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Saugus High School Guidance Program

Introduction

In accordance with Saugus High School's mission to prepare students to be responsible, thoughtful, and effective global citizens along with the Massachusetts School Counselors Association Model, the SHS Guidance Department has created the following developmental model to help guide students throughout their high school career.

The Saugus High School Guidance Department works cooperatively with students, parents and faculty on academic planning, course selection, personal/developmental issues, transition concerns, and the career/college search process. Counselors assist students in working toward their academic potential and encourage social and co-curricular experiences that provide opportunities for personal growth and independence. Students are encouraged to be self-advocates and seek out assistance whenever necessary. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's Guidance Counselor for assistance in a student's transition to school, educational planning or in regard to any questions or concerns relating to school.

Counselors work individually and will provide group seminars throughout the school year on a variety of topics including: transition, learning styles, goal setting, school and community involvement, personality profiles, career exploration, testing, and college planning. In the spring, counselors meet individually with students to help them choose elective courses based on postsecondary interests. Group meetings for parents of grades 9-12 students are scheduled each year as well.

Rank & GPA

Rank in the class is determined on the basis of a quality point weighted system. Class rank is computed by multiplying the numerical value of a grade by the credit of the subject and dividing this total by the sum of the credits. Weighted Grade Point Average and Weighted Class Rank are calculated according to the table below. Guidance Counselors inform colleges of Saugus High School's unique GPA scale through the letters of recommendation and our School Profile.

Ave.	CP	H	AP	Ave.	CP	H	AP	Ave.	CP	H	AP
100	4	4.5	5	88	2.8	3.3	3.8	76	1.6	2.1	2.6
99	3.9	4.4	4.9	87	2.7	3.2	3.7	75	1.5	2	2.5
98	3.8	4.3	4.8	86	2.6	3.1	3.6	74	1.4	1.9	2.4
97	3.7	4.2	4.7	85	2.5	3.0	3.5	73	1.3	1.8	2.3
96	3.6	4.1	4.6	84	2.4	2.9	3.4	72	1.2	1.7	2.2
95	3.5	4.0	4.5	83	2.3	2.8	3.3	71	1.1	1.6	2.1
94	3.4	3.9	4.4	82	2.2	2.7	3.2	70	1.0	1.5	2.0
93	3.3	3.8	4.3	81	2.1	2.6	3.1	69	0.9	1.4	1.9
92	3.2	3.7	4.2	80	2.0	2.5	3.0	68	0.8	1.3	1.8
91	3.1	3.6	4.1	79	1.9	2.4	2.9	67	0.7	1.2	1.7
90	3.0	3.5	4.0	78	1.8	2.3	2.8	66	0.6	1.1	1.6
89	2.9	3.4	3.9	77	1.7	2.2	2.7	65	0.5	1.0	1.5

Naviance

The Saugus High School Guidance Department incorporates technology into its program with its use of Family Connection from Naviance, a web-based service which is designed especially for students and parents. Family Connection is a comprehensive website that you can use to help in making decisions about courses, colleges, and careers. Family Connection is linked with Counselor's Office, a service that is used in the Guidance Office to track and analyze data about college and career plans, so it provides current information that's specific to our school.

Family Connection allows students and families to:

- **Receive important e-mails** – Family Connection lets us share important information with you and your child about upcoming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and other Web resources for college and career information. In addition, the site includes a link that your child can use to send us an e-mail message.
- **Get involved in the planning and advising process** – Build a resume, complete on-line inventories regarding career searches, personality types, and learning styles. You can also manage timelines and deadlines for making decisions about colleges and careers.
- **Research colleges** – Compare GPA, standardized test scores, and other statistics to actual historical data from our school for students who have applied and been admitted in the past. Seniors can check their own rank & GPA as well.
- **College visits** – Find out which colleges are visiting our school & sign up to meet with college representatives. Students must pick up & complete an informational form from the Guidance Office prior to their meetings.
- **Scholarships** – Local scholarships from area businesses & organizations are posted weekly and there is also a link for the National Scholarship Search from Sallie Mae.

To visit our school's Family Connection site, go to: <http://connection.naviance.com/saugus>

Career Exploration Program

Saugus High School offers grade 11 students the opportunity to participate in the ASVAB Career Exploration Program. The ASVAB is a comprehensive career exploration and planning program that includes a multiple aptitude test battery, an interest inventory, and various career planning tools. It is designed to help all students, not just those with an interest in the military, explore their strengths and weaknesses and begin to think about different career options. For more information go to: <http://www.asvabprogram.com>. The ASVAB will be offered annually and students and parents are strongly encouraged to watch for announcements.

Testing: Saugus High School CEEB Code- 221-885

College Entrance Examination Board Tests (CEEB) include the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing Assessment (ACT) and are done on a voluntary basis. Students who plan to attend college should take advantage of all test opportunities in order to check their educational progress. It is the responsibility of the students and parents to watch for testing announcements and to follow directions for registration. **Students are encouraged to take advantage of the four free score reports at each registration.** All test scores must be sent to colleges directly from the College Board or ACT program.

Saugus High School CEEB code: 221-885.

Freshmen, Sophomores, and Juniors: The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Tests and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (**PSAT/NMSQT**) is a two-hour practice version of the College Board SAT. The examination gives juniors the chance to qualify for National Merit Scholarship Corporation scholarship programs. Students should take the exam to receive feedback on their strengths/weaknesses on skills necessary for college, to see how their performance on an admissions test might compare with that of other students applying to college and to help them prepare for SAT Program tests. The tests are scheduled for mid-October, and students must sign up in the Guidance Office. The PSAT is only administered once per school year; there is no make-up exam if the PSAT is missed.

Juniors and Seniors –The **SAT Reasoning Test** is required by most colleges, including the Massachusetts State Colleges. It is a 3-hour and 45 minute exam measuring Critical Reading and Mathematical skills and Writing with a combined maximum score of 2400. However, most colleges will only use scores from the critical reading and math portions (out of 1600) for admissions purposes. This test assesses students' critical thinking skills as they relate to the ability to manage college-level instruction. Students are encouraged to take the SAT in the spring of their junior year and again during the fall of their senior year. Students who plan to apply to college Early Action/Decision should take the SAT's twice in the spring of the junior year. Practice tests are available on the College Board website.

The **SAT Subject Tests** focus on specific subject areas and are required by more selective colleges. They are one-hour exams that assess the knowledge of concepts taught in various content areas of a high school curriculum. It is strongly recommended that students check college admissions requirements and discuss testing options with their Guidance Counselor as many selective colleges may require up to 3 tests in different subject areas. Students may take up to three subject tests on one SAT testing day and the maximum score for each test is 800. The SAT Subject Tests may not be taken on the same day as an SAT reasoning test; a student must choose one or the other. Students can register for the SAT Reasoning Test and the SAT Subject Tests by visiting the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com.

The **ACT** is also a widely accepted college entrance exam which assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. It is a two-hour-and-55-minute examination that measures a student's knowledge and achievement in four subject areas -- English, mathematics, reading and science -- to determine the student's readiness for college-level instruction. There is also an optional writing test that assesses students' skills in writing an essay. The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 to 36 for each of the four areas. A Composite Score is developed by computing an average of the four subject area scores. The ACT has questions that are more direct and knowledge based. Students can register at, and send their score reports from, www.ACTstudent.org.

NCAA Clearinghouse

Student athletes must register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse to be eligible to play NCAA Division I or Division II sports in college. (Athletes playing in NCAA Division III do not have to register.) Students must meet certain eligibility requirements set forth by the NCAA such as:

- Completing a certain number of high school core courses (D1:16 D2: 14)
- Earning a certain minimum grade point average in these core courses
- Earning a certain minimum score on the SAT or ACT (for Division I, this is scaled according to the student's core-course GPA)
- Graduating from high school

Students who have not met the NCAA eligibility requirements may not be allowed to participate in Division I or II athletics. A list of approved core courses and GPA scale can be found on the NCAA website:

www.eligibilitycenter.org. The best way for students to prepare for a future in college athletics is to complete the approved core courses and earn appropriate grades in them.

Students are responsible for registering online with the NCAA, beginning in their junior year, and contacting the Collegeboard/ACT websites to have their standardized testing scores sent directly to the NCAA (code: 9999). Students can request that an official transcript be sent to the NCAA by completing a *Saugus High School Transcript Request & College Application Coversheet* in the Guidance Office.

Since there is a fee (currently \$60.00), students should be certain that playing a sport at a Division I or Division II school is a realistic goal. Coaches may have some valuable insight into college possibilities and readiness.

The College Process

Choosing a College

Choosing a college is an individual process that is all about the student and only he/she can set the wheels in motion. Before plunging into a senior year of deadlines, essays and anxiety, students should review and discuss their interests, goals, strengths and weaknesses. Knowing what they want and why they want it will give them the energy, enthusiasm and direction to make the business of applying to college an adventure rather than an ordeal. There are a few things students need to think about before applying to college. Some general questions they should ask themselves are whether they prefer their college to big or small? Public or private? Close or far away? Small classes or large ones? What subjects are they interested in? What do they enjoy doing outside of the classroom? Do they plan to live on campus or in an apartment?

Get Organized

Applying to colleges can be a draining and time-consuming business (and expensive as well, as most applications are around \$50). To get it done on time and with minimal anxiety requires a great deal of organization. Seniors should begin a filing system which includes:

1. Notes and any literature they have on the various colleges under consideration.
2. A checklist of the schools they are considering applying to, along with a list of their relevant deadlines, and required components of their applications.
3. A record of the tests they have taken, when they took them, copies of their score reports, and a list of the colleges to which the scores were sent.
4. A record of their interview appointments and contact information.
5. A record of which teachers are writing letters of recommendation on their behalf.
6. Copies/print out of all applications, essays and any other materials once they have submitted them.
7. A record of all correspondence with the colleges, as well as the College Board or ACT.

College Application

A *Saugus High School Transcript Request & College Application Coversheet* for each school MUST be submitted to the student's guidance counselor.

Items that the student is responsible for sending to the colleges:

1. The completed application form with essays.
2. The application fee.
3. Official SAT and/or ACT scores.
4. Any additional information that a school requires, such as an activities resume or a portfolio.

Items that the Guidance Counselor sends to each college when the student applies:

1. *Official Transcript.*
2. Counselor's Letter of Recommendation.
3. Teacher Recommendation Letters.
4. Secondary School Report.
5. School Profile.
6. Any additional information that is on file, such as transcripts from other institutions, supplementary letters of recommendation, etc.

*The application that the student fills out is the primary means through which the student identifies themselves to colleges (name, address, high school, etc.) and is one of the means through which character and personality may emerge for the reader on the other end. Doing a careful, thoughtful job on the application can make all the difference.

- Students should access the school's application online and create an application account for themselves by following each individual school's instructions in setting up an application username and password. It is best to keep all usernames and passwords organized and stored together in a convenient place.

College Essay

The college essay provides students with an opportunity to convey something that goes beyond the objective data. The essay should be well-written and carefully edited, and students should strive to keep it within the prescribed length (if no length is given aim for 500-600 words).

Selecting a Topic

Students should write about something that is important to them. This is their opportunity to reveal their intelligence, talent, sense of humor, enthusiasm, maturity, creativity, expressiveness, sincerity and writing ability. If students are stuck getting started on a topic, consider the following:

- Major accomplishments in a particular activity, in the community, in their family, etc.
- Influential persons in their life (real or fiction) and the particular influence they had on themselves or their development.
- Obstacles that they have overcome in their life.

- Skills or characteristics that make them unique.
- A challenging experience in which they succeeded or failed.
- Personal dreams and goals.

Letters of Recommendation

It is **the student's responsibility** to ask teachers for recommendation letters in person. Students are encouraged to select teachers who taught the student in an academic subject, preferably in eleventh grade. It is important that the teacher knows the student well. If a teacher agrees to write them a letter of recommendation, the student must provide them with a completed **Student Profile form** and a copy of their resume. If the student is using the Common Application, they **must invite their recommenders by entering their name and email address on the Common Application under "School Forms."** Students should always remember to write a thank you note to teachers for taking the time to write the recommendation. If students need a Guidance recommendation (required on the Common Application) students must complete the **Student Profile for Guidance Recommendation**. Students should always give teachers and Guidance Counselors **at least 2 weeks** notice if they need a letter.

The Interview

The interview is a terrific opportunity for students to add another piece of themselves to their application folder. The interview is a two way street, a chance for the school to learn more about the student and an opportunity for the student to learn more about the school. If a college requires an interview and is not within easy traveling distance, the college will arrange for them to be interviewed by a local alumnus or alumna or an area representative. If possible, we recommend that they arrange for an interview during their campus visit.

Some Tips on Interviews:

- Relax!
- Be prepared. Learn as much as possible about the college before the interview and be prepared both to answer and ask questions.
- Students should give some advance thought to the things they want to ask about. It is acceptable to bring a list of questions to the interview.
- Go to the interview alone. Parents are welcome on the tour but don't take them to the interview.
- Arrive on time or be a few minutes early.
- Student should be themselves, not what they think the college expects them to be. Be honest, sincere, and interested. Colleges want variety!
- Students should be prepared to discuss why they have chosen this particular college and what they expect to get out of four years there.
- Send a thank you note.

Financial Aid & Scholarships

College tuition is on the rise and families need to take advantage of all resources available to finance higher education. Applying for federal financial aid includes completing and submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Colleges use information from the FAFSA to determine a student's "financial aid package," which may include: grants or scholarships which do not need to be repaid; low-interest loans to be repaid after the student leaves college and work –study which is part-time work on a college campus. As a service to parents, the SHS Guidance Department will sponsor two Financial Aid Presentations with resource persons from the local community. These presentations assist families in college financial planning and the preparation of the FAFSA and the College Scholarship Service (CSS Profile for private colleges).

Families need to obtain a Federal Student Aid Pin at www.pin.ed.gov before filing the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA can be filed on or after January 1st; families should always file the FAFSA! Beware of scams; it should never cost money to file the FAFSA. Parents can file the CSS Profile in the fall of their student's senior year and should watch for specific financial aid deadlines! Students should contact college Financial Aid Offices if they have questions about the financial aid process. Please note that Guidance Counselors can only provide general information regarding financial aid.

Parents should take advantage of FAFSA Day, which is usually scheduled at the end of January or early February. FAFSA Day provides volunteers who can help families file their FAFSA on the spot and answer any questions which may arise. More information can be found at: <http://www.fafsaday.org>.

The Guidance Office receives notices of local scholarships during the school year. Criteria for awards may vary but are usually based on academic achievement, test scores, entrance examinations, essays, school and community service, and leadership qualities. Scholarship announcements are publicized on Naviance. It is especially important for families to inquire about scholarship opportunities offered by employers, church and community groups...etc. The application process should begin early as many deadlines approach quickly!

There are two types of financial aid: **need-based**, which is what is usually meant by the words "financial aid" and is based on numbers determined by the federal government from your FAFSA and possibly CSS Profile, and **merit-based**, which awards you for academic excellence, athletic skill, and other individual accomplishments. Most financial aid (over 85%) offered by colleges is based on demonstrated need.

Financial Aid Terms:

Annual Cost of Attendance (COA): the total amount it should cost a student to go to college. This amount includes tuition and fees, room and board, and allowances for books and supplies, transportation, and personal incidental expenses.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): The amount of money the family is expected to contribute annually to the student's education, as determined by the Federal Methodology need analysis formula approved by Congress. The EFC includes the parent and student contributions and depends on the student's dependency status, family size, number of family members in college, taxable and nontaxable income and assets.

FAFSA: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is used to apply for all Federal need-based aid. It is required by all institutions as the primary financial aid document and can be completed online at www.fafasa.ed.gov.

PROFILE: The CSS/Financial Aid Profile is an additional financial aid application that is required by many colleges and universities. It asks additional family income and asset information for the purpose of awarding institutional aid. There is a fee to register for the PROFILE and a fee for each college to which you send it. The form can be completed online at www.collegeboard.com.

Pell Grant: The Pell Grant is a federal grant that provides funds based on the student's financial need. These loans are given to those students with the highest demonstrated levels of financial need.

Loans: College loans are considered to be financial aid because they are subsidized by the government both in that they are relatively low interest loans and in that, in some cases, the government pays the interest for the student until after you have completed your education.

- Perkins Loans: the most desirable loans and come directly from the college's Financial Aid Office as part of the aid package. This loan is available only when there is considerable financial need.
- Stafford Loans: federal loans that come in both subsidized (based on need) and unsubsidized (available to all students regardless of demonstrated need) forms. Stafford Loan amounts vary depending on your college year. (FAFSA must be completed)
- Federal PLUS (Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students) Loans: available to the parents of undergraduate students.

*For more information about any loans, including loan limits, interest rates, repayment plans, etc., contact MEFA at www.mefacounselor.org

If you are applying Early Decision you will have to meet early Financial Aid deadlines. There are three different financial aid forms, the FAFSA (required by all), the PROFILE (required by some), and the college's own application (also required by some). Make sure you know what each of your schools require and file them by the deadline. Many colleges may also require copies of your federal tax return.

Developmental Guidance

8th Grade

The transition from middle school to high school represents a significant event in the lives of adolescents. The Guidance Department understands that a smooth transition plays an important role in a student's personal/emotional well-being and his or her academic success. In order to assist in this transition, the guidance counselors will:

- Help organize an 8th grade Open House Night for parents and prospective students.
- Meet with the 8th grade students in a large group setting in the spring to explain high school graduation requirements and post-secondary options & course selection. Each student is given a Program of Studies book to review prior to this assembly and counselors will go over available elective options. Students will see what a transcript looks like and counselors will stress the importance of strong grades and define a GPA. Counselors stress the need for each student to challenge themselves and achieve their true potential so that they have many options upon graduation.
- Meet with the eighth grade Guidance Counselors to discuss transition plans for students.
- Promote the Keys to Success in High School.....
 - Good attendance & behavior
 - Positive attitude (building self-esteem)
 - Time for studying & homework
 - Stay organized (writing down your assignments)
 - Have a healthy lifestyle (eat right, exercise, get enough sleep, avoid harmful activities)
 - Have healthy relationships
 - Seek advice/guidance from adults (parents, teachers, guidance counselor, principal)
 - Get involved!

Freshman Year

Adjustment & The Track to Success

The SHS Guidance Department introduces students to the high school environment and educates students on high school procedures and policies. As they begin their high school career, students must get to know the resources available to them and effectively advocate for themselves using the appropriate resources. The primary focus for freshmen students should be earning good grades, maintaining good attendance, and getting involved. Parents should be supportive and encourage the aforementioned as well. Counselors are available to support students academically, emotionally, and socially, and help them develop their self-advocacy skills. The counselors:

- Along with the high school administrators, provide a freshmen orientation prior to the start of the school year to help students get acclimated to the high school environment.
- Encourage students to re-define themselves as high school students by developing self-advocacy skills, exploring different interests, getting involved in a variety of clubs and activities, making informed decisions, and developing an action plan for a successful high school career and beyond.
- Host several assemblies during Mentor Room and review the resources available to students while addressing student questions/concerns.
- Visit classrooms and teach lessons on guidance related topics such as time management, decision making, bullying, etc.
- Provide individual academic, social, and emotional counseling as needed. (Counselors also work in collaboration with the school adjustment counselor and make referrals for individual counseling sessions.)
- Meet individually with students for course selection.

College Planning Guidelines for Students:

Grade 9:

- Take challenging classes! If you struggle in a subject, attend after school help sessions with your teacher or seek out peer tutoring. You are responsible for your grades and attendance!
- Get involved in sports, clubs, your community and activities which let you explore your career interests.
- Talk to your Guidance Counselor about classes, career interests, standardized tests and plans for after high school.
- Keep a list of your awards, honors, work experience, and co-curricular activities.
- Use Naviance to take the Learning Styles Inventory, start building a resume, and search different careers.
- **Work hard all year! Colleges see final grades for ALL years of high school! Your GPA is based on all four years of high school!**

Sophomore Year

Decision Making & Career Exploration

As students become more acquainted with the expectations of high school, the SHS Guidance Department will dive deeper into the importance of future planning, self-advocacy and decision making. Students will learn the various tools and resources available to them in the high school which allow students to plan a path for future success. Personal responsibility, self-direction and identity formation are all key goals during a student's sophomore year. Students will have the opportunity to brainstorm and research various careers, build their own personal resume and fully understand that decisions and choices during their high school career ultimately impact where their future lies. The counselors:

- Provide multiple opportunities for the students of SHS to really get to know the roles of the counselors, as well as the resources available to them in the guidance office.
- Along with the sophomore wellness teachers, provide sophomores knowledge of and respect for individual differences as well as promote interpersonal skills to work and relate effectively with others.
- Meet with sophomores in small group settings to teach students the benefits of College Board and Naviance in regard to future planning assistance.
- Encourage students to take the PSAT in the fall of their sophomore year, as well explain the purpose of taking the optional SAT Subject tests.
- Explain to students the MCAS graduation requirements, as well as the possible scholarship opportunities based on scores.
- Assist students in realizing the importance of positive decision making and the impact decisions can have on student's futures.
- Promote participation, positive behavior and appreciation within diverse groups.
- Provide students the opportunity to begin a personal resume.
- Organize and host a Sophomore Career Fair. There will be representatives from various professions educating students of their roles and responsibilities, as well as recommendations on how to get to where they are (i.e. college, technical school, internships, etc.).

College Planning Guidelines for Students:

Grade 10:

- Meet with your Guidance Counselor to check on your graduation requirements and to discuss colleges and their admissions requirements.
- Seek out leadership roles whenever possible.
- Use Naviance to take the career interest profiler and personality inventory and explore different post-graduation options.
- Consider taking the PSAT and SAT Subject Tests. Talk with your Guidance Counselor for more information.
- **Work hard all year! Colleges see final grades for ALL years of high school! Your GPA is based on all four years of high school,**

Junior Year *Planning for the Future*

The SHS Guidance Department aims to provide opportunities for students to explore their interests, abilities, and values and apply these to make responsible career and post high school educational decisions. Post-secondary planning is the primary focus of the counselor and student during the junior year. Our goal is to help our students plan for life. Students need to assume responsibility for their own college search and organization. They must follow a timeline that is stressed numerous times by the counselor. Counselors help students stay focused and organized on post-secondary planning through a number of programs. The counselors:

- Encourage all juniors to take the PSAT exam in October of their junior year.
- Meet with the juniors in a small group setting to review graduation requirements and transcripts. Counselors will discuss post-secondary options & initiate the college planning process. Counselors will introduce the Naviance program, career search and review testing options (SAT, ACT & Subject Tests) and help students build a resume.
- Meet with juniors during Mentor Room in December to return and review their PSAT results and make recommendations for test taking schedules and strategies.
- Hold a panel discussion with former graduates of SHS/current college students.
- Hold the ASVAB Career Exploration exam & interpretation for interested juniors.
- Organize and host a MEFA College Admissions Night in March for the juniors & their parents to go over college planning.
- Meet with the juniors in a small group setting to discuss the college admissions process more in depth. Develop college lists, discuss letters of recommendation, admissions data via Naviance, the Common Application, college visits, essay, interviews...etc.
- Meet with each junior individually in the spring to review course selections and verify that each student is enrolled in the appropriate classes regarding levels and graduation requirements.
- Bring Juniors to the National College fair in Boston in April.
- Organize and host a Mini College Fair and College Rep. Panel for juniors and their parents in June. There will be representatives from multiple colleges/universities from SHS students most commonly apply.

College Planning Guidelines for Students:

Grade 11:

- Meet with your Guidance Counselor to check on your graduation requirements and to use Naviance to work on your college search.
- In September, register for the PSAT/NMSQT in the Guidance Office.

- Go to college fairs, such as the National College Fair in April (www.nacacnet.org) and talk to college representatives. Contact colleges to request information about admissions requirements, including required tests and financial aid!
- Register for the SAT, Subject Tests and/or ACT in the spring. Watch for deadlines!
- Decide whether you're going to apply early action/early decision or regular decision. Deadlines will approach quickly during your senior year. **Early Decision is binding! You can only apply to one school this way. Early Action is not binding and you are able to apply to multiple schools using this method.**
- Look on Naviance & check in with your Guidance Counselor to find out about college visits, special events, open houses, and scholarship opportunities!
- Ask teachers who know you well if they can write your letter of recommendation & provide them with an activities resume.
- **Visit colleges!** This is the best way to figure out which type of college is for you. Check websites, call admissions offices, ask about tours and take the time to talk to students on campus. Bring the College Visit Checklist with you!

Senior Year

Post-secondary Action Plan

The SHS Guidance Department continues to focus on Post-Secondary planning during a student's senior year. Students are strongly encouraged to follow a timeline throughout the college admissions process including asking teachers and counselors for letters of recommendation, working on their college essay and resume during English class, paying attention to important college and testing deadlines and working on their college applications. Students need to assume responsibility for their own college deadlines and are encouraged to ask their Guidance Counselor whenever necessary. Counselors provide students with the resources to seek out scholarship opportunities and assistance with financial aid. Post-secondary planning is a continuous process that takes place throughout the entire senior year. Counselors support students during post-secondary planning and will:

- Meet with the seniors twice in a small group setting in mid-September to review the college admissions process, including using Naviance to build and maintain college lists and to sign up for College Rep Visits to SHS. The counselors will cover the appropriate procedures for asking for letters of recommendation, sending standardized test scores and researching different college program requirements. The counselors will also explain the *Official Transcript* request process and go over requirements for the Common Application.
- Organize and host an evening program for the parents of seniors in late September to go over the college admissions process and review the information previously provided to seniors.
- Coordinate visits to SHS with college admissions representatives as well as representatives of the armed forces to meet with seniors in a small group setting in the Guidance Conference Room. Students can sign up for these visits via Naviance.
- Meet with each senior individually beginning in early September and continuing throughout the senior year to assist them in their plans for after graduation. This includes building and modifying college lists, researching technical schools and/or jobs that the student will be applying to or discussing military options. For students planning to attend college, counselors will review the application process, the importance of application deadlines, the standardized testing schedule and the role of the Common Application.
- Host a Financial Aid Night in early January for students and parents to explain the FAFSA and CSS Profile forms.
- Organize and host the “On-The-Spot Admissions” Program for North Shore Community College and UMass Lowell in January/February. Those seniors who enroll in this program will need to sign up for an appointment via Naviance and follow detailed instructions prior to the event. Students are encouraged to pay attention to announcements and informational emails from the Guidance Department. Representatives will either offer admissions to the senior “on-the-spot” or provide the student with strategies to enhance their candidacy at the institutions at a later date.
- Meet with seniors throughout the year to check on graduation status and finalize college and career plans.

College Planning Guidelines for Students:

Grade 12:

- Meet with your Guidance Counselor to check on your graduation requirements and to discuss your plans for after graduation. Check with colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require and keep a calendar of application deadlines.
- Talk with your parents about their expectations and yours (financial considerations, etc.)
- Schedule meetings with your Guidance Counselor frequently to touch base in regards to post-graduation planning. **Communication is very important!** Let your Guidance Counselor know if you plan to apply to schools early decision or early action. Early action/decision deadlines can start as early as the end of October!
- Use resources in the Guidance Office & Naviance to check/sign up for college visits. If you plan to play sports in college, be sure to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- Register for the SAT/Subject Tests/ACT. Make sure to send your scores to colleges directly from the College Board. You can send your score reports by going to: www.collegeboard.com. **Make sure to take advantage of your four free score reports when registering!**
- Attend open houses and arrange college visits & interviews in the fall of your senior year. Write thank you notes and e-mails after college interviews & meetings with admissions representatives.
- Ask teachers if they can write you a letter of recommendation. Provide them with an activities resume & ample time to compose them! (at least 2 weeks). Also, ask your Guidance Counselor to write you a letter of recommendation and provide him/her with a completed Guidance Questionnaire. Write thank you notes to teachers who wrote you letters of recommendation!
- Your Guidance Counselor will help you with your applications. All colleges require an *official transcript* of your high school grades which must be mailed to colleges by your Guidance Counselor.
 - Bring your counselor a completed Transcript Request & College Application Coversheet for each college to which you apply. Attach envelopes and stamps so they can mail supporting documents and application materials such as transcripts, school profile, recommendations, etc. to college admission offices. They will also send quarter, mid-year, and final grades to colleges upon request.
 - Address each envelope to the Admissions Office of the college to which you are applying. Enclose any forms that need your counselor's signature, recommendation, etc. Some colleges and universities provide their own envelope. Follow directions on the Transcript Request & College Application Coversheet!
- **Read directions carefully!** College applications can have different essay questions and testing & program requirements. Mistakes can reflect very poorly on your candidacy for admission.
- Work hard all year! Colleges see 1st & 2nd term grades. Fight senioritis...colleges can rescind your acceptance if your final grades drop drastically!
- Attend financial aid night with your parents & watch for **financial aid deadlines**. The FAFSA can be filed after January 1st. Check Naviance & the SHS Guidance website for important financial aid websites and local scholarships. Contact college financial aid offices or www.mefa.org if you have questions or concerns about your financial aid package.
- Continue to visit colleges to help make your final decision. Review college acceptances and submit your deposit by May 1st.
- Inform your Guidance Counselor of admissions decisions. They will keep track of your decisions in Naviance. Bring in your stamped envelope so your final transcripts can be mailed to your college!

Guidelines for Parents:

- Parents should keep an eye on grades, study habits, and also talk to your child about their goals after high school. Help your child clarify goals and priorities.

- Openly discuss future plans, including financial concerns and any restrictions with your child. This should be done early in the school selection process so that everyone is on the same page.
- Encourage your child to develop independence! They are responsible for balancing homework, sports, work, and other activities. Students should be seeking out help if they are having trouble in school. Self-advocacy is key!
- Contact your child's Guidance Counselor with any questions regarding graduation requirements or post graduation planning.
- Check the SHS Guidance website & Naviance for important information regarding scholarships, financial aid opportunities, standardized tests, and career exploration.
- Check your e-mail, phone messages, Naviance and speak with your child periodically about college bulletins and information distributed in school.
- Attend college fairs. Prepare questions for college representatives ahead of time & let your child do the talking!
- Visit colleges at every opportunity! The experience of walking onto a college campus will help students as they plan for their future and figure out what type of college they are best suited for.
- Attend financial aid nights and take a look at your financial situation and plan ahead for college expenses.
- Be aware of deadlines!
- Keep records of all contacts with schools – phone calls, names or representatives, meetings, etc.
- Assist your child with payment of sending testing scores from www.collegeboard.com and college application fees on-line or by sending in a check with application packets.
- Attend financial aid night & watch for **financial aid deadlines**. The FAFSA can be filed after January 1st. Check Naviance & the SHS Guidance website for important financial aid websites and local scholarships. Contact college financial aid offices or www.mefa.org if you have questions or concerns about the financial aid package.
- Remain positive and encourage your child to work hard in achieving success!

DETAILED SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

Dear Parents,

In order to make your child's college search and selection process more efficient and productive, this timetable outlines some steps you and your student can follow to make the process, not only more effective, but will result in choices that best fit your child's academic profile and needs.

September

- Seniors will meet with their Guidance Counselors twice during Mentor Room to review the College Admissions Process
- Seniors will receive their senior folders with important forms and information. Use resources in the SHS Guidance website & Naviance to obtain more information.
- Visit colleges at every opportunity! The experience of walking on to a college campus will help students as they plan for their future and figure out what type of college they are best suited for.
- Students should register for the October and/or November SAT's or Subject Tests at www.collegeboard.com. For those colleges that require SAT scores, be sure to take advantage of your **four free score reports** when registering! If this is not done and the college requires SAT scores, you will have to make sure official scores are sent by the Collegeboard for an additional fee.
- Students should check their transcript in X2 for accuracy & meet with their Guidance Counselor to check on graduation requirements.
- Attend Senior Parent Night. Check SHS website, Naviance & X2 for announcements.
- Students should check Naviance for important updates and upcoming college representative visits and register if interested in a particular school.
- Students should ask teachers & their Guidance Counselor if they can write them a letter of recommendation. Complete **Student Profiles & provide ample time for the letters to be composed (at least 2**

weeks). Thank you notes should be written to those who wrote the letters of recommendation!

- Students should attend open houses and arrange college visits & interviews. Write thank you notes and e-mails after college interviews & meetings with admissions representatives. **If students miss school, they must bring a note from the college to the Main Office the day they return.**
- Set up your Common Application account at www.commonapp.org
- Seniors should schedule meetings with their Guidance Counselors frequently to touch base on post-graduation planning.
- Encourage students to work hard all year! Colleges see 1st & 2nd term grades. Fight senioritis...colleges can rescind their acceptance if final grades drop drastically!

October

- **Read directions carefully!** College applications can have different essay questions and testing & program requirements. Mistakes can reflect very poorly on candidacy for admission.
- Complete Early Decision/Early Action applications according to specific college deadlines.
- File CSS Profile if seeking financial aid from a private College/University.
- Late registration for November SAT's and if necessary SAT Subject Tests.
- Students should complete application essays & have them proofread by a reliable source.
- Fill out NCAA Clearinghouse Forms if students plan to participate in a Division 1 or 2 athletic program:
<http://eligibilitycenter.org>

- Students should check Naviance for local scholarship information

November-January

- Continue to attend College Open Houses.
- All college applications should be completed and mailed/submitted online. All addressed envelopes, application cover sheets, and requests for an *Official High School Transcript* should be given to your student's Guidance Counselor at least 2 weeks prior to the first college deadline.
- Read directions carefully & keep track of **college application deadlines**. Early action/decision deadlines can start as early as the end of October!
- Attend financial aid night with your parents & watch for **financial aid deadlines**. The FAFSA can be filed after January 1st.

February-May

- Check for announcements regarding Saugus Public Schools scholarships. Follow application directions carefully!
- Wait patiently for admissions letters & think about potential college choices. Students should update college admissions results in Naviance.
- Continue to visit colleges to help make final decisions. Review college acceptances and submit deposits by May 1st.
- Students should reply to colleges that accepted them but have chosen not to attend so those seats may be given to other potential applicants.
- Check Naviance & the SHS Guidance website for important financial aid websites and local scholarships. Contact college financial aid offices or www.mefa.org if you have questions or concerns about your financial aid package.
- Students should inform their Guidance Counselor of admissions decisions & bring in a stamped envelope so final transcripts can be mailed to their college!

Helpful Guidelines for Parents:

- Openly discuss future plans, including financial concerns and any restrictions with your child. This should be done early in the school selection process so that everyone is on the same page.
- Encourage your child to develop independence! They are responsible for balancing homework, sports, work, and other activities now and when they arrive at college. Students should be seeking out help if they are having trouble in school. Self-advocacy is key!
- Contact your child's Guidance Counselor with any questions regarding graduation requirements or post graduation planning.
- Check your e-mail, phone messages, the SHS Guidance website & Naviance for important information regarding college visits, scholarships, financial aid opportunities, standardized tests, and career exploration.
- Be aware of deadlines & keep records of all contacts with schools – phone calls, names or representatives, meetings, etc.
- Attend financial aid night & watch for **financial aid deadlines**. The FAFSA can be filed after January 1st. Check Naviance & the SHS Guidance website for important financial aid websites and local scholarships. Contact college financial aid offices or www.mefa.org if you have questions or concerns about the financial aid package.
- Assist your child with payment of sending testing scores from www.collegeboard.com and college application fees on-line or by sending in a check with application packets.
- Remain positive and encourage your child to work hard in achieving success.

Saugus High School

Student Profile for Teacher Recommendation

Student Name: _____ Teacher: _____

Course(s) taken with teacher: _____

Guidance Counselor: _____ Homeroom: _____

Date of first application deadline: _____ circle one: EA ED RD Rolling

Colleges I may be applying to: _____

List three adjectives you would use to describe yourself:

What is your favorite memory from class?

What assignment(s) did you find most interesting/challenging and why?

What did you learn from this class?

Do you think you will pursue a career related to this field? If yes, please explain. (use back of sheet if necessary)

Please speak with your teacher if you would like to discuss any special circumstances (family/work situations) that took place while you were in class.

Please attach your resume to this form!

For Counselor Use:
Date Submitted by Student: _____
Date Completed: _____

Saugus High School

Student Profile for Guidance Recommendation

Student Name: _____ Student E-mail: _____
Guidance Counselor: _____ Homeroom: _____
Date of first application deadline: _____ circle one: EA ED RD Rolling

As you know, part of the college application process involves a recommendation from your counselor, which helps to summarize your personal & academic strengths and weaknesses. With the increased number of applications colleges/universities are receiving, it is important that admissions officers are supplied with information that can assist them in accepting you over students with equal academic credentials. Completing this form will also help prepare you for college interviews, as well as, job interviews. Please complete this form as honestly & as thoroughly as possible & return it to your counselor **at least 2 weeks before your 1st college deadline. If you're using the Common Application, this form MUST be completed prior to applying.**

Colleges Under Consideration:

Please indicate if you intend to apply early to any of these schools. If you have prioritized your list, please list the schools in order.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

Highest SAT Scores: Math _____ Verbal _____ Writing _____
ACT Score: _____ SAT Subject Test Scores: _____
Will you be re-taking any of these tests this fall? Circle one: No /Yes. If yes, what month _____

Teacher Recommendations: 1. _____ 2. _____

- 1. List 5 adjectives that describe how you see yourself or how someone living with you would use to describe you. Give examples to explain why you chose these.**

- 2. How have you changed as a person/student since freshman year?**

- 3. Describe any unusual circumstances that may have had a negative impact on your academic performance.**

4. Describe your proudest personal accomplishments. Please give examples in order to illustrate your achievements. (Honor roll, NHS, black belt in karate, started a band etc.)

5. Do you have an intended major/career? Did you have a major event or experience that contributed to this decision? If undecided, what classes do you find the most interesting?

6. What do you do with your out-of-school time? Do you have any special interests, talents, skills, and hobbies?

7. Use the chart to describe any employment/sports/community service/club/leadership activities.

Activity	Years involved 9, 10, 11, 12 or hrs/wk	Role/responsibilities/achievements

8. What else would you like someone to know about you that was not requested on this sheet? Feel free to use additional paper.

For Counselor Use:
Date Submitted by Parent: _____
Date Completed: _____

Saugus High School Guidance Department Parent Questionnaire Form – Optional

_____ Printed Name of Student _____ Printed Name of Parent _____ Parent e-mail address

1. What do you consider to be your son/daughter’s most outstanding accomplishments over the past three to four years? _____

2. In what areas has your son/daughter shown the most development and growth during the past three or four years? _____

3. What do you consider to be his/her outstanding personality traits? _____

4. Are there any particular interests, projects, talents, or hobbies you might see that we are not aware of here? _____

5. Has your son/daughter faced any personal challenges or difficult experiences which may have affected his/her academic or emotional growth? _____

6. Is there anything else that you would like me to share in my school statement? Any anecdotes that reflect your son/daughter’s uniqueness and/or personality? _____

Please e-mail completed form to your student’s Guidance Counselor at least 2 weeks prior to the 1st application deadline. Thank You!

Saugus High School Transcript Request & College Application Coversheet

To Student: You must turn in 1 Completed Coversheet per College/University.

Student Name: _____ Name of College/University: _____

How are you applying? Common Application Online Specific College Application Online
 Paper Application Application Deadline: _____ (circle one): EA/ED/RD/Rolling

Attach the following to this coversheet:

- Large Envelope Addressed to College. Print College/University address NEATLY in center of envelope. **No envelope needed if you applied online w/the Common Application.**
- Return Address printed NEATLY in top left-hand corner of envelope:
Saugus High School
Pearce Memorial Drive
Saugus, Ma 01906
- Minimum of 4 stamps per envelope. Keep stamps separate as your counselor will weigh envelope and apply stamps as needed.
- Complete, Signed Application with check (if applicable)
- Essay (Unless submitted online)
- Counselor Recommendation (If using Common Application Invite Counselor under "School Forms")
- Teacher Recommendation (If using Common Application Invite Teachers under "School Forms")
- Had your SAT scores sent directly from www.Collegeboard.com. Saugus High School CEEB Code: 221-885. It is your responsibility to log into your account to make sure these have been sent.**

*** Your Guidance Counselor will include your *Official High School Transcript* in your packet before mailing.**

To allow this process to be completed correctly and punctually, make sure you have

- Passed in everything TOGETHER
- Given out & collected your teacher recommendation forms
- Checked to see if the major to which your applying requires additional information (Example: Art/Photograph Portfolio)

*If the College/University to which you're applying requires your mid-year grades, include a small stamped envelope with this packet.

College Visit Checklist

How to make the most of your trip

Take a look at this list before planning campus trips to make sure that you plan enough time on each campus to really get a sense of what the school—and student life—is really like.

*Be sure to bring a note from the Admissions Office to the SHS Main Office the day you return to school so that your absence is excused. You have 2 excused absences for college visits

- Visit school websites to educate yourself on each school.
- Take a campus tour (check to see if you can sign up for one on the college's website).
- Participate in a group information session at the admissions office.
- Schedule an interview with an admissions officer.
- Get business cards and names of the people you meet, for future contacts.
- Wander around the campus by yourself.
- Ask students what they love/hate about the college.
- Ask students why they chose the college.
- Ask students what they do on the weekends.
- Eat in the cafeteria.
- Try to visit all of the dorms.
- Visit the college library.
- Talk to a professor in your chosen major or in a subject that interests you.
- Sit in on a class that interests you.
- Talk to a student or counselor in the career center.
- Talk to a coach in your chosen sport & attend a team practice. Ask about doing an overnight visit.
- Visit the college bookstore.
- Listen to the college radio station.
- Read the student newspaper, newsletters, bulletin boards...etc.
- Pick up financial aid forms.
- Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.
- Imagine yourself attending this college for four years!**

Notes:

Definitions you need to know!

***Common Application:** Is an online application that can be submitted to multiple colleges. The Common Application is used for undergraduate admissions by over 400 colleges and universities. Only schools that evaluate applications holistically are allowed to use the common application; that is, the admissions staff must take into consideration things like letters of recommendation and the application essay. If a college bases admission solely on GPA and test scores, they cannot be members of the Common Application. Many schools will ask for supplemental essays which are often submitted through the Common Application website.

Recommendations: Statements or letters of endorsement written on a student's behalf during the college admissions process.

Transcript: This is the official document containing the record of a student's academic performance and testing history. The transcript must be issued by the school at which a student is or has been officially enrolled and should be certified by the signature of an authorized school administrator. The school's official seal or watermarked school stationery may also be used to authenticate the transcript

First-Generation Student: A student whose parents have no college experience.

****Early Decision vs. Early Action**

You should understand the differences between early decision and early action before sending in your applications. Keep in mind that the rules may vary somewhat by college. Check with your counselor to make sure you understand your rights and obligations. Below are some important facts about the types of early-application plan.

Early decision plans are binding. By applying early decision, you commit to enrolling in the school if accepted. Although you can apply to only one college for early decision, you may apply to other colleges through the regular admission process. If you're accepted by your first-choice college early, you must withdraw all other applications.

Early action plans are not binding. By applying early action, you apply for admission by an early deadline (before the regular admission deadline) and receive notice of acceptance, denial, or deferment with no obligation to the university to enroll. If you've been accepted, you can choose to commit to the college immediately, or wait until the spring. Under these plans, you may also apply early action to other colleges. Usually, you have until the late spring to let the college know your decision.

Single-choice early action is a new option offered by a few colleges. This plan works the same way as other early action plans, but candidates may not apply early (either early action or early decision) to any other college. You can still apply to other colleges under regular decision plans and are not required to give your final answer to the early-application college until the regular decision deadline.

****Rolling Admissions:** This is a practice used by some institutions to review and complete applications as they arrive, rather than according to a set deadline.

Deferred Admission: A category of admission used in conjunction with early (action, decision, notification, or acceptance) plans to indicate that a student has not been admitted early but will remain in the applicant pool for reconsideration during the review of applications for regular admissions.

Waitlist: An applicant is put on the waitlist when an admissions officer or committee decides to offer the applicant the opportunity to enroll in the institution only if there is space available in the incoming class after fully admitted students have responded to their offers to enroll. This category of admissions is reserved for students whose profiles are strong, but who are marginally qualified in comparison to the overall strength of others in the pool of applicants.

Need-Blind Admission: Full consideration of an applicant and his or her application without regard to the individual's need for financial aid.

Notification Date: The date by which applicants who are accepted for admission to American colleges and universities are expected to notify the institutions of their intent to enroll and make enrollment deposits. That date is often on or around May 1st.

Financial Aid: Financial Aid describes funds awarded to the student to help pay for his or her college education. Funds may come from the federal or state government, the college at which the student enrolls, or private sources.

FAFSA: This is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, a federal form required as the application from all students who wish to apply for need-based financial aid, including grants, loans and work-study awards.

College Scholarship Service (CSS)/Financial Aid Profile: This is a service provided by The College Board to provide personalized student information to higher education institutions for use in awarding scholarships and grants to students eligible to attend those institutions. The CSS Profile may be required in the application process for financial aid at some institutions.

* www.mycollegeoptions.org

**www.collegeboard.com

IMPORTANT WEBSITES!

NAVIANCE:

Career Search, College Preparation, Scholarships:

<https://connection.naviance.com/saugus>

Important forms & upcoming events

<http://www.saugus.k12.ma.us/SHS/guidance>

SAT's, Test Prep & College Searches:

www.collegeboard.com

ACT's:

www.ACT.student.org

COMMON APPLICATION:

www.commonapp.org

FINANCIAL AID:

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.mefa.org

CAREER EXPLORATION:

www.asvabprogram.com

TOP TEN FACTS

STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

- 1) You have the right to request information from colleges and universities without feeling high pressure tactics to persuade you to apply or enroll.
- 2) You have the right to accurate information about each institution's academic programs, facilities, and faculty, along with each institution's retention and graduation statistics.
- 3) You have the right to the names of all accrediting, certifying, or licensing organizations for each institution.
- 4) You have the right to complete information about all direct and miscellaneous expenses, the types of non need-based and need-based financial assistance provided, and the methods by which eligibility is determined.
- 5) You have the right to accurate information about all aspects of campus safety, including institutional crime statistics.
- 6) You have the responsibility to assure that all required items necessary for the completion of your application are received by each institution within the required timeframe.
- 7) Once admitted to a college or university, you have the right to wait until May 1 to respond to an offer of admission and financial aid (unless you have been admitted under a binding Early Decision program).
- 8) You have the right to request in writing an extension to May 1 without penalty if an institution requires an earlier commitment (unless you have been admitted under a binding Early Decision program).
- 9) You have the right to historical information about prior waiting list activity including the number wait-listed, the number ultimately admitted and the availability of housing and financial aid. Colleges and universities cannot require a deposit from you to maintain your place on a waiting list.
- 10) You have the responsibility to submit a deposit to only one institution—and upon submitting that deposit to withdraw from all other institutions to which you have been admitted.



NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION COUNSELING

www.neacac.org