typically online.

*****Pay careful attention to what each school is asking, do not procrastinate!*****

Deadline Types

- Make sure to get the deadlines from the college website, NAVIANCE is not always updated.
- Not all schools will have every deadline type, be particularly astute to what their policies and procedures are.

ED: Early Decision: This is a binding agreement between you and the college, in which you promise to attend if you are accepted. This is regardless of your financial aid package and you must withdraw your applications to others schools should you be accepted. You will sign an agreement when you apply. This option is not for everyone, you must LOVE the school and it must be your top choice. You need to have a discussion with your family to decipher if it is the best option for you. **Typically starts November 1st.**

EA: Early Action: Non-binding, the student applies early, usually between Nov. 1st and Nov.15th and they will receive the results sometime in December. There is no limit to the number of EA applications you can submit.

EA Restrictive: The student applies early, it is non-binding, but they are restricted from applying ED or EA to other schools.

Regular: Usually between Jan 1st and March 1st, the student will be considered in the regular pool of applications.

Rolling: You may apply at any time, but seats fill up as the year progresses.

Application Components

Academic Record

What colleges are looking for:

1. Rigor – that you are challenging yourself, to a point that is appropriate for you
2. Growth – want to see an upward trend.
3. That you are taking what is suitable for you!
4. Four years of core curriculum courses.
5. Foreign language, ideally all four years.
6. Senior year course schedule – does it maintain the level of rigor and does it include core curriculum and a language?

Great Neck Public Schools do not weight honors level or AP level courses. Colleges are informed of this on the School Profile, which is sent with your transcript.

Great Neck Public Schools also does not rank students. This is also indicated on the school profile.

Colleges treat the transcript differently in respect to the GPA. Some schools will recalculate the GPA based on their own criteria. For example, they may remove elective course and only calculate core courses. Other schools may use their own weighting system. Check with individual schools about their policy.

SENIOR YEAR MATTERS! Schools will see your school year schedule and may ask to see your quarter or mid-year grades.

Standardized Tests

PSAT

Taken in 10th and 11th grades. Can qualify students as a National Merit Scholar in 11th grade. Scores can be used as a baseline to target study strategies for future exams. Colleges will not see these scores.

SAT and ACT

Colleges will accept either exam for the testing requirement.

The **SAT** was newly redesigned and made available in March 2016. Practice questions and registration information is available at www.collegeboard.org. Students will be tested on reading, writing and language and math. There is also an optional essay component, but some schools will require this portion. Check with individual schools.

You will find information about and can register for the **ACT** on www.act.org. The ACT tests students on reading, math, English, and science with an optional essay component. It is highly recommended that students take the essay section.

Every student is different and some may be more comfortable with one test over another. It is recommended that students familiarize themselves with both tests, try a diagnostic, then determine which one they would like to take, if not both. If testing both, do not take within a close time period.

*****Make sure to carefully check the requirements
for each of your schools*****

Sending Scores to Colleges

It is the student's responsibility to send scores to their colleges and adhere to the requirements of each school. Not all schools have the same requirements when it comes to standardized testing. Here are some options you may see:

1. **Full disclosure** – Many schools ask that you send your entire testing history. Keep this in mind when you are determining your testing timeline, as you do not want to take your first exam too early, before you are fully prepared.
2. **Score Choice** – Some schools will allow you to choose your best scores only and do not require to see all test dates.
3. **Super Scoring** – This option requires you to send multiple test dates and the school will take the highest scores of each section and create one “Super Score” which will increase the composite.
4. **Test Flexible** – This option allows students to choose their most favorable results from a variety of options. For example, you may be able to send 3 AP exam scores instead of an SAT or ACT. This option is less common.
5. **Test Optional** – Some schools do not require any standardized tests, but it is up to the student if they would like to send them anyway. Visit www.fairtest.org to find a list of schools that are test optional.

Essay

The essay is about YOU! Colleges want to know who you are beyond what they can see from the other application pieces. Make sure it is a true reflection of your personality.



If using the Common Application, you will have a choice from a variety of essay prompts - check www.commonapplication.org.

What they want:

1. Genuine reflection of who you are.
2. How you will contribute to the culture of their school
3. Answer the prompt.
4. Steer away from cliché statements.
5. Be positive.
6. Your voice.

College admission counselors are reading hundreds of essays; make sure you grab your audience's attention.

DO NOT WAIT! Start working on your essay early and make sure you take the time to reflect, write, and revise.

Have English teachers proofread your essay, and do not ask them last minute.

Have your counselor read your essay.

Letters of Recommendation

Most school will ask to see two teacher letters and one from your counselor.

Colleges expect that you can follow their directives. Do NOT send extra letters if they do not ask for them.

If you have additional people in your life who can contribute powerful statements to your application, ask them to speak with your counselor and he/she may add this information to their letter.

Your counselor will use your guidance questionnaire on NAVIANCE to write your letter. Make sure to be thorough and to communicate any personal details to your counselor that you would like addressed in the letter. If you have had any circumstances that have impacted your academic performance, make sure that you speak with your counselor about them.

Ask two teachers who know you best! Junior year teachers are the most ideal. You do not need to choose a teacher from a course that is your highest grade, select a teacher who you have a close relationship with, someone who can speak about your contribution to the class environment, your work ethic, and your intellectual curiosity.

Plan on speaking with these teachers by the end of Junior year. Follow up in the fall. You will need to provide them with the list of schools you intend to apply to. They will send your letter via NAVIANCE or by mail. It is your responsibility to communicate with your teachers about the submission process. If letters are submitted by mail, you must provide a stamped envelope with the address of the admission office.

Students will be signing the FERPA, which waive their rights to see any letter of recommendation.

Don't forget to send a thank you letter or note to your recommenders! And let them know your results.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Quality vs. Quality!

- Don't "pad" your resume with activities that you are not genuinely interested in.
- Colleges like to see commitment.
- Your activities should be aligned with your goals.
- Keep track of your activities since 9th grade on the activity tracker in NAVIANCE.
- Keep careful records including dates, average hours per week, supervisor, etc.
- Have this list available while you are filling out your applications.



Students with Unique Talents

Student Athletes

If you are interested in pursuing Division I, II, or III sports, you must start the process early!

1. Talk to your coach.
2. Talk to your counselor.
3. Don't be afraid to reach out to schools and express interest, they want to hear from you!
4. Complete the NCAA clearinghouse early.



NCAA Clearinghouse



Division I Academic Requirements

College-bound student-athletes will need to meet the following academic requirements to practice, receive athletics scholarships, and/or compete during their first year.

Core-Course Requirement
Complete 16 core courses in the following areas:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 years of English• 3 years of math (Algebra I or higher)• 2 years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered)• 1 year of additional English, math or natural/physical science• 2 years of social science• 4 years of additional courses (any area above, foreign language or comparative religion/philosophy)

Full Qualifier	Academic Redshirt
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete 16 core courses:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ten of the 16 core courses must be completed before the seventh semester (senior year) of high school▪ Seven of the 10 core courses must be in English, math, or science• Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.300• Earn the ACT/SAT score matching your core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale (see back page)• Graduate high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete 16 core courses• Earn a core-course GPA of at least 2.000• Earn the ACT/SAT score matching your core-course GPA on the Division I sliding scale (see back page)• Graduate high school

Full Qualifier: College-bound student-athletes may practice, compete and receive athletics scholarship during their first year of enrollment at an NCAA Division I school.

Academic Redshirt: College-bound student-athletes may receive athletics scholarships during their first year of enrollment and may practice during their first regular academic term but may NOT compete during their first year of enrollment.

Nonqualifier: College-bound student-athletes cannot practice, receive athletics scholarships or compete during their first year of enrollment at an NCAA Division I school.

Art Talent

Make sure that you plan early and pursue every opportunity to take multiple courses and engage in the field.

Let the art department know that you are interested in pursuing the field beyond high school, they will have suggestions and be able to guide you through much of the process.

Begin working on your portfolio early. Most schools will ask to see a portfolio of your best work that reflects your growth, knowledge and skill. Check with each individual school for their specific requirements.

Music Talent

If you are considering majoring in music, participate in as many school-wide and community-wide opportunities you can. Talk to the music department about your ambitions and get suggestions from them.

Compile samples of your work throughout high school, such as on a CD or digital media source.

You will likely be asked to appear for an audition, be sure that you work closely with your music instructor and select a piece that fulfills their requirements and showcases your unique talents and abilities.



Interviewing

Some schools will offer students the opportunity to interview, but it is becoming less common. Many times, students will be able to have an Alumni interview.

If you are given this opportunity, it is important to review basic interviewing skills.

Here are some pointers:

- Do your research about the school and come prepared with questions, demonstrate your interest.
- Dress the part, first impressions are important – Be careful not to be too casual (no baseball caps or jeans).
- Be positive.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your leadership, community and school involvement and meaningful experiences
- Be early! 15 minutes is ideal.
- Watch your body language.
- Be yourself!
- Follow up with a thank you.

If you would like to practice, see your counselor, they will be happy to help!

Disability Support

If you are a student with an IEP or a 504, there are schools with a variety of levels of support and you can still receive the services you need to be successful. You are not obligated to reveal that you received services during high school to your colleges.

Basic Level

Schools may choose to provide basic level services through their Office of Disability Support, such as extended time, use of a scribe, or separate location. You must advocate for yourself and provide the schools with documentation, such as an IEP.

Structured Programs

Some schools have structured programs that cater to more specific needs of students with disabilities. Within these programs you are provided with additional learning support, such as weekly meetings with an academic advisor or additional summer programs.

If this is something that you think you would like in college, please speak with your counselor and they can help you investigate schools that have such programs. There is usually an additional fee added to your tuition for such programs.

Community College

Community Colleges offer two-year degrees, certification programs and vocational training.

Community College can be a great option for students for a number of reasons.

1. Financially – During the first 2 years of college most students are working towards completing pre-requisite requirements. That can be done at a community college for a considerably lower price. Additionally, some students do not know what they want to do and start off at a community college so they do not acquire substantial amount of debt until they solidify their preferred field of study.
2. Improve academic skills – Maybe you did not do as well in high school as you wanted and you want time to improve your grades and skills, and then pursue a four-year degree.
3. You are interested in a two-year program that can lead you immediately into the work force.
4. You need to live at home and commute for any number of reasons.
5. You would like to attend school part-time so you can work as well.
6. Family circumstances.

Community colleges can offer a great deal of fantastic educational opportunities. Typically, class sizes are smaller and there is more access to your professors. The skilled training programs can enable students to become certified and more marketable.

Transferring to a four-year school can be fairly easy, and many, if not all courses will be accepted.

Military

The military offers a world of opportunity to students! If you are interested in serving our country, while learning valuable job training skills, earning money for college and traveling, this may be a great option for you.

If you are interested in the military, speak with your counselor and they will help connect you to a recruiter.

On occasion, recruiters will visit South High. Check NAVIANCE for any upcoming visits.

In order to enter the military, you will need to take the ASVAB examination, which measures your ability to perform certain tasks within the military and will determine what type of positions you will be eligible for.

If you take the ASVAB, you are not committed to join the military. The ASVAB can also be a great tool for career planning. Please speak with your counselor about how to register for this exam.

Great Neck South Procedures for Applying to College

1. Submit your Counselor Questionnaire/Resume to your school counselor's Google Classroom as soon as possible to ensure that your counselor can complete your recommendation.
2. Complete your activity resume on NAVIANCE so the counselor can view your activities.
3. USE A CONSISTENT PROFESSIONAL EMAIL FOR EVERYTHING.
4. Match your NAVIANCE and Common Application. You must complete through the education portion of the Common Application and the FERPA Agreement before you will be able to sync your accounts.
5. Complete the FERPA statement on Common Application.
6. Complete the transcript request form and turn it in to your counselor at least 15 school days prior to deadline
 - a. Make sure that all information is accurate and complete
 - b. Do not put it in your counselor's mailbox or leave on their desk, turn it in directly to them
7. Follow up with your schools to verify that materials have been received (sometimes it takes a while for the application to be marked as complete).
8. Let your counselor know your results.

Financial Aid



You are not required to apply for financial aid, but for students who would like to be considered for loans and grants, you must meet the financial aid requirements of the schools to which you are applying.

CSS profile – Some schools will require that you complete the CSS profile. A list of schools that require this form is available at: <http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>.

This form is much more detailed than the FAFSA and will require more in depth information about your family's financial information.

FAFSA - **The Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

www.fafsa.gov

This form is required if you would like to be considered for grants, federal loans and private loans. Based on Prior Prior Year (PPY) information you will be given an EFC (estimated family contribution), which will determine what your family can afford and will determine your financial aid packages based on their standards.

PPY – For example, FAFSA will use your tax information from 2020 to determine your 2022 School Year financial aid package.

Each school will have a **NET PRICE CALCULATOR** on their school website, which will give you a predicted cost of attendance.

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO ATTEND OUR FINANCIAL AID NIGHT FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION REGARDING FINANCIAL AID.

Scholarships

Many schools will offer merit-based scholarships at the time of application and there is no need to submit an additional application for the scholarship.

Some schools will offer additional scholarships that you can apply for (Check each individual school's website for more information).

There are also individual scholarships available that you can pursue:

- Check with your counselor - they may know of additional scholarship opportunities
- Community based scholarships
- Great Neck Student Aid Fund
- **E-Scholarships USA - A National directory of scholarships. Please see your guidance counselor for username and password information.**

There are also websites, which provide information about various scholarship opportunities such as:

www.fastweb.com

www.scholarships.com

Be wary of any scholarship service that charges.