

THE POSTSECONDARY APPLICATION PROCESS

This presentation will begin at 6:00.

Agenda

- Virtual Meeting Norms
- SWHS Counseling Department Introductions
- Applying to Postsecondary During COVID-19
- The Senior Year Postsecondary Application Process

Virtual Meeting Norms

- **Recording:** This session will be recorded and posted on the website
 - ▣ Feel free to turn your webcams off if you'd like
- **Mics:** Please keep microphones muted throughout the presentation
- **Questions:** Post all questions in the Chat – which is being monitored – or save questions until the end of the presentation
 - ▣ **Confidentiality:** Questions will not be confidential due to recording, please follow up with contacting a Counselor or CCC Coordinator if you'd like your question to remain confidential
- **Patience:** Please afford grace and patience regarding technology limits, issues, or delays

Southwest Counseling Department

Jenny Moore



A - Dir

Andrea Baldwin



Dis - Kiz

Shelly Landry



Kla - Rey

Janelle Vogel



Schs - Z

Cecilia
Caro



Miriam
Osman



Counselor – TBN
Rez – Schr

Will be announced
as soon as they
are hired.
In the meantime,
seniors will work
with Ms. Vogel.

Counseling Department Communications

1. We ask students to share specific information with their families
2. Websites:
 - ▣ Southwest website > Departments > Counseling
 - ▣ Southwest website > Departments > AchieveMpls Career & College Center (CCC)
3. Weekly emails
 - ▣ CCC
 - ▣ SWHS Weekly News
4. Social Media
 - ▣ Twitter and Instagram
 - @SWHSCCCC

A horizontal decorative bar at the top of the slide, consisting of an orange square on the left and a blue rectangle on the right.

Applying During COVID-19

First - Take a Deep Breath!

- Admissions Offices are not the “Denial Office”
 - Looking for reasons to let students in, not keep them out

- College admissions offices are trying to build a freshman class/a school community
 - ❖ Looking for diversity of all kinds
 - ❖ Looking for students who want to learn and have demonstrated a commitment to learning
 - ❖ Looking for students who are academically prepared for their college’s academics
 - ❖ Looking for students to be a part of their school community

All of this remains – even during COVID-19.

Angel
Pérez

CEO of
National
Association
for College
Admissions
Counseling
(NACAC)

“So many things that were sacred in the college admissions process may not be sacred anymore. Colleges and universities are reinventing a process that hasn’t changed in over 50 years in the span of a couple months ... and they don’t have another choice.”

Applying During COVID-19

- **Seniors nationwide are impacted**
 - Missing ACT/SAT scores
 - Missing letter grades – (no) impact on GPA
 - Limited extracurricular activities
- **Stay updated on news from colleges you're interested in – follow social media accounts**
 - Test optional?
 - List of schools that changed their test policy this year due to COVID-19: <https://www.collegelife.today.com/tips/organizing/college-not-requiring-sat/>
 - List of schools that already were/are test optional: www.fairtest.org
 - Deadlines?
- **Be flexible**
 - Online touring options
 - Virtual Q&A sessions
 - Virtual college fairs
 - Initiate your own independent project? (Due to limited extracurricular options.)
- **Revisit postsecondary priorities?**
 - Stay closer to home?
 - Gap year?
 - Financial safety schools

Applying During COVID-19

- Many admissions offices are asking applicants to submit what's available to best show what represents them in an academic space
 - ▣ AP or IB scores instead of ACT?
 - ▣ Writing samples from class?
- The college essay
 - ▣ These will likely get closer reads this application season
 - ▣ Advised not to write about COVID – COVID fatigue is real and admissions offices won't want to read thousands of essays about the same topic
- Explaining COVID extenuating circumstances
 - ▣ Common App Additional Information question
 - ▣ Non-Common App – section on app to address COVID?
 - ▣ Admissions officers are real people also struggling with COVID in their own personal and professional lives – they're empathetic to the impact on their applicants

Financial Aid During COVID-19

- Financial aid applications open October 1
 - ▣ FAFSA or MN Dream Act
 - ▣ CSS Profile, if required by the college or university

- The applications collect financial information from 2019 tax returns
 - ▣ If family's financial situation has changed since then:
 - **FIRST**: Submit application using 2019 tax return information
 - **THEN**: Reach out individually to the financial aid office at each institution to explain that your financial situation has changed and ask how you can provide updated information



The Senior Year

Postsecondary Application Process

Primary Focus on College

Student: Project Manager



Students are responsible for:

□ Communication:

- Contact colleges
- Talk with teachers
- Work with school counselor
 - Follow-up as needed
- Keep parents in the loop

□ Completion:

- Application components
- Scholarship research/applications

Families: Support

□ Parent/Guardian

▣ Tangible

- Help with research
- Gather & provide information
- Ask questions
- Recommendation questionnaire in Naviance

▣ Intangible

- Non-judgmental, understanding
- Reality check
- Support parameters around college conversations



In practice...

Child needs...	How parents want to help...	How parents could help...
Essay help	Rework student's first draft, including structure, content and grammar; write essay for student.	Be a sounding board, make broad statements about structure, flow and grammar.
Application completion help	Complete the application.	Sit together to brainstorm answers; remind about deadlines; review for errors.
Answer from admissions	Make the phone call and ask the question.	Role play the conversation or make suggestions for questions.

Components of a College Application

- Online Application
 - Explained further on future slide
- Application fee
 - Fees may be waived for students who qualify for Educational Benefits
- Test scores, if needed
 - Most colleges and universities are test optional this year
 - Official test scores (e.g. ACT scores) cannot be sent by Southwest – student must submit a request to the test company to have a score sent to the colleges they're applying to
 - ACT for ACT scores, CollegeBoard for SAT or SAT Subject Test scores
- Essay(s)
 - Common App essay, individual college's essay questions (where applicable)
- Supplement(s), if needed
 - Examples: art portfolio for art school admissions; musical audition
- Official high school transcript
- School Profile
- School Report
- Application fee waiver request form, if applicable
- Letter(s) of recommendation, if needed
 - Explained further on future slide

STUDENT

STAFF

Types of College Applications

(they're all online)

- The college's application
 - ▣ Can be found on the college's admissions website
- The Common Application – commonapp.org
 - ▣ One application that can be used to apply to multiple colleges if the colleges participate in Common App (tends to be more selective colleges)
 - ▣ Some colleges only use Common App... some colleges accept the Common App and also have their own application... some colleges don't participate in the Common App at all
 - ▣ Large application – only use if it makes sense (e.g. a Common App only school or multiple Common App schools on list of schools you're applying to)
- Use Naviance to determine if a school is a Common App school or not
- The Coalition Application – not necessary unless applying to a Coalition Application ONLY school

Letters of Recommendation

- Do you need one? If so, you must ASK!
 - Some colleges require, some don't – can find this information on the colleges' websites or in Common App if using the Common App to apply to schools
 - **Students are required to speak with teacher and/or counselor no later than one month prior to their first application deadline to request a letter of recommendation in order to have a letter prepared by the deadline**
 - Questionnaires in Naviance required for a letter of recommendation:
 - Teacher letter of recommendation questionnaires
 - Counselor letter of recommendation questionnaire

- **Teacher recommendations:**
 - Academic Core teacher (English, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Language)
 - Junior Year
 - Special programs such as art programs may be exceptions, talk to your Counselor
 - Discuss who student is as a learner in class

- **Counselor recommendations:**
 - Discuss who student is as a wholistic human being and places them in context of high school experience
 - Any special/extenuating circumstances to explain?

The Senior Meeting

(how it all comes together)

- Students are expected to reach out to their Counselor to schedule their Senior Meeting ***no later than one month prior to the first application deadline***
 - Email Counselor to set up Senior Meeting

- **At the Senior Meeting** the student will:
 - Request transcripts to be sent to the colleges they're applying to
 - Work with Counselor to determine if they need Counselor and/or Teacher letters of recommendation
 - Discuss any and all college-related questions the student has
 - Examples: how to send test scores, financial aid/scholarship questions, application questions, etc.

- **After the Senior Meeting:**
 - Student handles their pieces, Counselor and teachers handle their pieces – everything submitted by the deadline
 - Students must update their Counselor if anything changes (for example, changes mind about a school they want to apply to, wants to add a school)
 - Students can always reach out to their Counselor or the CCC Coordinators with any questions throughout this process

General Tips for Completing Apps

- **First Impressions Matter**
 - ❖ Students often communicate electronically with colleges
 - ❖ **Be professional:**
 - Email address: VERY IMPORTANT (best to use school email address)
 - Language – e.g. use proper punctuation, grammar, and capitalization
 - Use spell check
- **Use same username & password for all applications/websites whenever possible**
 - Always WRITE DOWN usernames and passwords
 - College applications, Common Application, Financial Aid applications, ACT online account, etc.
- **Read & follow application directions carefully**
- **Meet ALL deadlines – the postsecondary institutions' and Southwest's!**
 - Colleges have admission application deadlines and financial aid application deadlines, and sometimes separate deadlines for supplemental pieces

Other Tips and Common Mistakes

- Being too casual
 - ▣ Appropriate grammar, punctuation, spelling → this is the time to be FORMAL
- Forgetting to send test scores from test company, if applicable
- Not following directions from each college **after** an application has been submitted
 - ▣ Must read emails and follow through with any additional requests or instructions from the college(s)
- Waiting until the last minute
 - ▣ Rushed applications tend to be weak applications – take the time to submit a strong application

A Word About Deadlines...

- Students can submit their application pieces whenever they're ready (just make sure it's by the application deadline)

- Counselors submit school-based application pieces by the college's deadline (not by earlier, preferred deadlines)
 - ▣ SWHS Counselors do not miss deadlines!
 - ▣ With about 120 seniors per Counselor, SWHS Counselors must prioritize the work by the colleges' deadlines
 - ▣ Colleges are very good at sending students email reminders about what pieces of their application are still missing
 - If the student had their Senior Meeting, they do not need to remind their Counselor to send their transcript or letters of recommendation, etc.
 - Everything will be submitted on time – by the college's deadline

Reminders:

- Students are responsible for scheduling their Senior Meeting with their counselor **no later than one month prior to their first application deadline.**
- Students are responsible for checking their email.
- Students can always reach out to their Counselor or the Career and College Center (CCC) Coordinators with any questions throughout this process.

Non-College Postsecondary Options

- Trades
- Career Certificate Programs
- Gap Year Programs
- Military
- Employment

Visit the CCC website for more information.

Questions and Feedback

- Questions?
- We'd love your feedback!
 - <https://forms.gle/kyEgQD7xDXqhFQtf8>

Presentation available:

Southwest website → Departments → Counseling → Archived Presentations

College Admission Plans

Plan	Definition
Early Decision	Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision both occur early. BINDING
Restrictive Early Action	Students apply early to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.
Early Action	Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular decision response date.
Priority	In applicant's best interest to meet this deadline if it's offered.
Regular	Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time
Rolling	Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render decisions on a rolling basis throughout the admission cycle.