



College Counseling Handbook

2024-2025

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INTRODUCTION

Aloha!

Welcome to the College Counseling process at La Pietra – Hawai‘i School for Girls. We know that planning for college can be both intimidating and challenging but also hopefully exciting, and we are eager to partner with parents and students in this wonderful process.

In this College Counseling Handbook, you will find a variety of information that will help to explain the college admissions process and its various components. We recommend that all students start researching and working on applications early; exposure to the process begins in Junior Seminar, and enactment of the process is through Senior Seminar. Please use this as a guide and supplement to your college-application process.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email, call, or schedule appointments with me.

I look forward to working with you throughout this school year!

Kindly,



Cheyne Nomura
College Counselor & Registrar
La Pietra – Hawai‘i School for Girls



****Please note that all of the following information is subject to change based on modifications made by the government/various organizations in relation to all matters/steps associated with applying for college.****

BEST IMMEDIATE ONLINE RESOURCES:

I am happy to guide you through this college-application process, notably through Senior Seminar and the appointments you make with me. However, if you need some resources while exploring this process on your own time, here are some great websites to use:

[NACAC: National Association for College Admission Counseling](#) [College Board](#)

['Better FAFSA'](#) [Tests and the rest, The College Admissions Industry Podcast](#)

Sallie Mae: [Website](#) / [YouTube](#) / [Webinars](#) / [NITRO: Financial Aid Resources](#)

IMPORTANT DATES, 2024-2025:

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

*All through Senior Seminar:

- Attend sessions with visiting college admissions representatives.
- Start building your College List.
 - [BigFuture via College Board](#) is a good resource to complete this.
- Kindly, professionally begin to request 1-3 teachers to write letters of recommendation for you.
 - *Give them at least 2 weeks' notice, but the sooner the better!
 - Provide these teachers with a copy of your resume in order to assist them with writing your recommendation.
- **September 29: Deadline to [register for October 5 SAT](#)
 - Do this if applying for [Early Decision or Early Action](#).
- Create accounts for:
 - [Common App](#)
 - [Naviance](#)
- Begin to draft your college essays, with guidance provided in Senior Seminar.
 - Prompts for the graded assignment will come from those of the [Common App](#).

OCTOBER:

- October 1: [FAFSA](#) 2025-2026 projected to open.
- October 1: [College Scholarship Service \(CSS\) Profile forms](#) opens.
 - [Click here to view list of participating CSS institutions and programs](#)
 - [CSS Profile Resource](#)
- October 18: Deadline to [register for November 2 SAT](#)
- October 5: Deadline to take the SAT if you are applying for Early Action/Decision
- October 9: PSAT for 10th and 11th graders

NOVEMBER:

- *Deadline for Early Action and Early Decision applications—be sure to check when the school-specific deadline is.
- November 22: Deadline to [register for December 7 SAT](#)
- Follow-up with teachers to see if they began working on your recommendation letter yet.

DECEMBER:

- December 7: Final date to take SAT for Fall 2025 admissions.
- Typically when colleges will request that a copy of your official transcript be sent to them if you applied via Early Action/Decision.
- Make sure the final list of colleges you've chosen to apply to are indicated in your Naviance account in order to ensure transmission of supporting materials.
- Retake SAT or SAT Subject Tests if necessary. This is your last chance to take them for UC consideration.
- December-February: Regular Application Deadlines

JANUARY-MARCH:

Typically a lull in the process, now that you've submitted all of your application materials. That said, during this time, you should...

- Continue to keep your grades up!
 - You're not out of the woods yet—colleges will still want to see your semester 2 grades.
- Apply for [scholarships](#)
 - You will likely need letters of recommendation for these, too, so ask, again, your teachers to submit them for you.
- If able, schedule visits with the schools you've applied to.
 - Getting a feel for the schools in-person and meeting the various faculty and staff should help you to narrow down your decision.
- Write thank-you letters to the teachers who wrote recommendation letters for you.

APRIL:

- Take deep breaths and prepare to receive acceptance 😊 (or rejection 😞) letters from the colleges you've applied to.
- Please inform Mr. Nomura of all of the colleges you applied to, whether they accepted you or not, and the scholarships/grants they offered to you.
- Have your parents/guardians update the FAFSA/CSS forms, if they hadn't already.

MAY:

- May 1: Decision Day!
 - Inform the college you plan to attend, and, as a courtesy, thank and inform the other colleges that you respectfully decline.

SENIOR TIMELINE 2024-2025

August-September:

- Update your list of colleges to 6-10 schools. Be sure to add schools to your Common App and Naviance accounts.

- Decide if you will be applying through Early Decision, Early Action or Regular Decision admissions and update this information in Naviance.
- Check your email!
- Move College List into Naviance to ensure transcripts & recommendations are submitted.
- Register for fall SAT and/or ACT test dates and make sure to register early! (www.collegeboard.com for SAT and www.actstudent.org for ACT).
- Attend meetings with college admissions representatives, which take place during period 3.
- Start requesting letters of recommendation from teachers. Be sure to ask your teachers for some time to go over your resume and to let them know the schools you are applying for and their deadlines. After your meeting, officially request your letters of recommendation from your teachers in Naviance.
- Estimate your [financial aid needs](#).
- Register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center if you are an athlete planning to continue playing a sport in college (ncaaclearinghouse.net).

October:

- Early October:* Deadline to submit Early Action/Early Decision contract through Common App (instructions [here](#)).
- October 4, 2024: College Fair field trip at the Hawaii Convention Center.
- Complete the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile forms
- Attend meetings with college admissions representatives. The schedule will be posted online. Please follow La Pietra's college visit policy and make sure you check in with your teachers for any missing work.
- Begin your applications, monitor your progress, and check in with your counselor often. Be aware of college entrance requirements to complete them as well as essay requirements, deadlines, fees, etc.
- Register for November or December SAT/ACT. (www.collegeboard.com for SAT or www.actstudent.org for ACT). Please note that you are responsible for making sure your official SAT or ACT score reports are directly sent from those organizations to the colleges you are applying to.
- Update your Naviance account in order to ensure transcripts are sent from La Pietra directly to the colleges you are applying to. It is your responsibility to make sure you have everything updated in Naviance before your applications are due.
- Submit your FAFSA and CSS Profile (if required by colleges) to meet colleges' financial aid deadlines.
- Request letters of recommendation to teachers via Naviance after having asked them *in-person*.

November/December:

- Complete the financial aid (FAFSA) application.
- Continue working on applications.
- Meet with your counselor to ask any questions you might have.
- Keep a copy of everything you send to the colleges.
- November 30th is normally the deadline for all UC/Cal State applications.** Do not miss this!
- Some deadlines may occur during La Pietra's winter break. Be aware of those deadlines and request all materials before December 1st.
- Remember midterm academic reports are sent to all of the colleges- your grades count! If your

college requires a hard copy mailed out, this must be turned into Mr. Nomura before December 1st.

January/February:

- Follow up to submit any needed documentation for financial aid/scholarships.
- Continue working on applications. Submit completed applications (regular decision).
- Look up scholarship opportunities online.
- Ask your counselor any questions you might have or meet with your counselor.

March:

- Spring Break!
- College Admission Decision Season- Mid-March to April 1

April:

- Complete research on colleges you are admitted to for the decision-making process. Find a place that will best help support you in completing your academic and personal goals. Consult with your family!

May:

- May 1 is National College Decision Day! Submit your enrollment deposit to notify the college you will be attending there in the fall. Please do not double-deposit.
- Work hard and finish your studies the best you can! Colleges review final transcripts and may rescind an admissions offer if there is an unreasonable drop in academics.
- Submit information to your counselor on where to send your final transcript. Please note that La Pietra will only send one final transcript.
- Take AP exams and send scores to the college you plan to attend.
- Make sure all fees are paid on time to ensure the release of your final transcript.
- Send in a housing deposit, register for classes/placement tests and sign up for the college's orientation session.
- Thank all who have helped you with the process. We are all so proud of you!
- Graduate!

COLLEGE RESEARCH INFORMATION

Choosing the best fit for you!

As you research and review the many colleges in the United States and abroad, here are a few of the common

considerations students look at as they figure out which school they would like to apply to. As you decide which of these is most important to you, keep in mind that the college you add to your list should help you to realize your goals academically and personally.

1. SETTING AND LOCATION

Where is the college located—West coast, east coast, etc.? Is it an urban, rural or suburban campus? Is it primarily a residential or commuter campus? How accessible is the college—for instance, how close is the nearest airport? Is the college in a city, close to a major city, or far away from one? How easy is it to get around campus—on foot? by bike? Do you need a car? How convenient is the public transportation system? Is the school co-ed or single gender?

2. SIZE

How big is the college, and what are its distinctive features? You're used to class sizes of 10 to 15. How do you feel about classes with 200-500 people? Or larger classes? As size is relative to each person, keep in mind what you are looking for in a college.

3. PROGRAM AND PHILOSOPHY

Is it a college or university? Colleges offer primarily a liberal arts curriculum, while universities are made up of different colleges and graduate schools and will offer a variety of majors that might not exist at a smaller college. What kind of majors and minors does it offer? Are you able to do a double major? What is the study abroad program like?

4. ACADEMIC RIGOR

How difficult or challenging are the courses? Do you want to be active in class discussions? What is the workload? What type of student body/learning environment exists on campus? How are students able to choose their classes? Are certain students given priority for certain majors? What is the freshman retention rate? Graduate rate? Job placement rate?

5. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL LIFE

What types of activities, sports, and other opportunities are popular with the student body at this school? Can you play sports at the level you want? What do students do on the weekends? Are there fraternities and sororities? Are students conservative, moderate, liberal, etc.? What is the tone of the college and do you feel like you would be a good fit? What kind of student resource programs does the school have?

6. COST

Cost will vary widely institution to institution (public/private, in-state and out-of-state). How much financial aid and/or scholarships will you need to afford an education at this institution? Though, you should not immediately eliminate a college option based on presented cost, as you may very well qualify for financial aid and scholarships.

7. COLLEGE MATCH

Have you realistically matched yourself as a student with the college's stated admissions requirements? Does your GPA approximately match the average GPA of the college's current freshman class? Do your SAT/ACT scores fall within the range of the top 75% of its current freshman class? Note: If your answer is "yes" to both these questions, there is a good chance that your personal academic profile will match the one for which the college is looking

8. OTHER

There may be other criteria that will be important to you as you complete your research. For current information on these requirements, check the college guidebooks and college catalogs in libraries, bookstores, and our offices.

Several good guidebooks are:

- *Four-Year Colleges 2020 (Peterson's Four Year Colleges)*
- *The College Handbook (College Board) 2020*
- *The Fiske Guide to Colleges 2020*
- *The Best 380 Colleges (Princeton Review) 2020*
- *Colleges That Change Lives*
- *Loren Page Complete Book of Colleges 2020 (Princeton Review)*

**If you're still having trouble selecting some colleges to apply to, [BigFuture via College Board](#) is a great resource to help you make your selections.

BUILDING YOUR COLLEGE LIST

Continue to think, read, and research so you can narrow your choices. As you build your list of safety, target, and reach schools (keep on reading for more info on that), make sure to avoid applying to a school that you would not gladly attend. Remember to keep the following factors in mind (along with what you determine to be important):

- Pros/cons of each school
- Percentage of applicants accepted
- Enrollment size of the college/university
- Location and distance from home
- Academic program of your intended major
- Freshman class profile
- Application fee and deadlines
- Athletics, student life, housing options
- Costs and financial aid information
- General impression of tone, academics, students, admission

A total of six to eight carefully considered and subsequently selected schools is generally recommended. We recommend 2-3 schools in the safety, target, and reach categories. Your list should include places where you'll be happy to study at, no matter the category.

- **Safety schools:** The safety school is one in which your academic records (GPA, SAT/ACT scores, class rank, etc.) are stronger than the school's range for the average freshman. It's also a great idea to include financial safety schools on your list as well. You can find the school's range of academic stats for last year's class on their Admissions page. An example of a safety school would be a local community college.
- **Target schools:** The match school is one where your academic records fall within or are above

the school's range for the average freshman from last year's class.

- **Reach schools:** A reach school is a school where your academic record falls below the school's range for the average freshmen from last year's class, but you feel you might have a chance at acceptance.

A mix of these categories will ensure that you have a college list that includes back-up options while also allowing you to pursue your ambitious goals. More in-depth information and explanations of these categories can be found online as well. Here is one recommended site:

<https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/dream-match-safety-schools>.

COLLEGE VISITS

Representatives of colleges and universities from across the country visit La Pietra, mainly in the fall. The meetings, which we schedule with these reps, are a great way to find out about schools, either as a substitute for visiting those schools personally, or as a first step in determining whether or not you will visit them.

College representatives have the latest information about their schools to share with you. Those college representatives are often the ones reading applications. It is not unusual for a representative to become a personal contact at many points in the application process.

College visits will be scheduled whenever possible during Senior Seminar class periods. Permission from your teacher must be obtained at least a day in advance of a college visit if you will miss class time to attend. Please note that should you miss a part of class time, you are expected to contact your teacher to make up any missed assignments, tests, and content. We want to make sure you have great grades in your classes! The schedule of college visits is printed in the College Counseling section of the La Pietra website.

Here are some recommendations for getting the most out of your college visits:

1. Do a little research on your college to see what questions pop up or if you would like clarification from the college rep on anything.
2. Make sure to write out your questions and keep all your college visits (and all other senior counseling materials) in one place—a binder, notebook, etc. Don't forget to take notes!
3. Make sure to introduce yourself and ask great questions! First impressions are important and many times, the college representative is also the one reading your application. Also, once you have asked a question, make sure to maintain eye contact and pay attention to the answer!
4. Make sure to follow up with a "thank you" email after the visit. ☺

*Visiting college campuses is also a great way to get a feel for the school's personality, resources, and campus. If you're not able to travel to the school, many colleges offer virtual tours. This information is usually located on the college's admissions page.

In general, the most efficient way to obtain application forms, catalogs, and other college materials is to request them online. Application forms and other college materials will also be available during college visits. Feel free to ask!

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND QUESTIONS

The Hawaii National College Fair also occurs during mid-Fall and in Spring. We will inform you when these fairs take place and encourage you to visit the fair to speak with representatives and pick up information. It's also a great opportunity to introduce yourself to various admissions counselors, especially if the particular college or university does not visit La Pietra in the fall. We encourage you to ask great questions and ask for materials for your research process.

Here are some questions to think about and ask:

- What's most distinctive about this college/university?
- What are considered the strongest departments? Most popular majors?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college's advising system?
- Is the emphasis for professors on teaching or research (or a mix of both)?
- What is the college doing to address issues of diversity? Safety? Academics?
- What are the study abroad and internship opportunities offered at your school?
- What is the typical course load for freshmen?
- Describe the study body in terms of diversity, social values, and attitudes?
- What kind of person would not be a good fit?
- What is student housing like? What is the housing requirement at your school?
- What student organizations and activities are offered on campus?
- To what extent are admissions "need blind" with regard to a family's financial situation? To what extent do you meet full demonstrated need?
- What is the freshman retention rate? Job placement or graduate school placement?

APPLICATION INFORMATION

College applications can be overwhelming as there are usually various requirements, different deadlines, and other moving pieces to the puzzle. Here are the general requirements for college applications, but make sure to check out your colleges' various admissions pages for the most up-to-date information. Generally, applications include the following:

1. College application

- Is it the school's actual application or can you apply through Common App (or another system)? Does the college require a paper or online format?

2. Application fees

- Generally, they can range from free to up to \$80 or more. Sometimes you can request/get a fee waiver by attending an admissions visit or event or by meeting certain economic criteria. Applications will not be processed until application fees are paid (generally these can be paid online).

3. Transcripts/Schedule of classes

- Colleges will require the most up-to-date official transcripts directly from La Pietra. We will either send official copies via mail, Naviance or by uploading directly online through Common App. This depends on

the college's preferences and systems.

- Test scores (AP, SAT, and ACT) will not be posted on official transcripts. Students are expected to send out their own test scores through their Collegeboard.org or act.org account.
- Please note that La Pietra sends a transcript generally at the start of the application process, at the midterm timeframe in December, and a final transcript to one school once the senior has finalized a college choice for the next year.
- Seniors should not be changing classes in the middle of the year, as this affects the reports being sent to schools.

4. Test scores

- Colleges may require either the ACT or SAT test scores. More information about which schools are and are not test-optional can be [found here](#). These score reports must be sent directly from the testing agency. Score ordering information can be found here directly on the College Board or ACT website.
- We recommend that you send score reports a few weeks in advance to allow the colleges to receive the score report and file it correctly. Make sure to check your application status to make sure your colleges receive your scores!

5. Essays

- Many schools will request 1-2 essays and sometimes short-essays. You will have to check each college's site to see what writing they require.
- If you are applying through the Common App, you may be required to submit one of the Common App essays. *There will be a unit in Senior Seminar on how to write a college essay based on the Common App prompts.* If you would like additional help with your essays beyond the lessons and feedback provided, you may check in and request for help. Please make sure to plan ahead of the deadline so that there is ample time for you to write your essays and for Mr. Nomura to review; you should ask at least 3 weeks prior to the due date.

6. Letters of Recommendation

- Many times a college will require letters of recommendation from your school counselor, teachers, or other members of the community. Please check your college's site for more details.
- Once you have found out who needs to write your letter of recommendation, you must ask your teacher or other community members, in person, to see if it's possible for them to write your letter.
 - You should ask at least two individuals, depending on your colleges' admission requirements, and have a few back-up ideas for writers in case a teacher is unable to write the letter.
 - Make sure to give your recommenders ample time to write your letter of recommendation (at least 3 weeks or longer). Don't forget to give them your resume as well!
 - It should be a teacher who knows you well, has seen you in the classroom in your sophomore or junior year, and has witnessed your growth/success in their classroom.
 - Set up time to speak with your teacher about writing you a letter of recommendation. Make sure you come prepared so your teacher and you can discuss the specifics of the letter and figure out the timeline.
 - Make sure you give them a copy of your resume and any other helpful information. More info is helpful in this situation!
 - Finally, be sure to give your letter of recommendation writer a thank-you card, as it takes time and effort to write each student a letter. ☺

8. Extracurricular Activities

Most colleges want to know what you have been up to during your high-school career. There is usually a section where you will need to write in what activities, clubs, volunteering, awards, etc. you have earned or done during the past few years, and these don't *only* need to have been affiliated with La Pietra. For example, are you a Girls Scout? Do you tutor on your own time? Do you help to coach a sport? If so, include these!

IMPORTANT: WHEN APPLYING ELECTRONICALLY, BE SURE TO LET MR. NOMURA KNOW THE COLLEGES TO WHICH YOU HAVE APPLIED, AND WHEN, SO YOUR TRANSCRIPT AND OTHER SUPPORTING MATERIALS MAY BE SENT TO THEM, AND WE HAVE A RECORD FOR YOUR FILES.

- Please also let him know about your individual acceptances and rejections for schools and scholarships.

DEADLINES AND APPLICATION PLANS

Colleges have varying due dates for receipt of applications. The University of California system, for example, accepts applications only in the month of November. Most other deadlines are November 1 to March 1, but you must check specific colleges' due dates.

Below are the types of Application Deadlines:

- **Early Decision:** Some universities allow students to apply as early as October and November (deadlines will vary from college to college) so that they will hear back at an early date. With Early Decision, students can only apply to one school as an Early Decision application. Parents, students, and the college counselor will need to verify that there is only one Early Decision application and sign off on a form. If you are accepted, you will be required to go. Generally, it is recommended to apply Early Decision only if you know this is your first choice, that you will go if you are admitted, and that you surpass the academic records of last year's average freshman as the Early Decision applicant pool will be competitive. If this is not the case, it is NOT recommended that you apply Early Decision.
 - **Common App Early Decision Agreements in Naviance:** *Three parties need to sign the Common App Early Decision Agreement (EDA): The student, parent, and counselor. The student and parent will do their parts using the Common App, and the counselor will complete his or her part in eDocs on the Send tab. The counselor does not need to wait for the parent to sign the EDA using the Common App before they can sign the EDA in Naviance.*
- **Early Action:** For Early Action deadlines, students will normally apply by November and will hear back between December and January. Early Action applications do not require students to attend if they are accepted. You can apply to as many schools as you would like under the Early Action plan. Besides hearing back earlier from institutions (and being able to compare financial aid/scholarship packages), many schools' scholarship deadlines coincide with or around the Early Action deadlines (please check college websites for particular deadlines).
- **Rolling Admissions:** Spots for rolling admissions institutions are on a first-come, first-serve basis as long as the application requirements are met and there are still spots remaining. There is usually a priority deadline so it is highly recommended to meet it to allow the best chance for admission and bigger financial aid packages. Once the Rolling Admissions deadline has passed, it can be difficult to secure an acceptance due to numbers.

If you have any questions on which deadline you should be applying for, please contact Mr. Nomura.

TESTING INFORMATION

As stated in the College Applications section of this guide, many colleges have become [test-optional](#) regarding the SAT and ACT. While we wish we could tell you straight away which colleges are and are not, we simply can't. Therefore, La Pietra recommends that students take their first SAT and/or ACT in the spring or summer of their junior year. This allows students time to take a second testing administration in early fall (October-December) of their senior year, especially since scholarship opportunities may require it. (Even if not, it may be good to include your SAT scores on the resumes you submit.) Check the dates for SAT and/or ACT testing and register/pay fees online. Most schools throughout the country will accept either the SAT or the ACT. You'll need to check the admission requirements of the colleges you're thinking about to see if they also require SAT Subject tests. Assuming they do, you'll want to take the SAT Subject Test(s) in October, November, or December if you did not take the tests earlier.

*It is recommended to register and take the SAT or ACT earlier in your academic career to make college admissions deadlines and to allow time for possible retests. Please make sure to double-check your colleges' testing requirements to make sure you meet them and send them in on time.

Recommended Testing Timeline:

Junior Year:








- Fall (usually October): La Pietra will administer the PSAT for all enrolled students.
- February/March: [Register](#) for the SAT or ACT to take in March, May, or June 2025.
 - **These spring tests will be administered digitally.
- Summer: If you opted not to take the SAT in the spring or were not happy with your scores, use this time to study for the SAT or enroll in a preparation course.

Senior Year:

- (Re)Take the SAT in October, November, or December.

SAT/SAT II

The SAT tests critical reading, math, and writing with an optional essay. The Subject Tests test knowledge in particular academic subjects. See sat.collegboard.org for more information.

SAT Test Date*	Registration Deadline	Deadline for Changes, Regular Cancellation, and Late Registration**
Aug 24, 2024	Aug 9, 2024 	Aug 13, 2024
Oct 5, 2024	Sept 20, 2024 	Sept 24, 2024
Nov 2, 2024	Oct 18, 2024 	Oct 22, 2024
Dec 7, 2024	Nov 22, 2024 	Nov 26, 2024
Mar 8, 2025	Feb 21, 2025 	Feb 25, 2025
May 3, 2025	Apr 18, 2025 	April 22, 2025
June 7, 2025	May 22, 2025 	May 27, 2025

SAT & SUBJECT TESTS 2024-2025

SAT Test Date	Registration Deadline	Deadline for Changes, Regular Cancellation, & Late Registration
August 24, 2024	August 9, 2024	August 13, 2024
October 5, 2024	September 20, 2024	September 24, 2024
November 2, 2024	October 18, 2024	October 22, 2024
December 7, 2024	November 22, 2024	November 26, 2024
March 8, 2025	February 21, 2025	February 25, 2025
May 3, 2024	April 18, 2024	April 22, 2025
June 7, 2025	May 22, 2025	May 27, 2025

La Pietra's School Code: **120036**

To find more information on testing with accommodations, please [click here](#).

- Please note accommodation requests take time, so it is recommended to contact your counselor at least 2-3 months in advance of the registration deadline to get the necessary paperwork done and submitted.

To find more information on ordering/sending test scores to colleges, please check out this link:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/scores/sending-scores/how-to-send>

ACT

The ACT differs from the SAT program in that it consists of four sections: reading, writing, math, and science. There is also an (optional) essay component as well. We recommend taking the ACT with Essay as many colleges require the essay component. *If you do not take the essay component in a testing administration but need to, you will be required to register for and take the full ACT (the four sections plus essay). See actstudent.org for more information.

ACT TESTS 2024-2025

[Click here for more information on registering](#)

Test Date	Register By
September 14, 2024	August 9, 2024
October 26, 2024	September 20, 2024
December 14, 2024	November 8, 2024

La Pietra's School Code: **120036**

For students who would like to request for testing accommodations, please see the ACT website for more details. Please note accommodation requests take time, so it is recommended to contact your counselor at least 6-8 weeks in advance of the registration deadline to get the necessary paperwork done and submitted.

For more information on ordering scores to send to colleges, please [click here](#).

FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION

College costs can be very intimidating when families start comparing costs. Some resources that can help with overall costs are financial aid and scholarships.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid may be available, but you must apply for aid in order to be considered for financial aid. Parents will need to fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and, for some colleges, the CSS Profile, which we will receive in the fall, administered by the College Scholarship Service for a fee.

What financial aid can I receive with the FAFSA®?

Fill out the FAFSA® to access federal financial aid like Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grants. The FAFSA® may, depending on qualifications, also give you access to a variety of loans, such as subsidized loans, unsubsidized loans, PLUS Loans, and Perkins Loans. The FAFSA will be available in October 2024, and families will be able to use their tax information from the previous years.

'Better FAFSA®'

The current Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) is the standard, most commonly used source of applying for financial aid, which colleges use to assess financial aid eligibility. The FAFSA® form is an application that students and families need to complete to apply for federal student aid, such as federal grants, work-study funds, and loans. Completing and submitting the FAFSA® form is free, and it gives students access to the largest source of financial aid to help pay for higher education. Below are changes that were made to the FAFSA® beginning in December 2023:

- 120 to 36 questions.
 - There won't be any questions about housing plans (dorms, off-campus, etc.)
 - In one of these questions, instead of inputting all tax information, you can authorize, with the mere checking of a box, for the IRS to pull your tax data.
 - **If parents are married but file separately, both parents will need to create accounts and check the box - dual authorization.
 - **No changes for divorced parents—the Better FAFSA® will use the financial- and tax information from the parent, who holds more than 50% of time living with the child; the other parent will not need to complete the Better FAFSA® nor authorize tax data to be pulled by the IRS.
- The Expected Family Contribution (EFC) went away and was instead replaced by the [Student Aid Index \(SAI\)](#):

- “Financial aid administrators (FAAs) subtract the SAI from each student’s cost of attendance to determine their need for federal student financial assistance offered by the U.S. Department of Education (the Department).”
- This is expected to be a more accurate reading on what families can contribute to their student’s college expenses every year based on information input into the FAFSA, as opposed to the EFC, which often provides an inaccurate estimate, and is a good change, because the indicated EFC is what colleges/the government thinks/expects you to pay, even if you cannot meet that number. Thus, colleges will be able to use the SAI amount to determine which families are in most need of aid/assistance.
- Net Price Calculators on colleges’ websites may also be impacted, and families will need to read up on how each college they are applying to will accommodate the implementation of the SAI.

The **College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile** and **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)** are two tools that students can use to receive financial aid for college. The major difference is that the FAFSA® provides federal grants, loans, and other types of government assistance, and the CSS Profile is an application that universities use to gauge how much non-federal financial aid you need.

What financial aid can I receive with the CSS Profile?

Colleges and universities that accept [CSS Profiles](#) use the forms to calculate institutional aid. The institutional aid available varies from school to school but usually includes scholarships, grants, and work-study programs. Universities may use the CSS Profile to determine how much help you need from state grants, loans, scholarships, work-study funds, and tuition assistance. Each school has its own CSS Profile deadline, but [many of them fall between January 1 and March 31](#).

***Both the FAFSA and the CSS Profile may be filed online. It is strongly advised, however, that you download forms to use as worksheets before completing the on-line applications.*

**You should only file the CSS Profile if required by the institution you are applying to.*

As a reminder, parents and students please make sure your FAFSA®/CSS Profile are filed before their deadlines and that you check your email for any important updates as financial aid is an important matter between various college Financial Aid Offices and families.

NEED-BASED AID

Individual colleges determine financial aid packages based upon the information provided by you on several forms: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®), the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile, and the college’s own institutional forms. These forms will help the financial aid office determine the estimated family contribution (EFC) to the student’s educational costs.

GRANTS

Grants are funds that do not have to be repaid. Grants are usually awarded on the basis of need alone and can come from a variety of sources: Pell Grants (federal money), state grants (usually available only to students attending college in their home state), and grant money from the college’s own resources.

LOANS

Loans must be repaid, generally after you have graduated or left school, and usually have lower interest rates than commercial loans. The amount of these federal student loans are capped to ensure that students are not

overburdened with debt when they leave school. There are also federal loans available to parents if their child is enrolled in school at least half-time and makes satisfactory academic progress. Parents may borrow up to the difference between the cost of education and other financial aid awarded. The loan, which is not based on parents' income, has a variable interest rate and repayment begins immediately.

WORK STUDY

A College Work Study Program involves earning money as payment for a job, usually one arranged for you by the college. Students normally work up to ten hours a week in an on-campus job selected by the student. The money comes to the student in the form of a paycheck and can be used for college expenses.

MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

Unlike the National Merit program and competitive scholarships sponsored by businesses and community service organizations, "no-need" awards are generally awarded by an institution specifically for use at that institution. They might also be sponsored by a religious, ethnic, or professional group for students who belong to that religious or ethnic group or aspire to that profession. Some businesses also sponsor scholarships for the children of employees. Students should inquire with the schools they apply to about merit scholarships.

Some great areas to find scholarships are through online search websites, college scholarship pages, and books in your College Counseling Office and in libraries/bookstores. Many scholarship deadlines will be posted for spring of your senior year but there are a few with fall deadlines so keep on the lookout for that!

Information on scholarships can be found online or through other local organizations such as churches, banks, places of employment. We highly encourage you to research scholarships online throughout the year as there are many resources that are available online. Mr. Nomura will regularly update the Naviance portal with scholarship information.

As most college admissions applications will be completed by the end of fall, students should be concentrating their efforts on looking for and filling out scholarship applications in the fall and especially the spring. Mr. Nomura can help with scholarship applications by looking them over and/or reviewing essays, but students are responsible for looking through the scholarship information and going through the submission process. Just remember: a few hours of work can pay off big in the scholarships arena!

Some recommended websites:

- www.fastweb.com
- www.Hawaiicommunityfoundation.org

BEFORE YOU APPLY: NAVIANCE

Logging in You can access Naviance through [this link](#). Every student and parent needs a registration code to register. If you need or have lost your registration code, please contact Mr. Nomura. If you misplaced your password, click "forgot password" link on the home page.

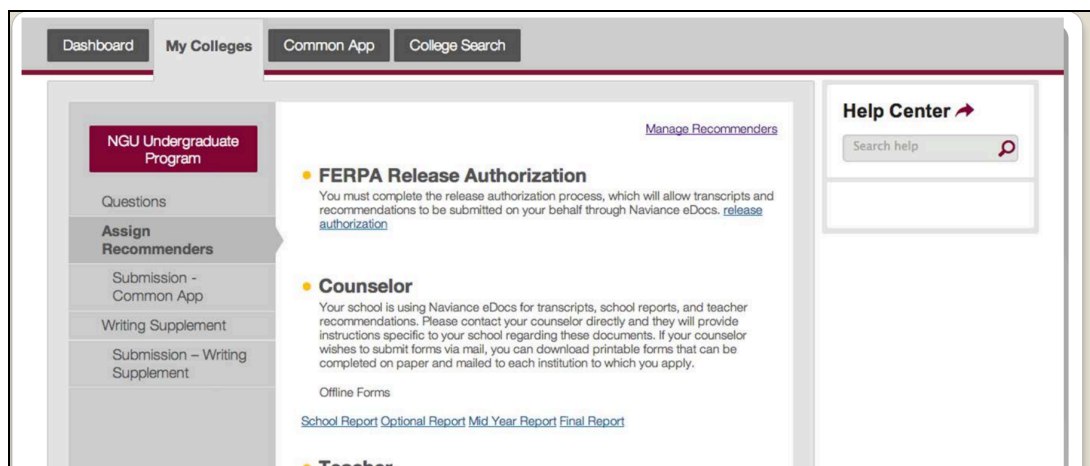
Before you begin your applications, please go through this CHECKLIST:

1. Waive your right (given under FERPA) to read/have access to your counselor- and teacher LORs.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), students have a right to see their academic file, which includes letters of recommendations. Colleges ask you to (and would prefer you to) waive this right in order

to keep recommendations confidential. Students must choose whether to waive their right to read their recommendations or not.

- After you have logged into Common App (www.commonapp.org), go to “College Search” tab, then add 1 college you are sure you are going to apply to. (You can use “search” option to help you with this- BE SURE TO CLICK “ADD”) *Once you link to Naviance the rest of your schools listed in “Colleges I’m applying to” in Naviance will also link *You must add all your schools to the “Colleges I’m applying to” Naviance list.
- Click the box to authorize La Pietra to release your high school transcript to all colleges to which you are applying.
- **TO SIGN FERPA WAIVER in Common APP :** Go to “My Colleges” tab and then “Recommenders and FERPA”. Under “FERPA Release Authorization” read release authorization and click appropriate check-boxes.

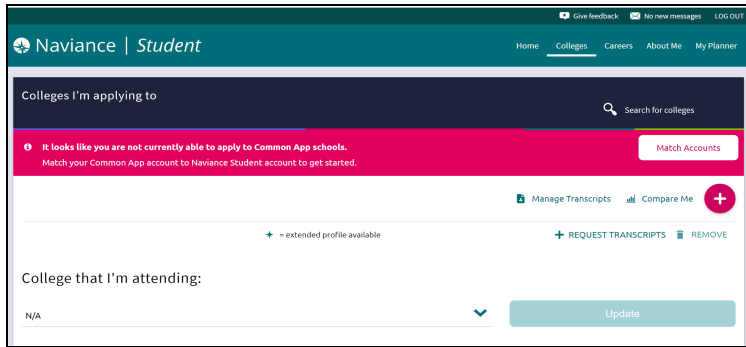
A screenshot of the 'Release Authorization' form. It features a progress indicator with two steps: '1 Instructions' (completed) and '2 Form'. The form text includes a checked checkbox for authorizing record release, a 'Please select one:' section with radio buttons for waiving or not waiving the right to review recommendations, and a warning that selections cannot be changed. At the bottom, there are fields for 'Signature' and 'Date' (07/01/2013).

2. Verify your Common Application Account in NAVIANCE

Naviance and the Common Application are linked and work cooperatively throughout the application process. It is VERY IMPORTANT that your Common Application username and password be entered CORRECTLY into Naviance. Until this happens, your counselor will not be able to send your transcripts to schools and your application status will not be trackable.

- To enter your Common Application username and password, log in (to the student’s account) -> Click on the “Colleges Tab” at the top of the screen -> under my colleges, click on “Colleges I am Applying To.”

A blue box titled “Important Privacy Notice for Common Application” will appear. Scroll to the bottom of the blue box to where it says PLEASE ENTER YOUR COMMON APPLICATION ONLINE USERNAME AND PASSWORD. Enter the Username and password. Click submit.



3. Indicate if you are using the Common Application for each application

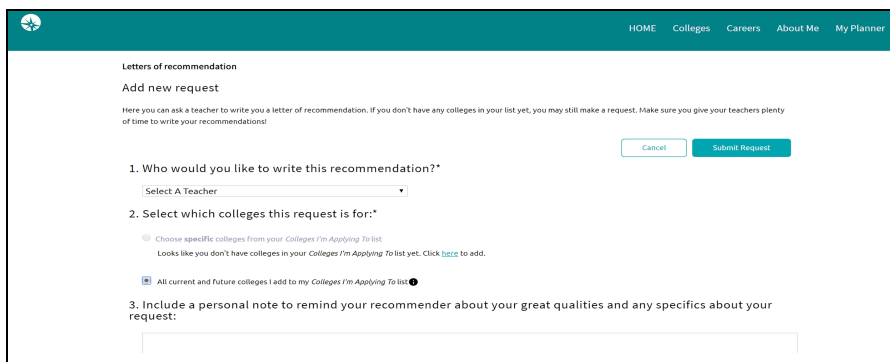
Some schools that accept the Common Application also offer the option of their own application instead (e.g. priority applications). It is VERY IMPORTANT to indicate whether you are choosing the Common Application or not. If a school accepts the Common Application but you choose not to use it, your counselor is unable to send your transcripts, school profile and recommendations electronically and will have to send your documents via postal mail.

- To indicate whether you are using the Common App, log in (to the student’s account) -> Click on the “Colleges Tab” at the top of the screen -> under my colleges, click on “Colleges I am Applying To.” All schools for which you have requested transcripts will be listed under “Colleges I am Applying To.” Next to each school that accepts the Common Application, under the heading “Applying via the Common App,” choose Yes or No.

4. Request Teacher Recommendations

Before requesting recommendations through Naviance, make sure you have spoken to the teacher in person and they have agreed to write you a letter. You must then make the request electronically.

- To request electronically, log in (to the student’s account) -> Click on the “Colleges Tab” at the top of the screen -> under my colleges, click on “Colleges I am Applying To.” Scroll down, under the heading “Teacher Recommendations,” click on “Add/Cancel requests.” ElectronicCommon App School Mail-Only School Electronic- Non Common App School
- Under the heading “teacher” use the drop-down options to find the 2 (or more) teachers you are asking. Click “Update Requests” (see below).



PARTS OF THE APPLICATION

Submitted by Student:

The Application Form

You are responsible for completing an application form and submitting it by the college deadline. Many schools accept The Common Application, the Coalition Application, or the Universal College Application. No matter what school or what application, these may be important components:

1. Personal and educational data: Name, address, phone number, email, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, and standardized test scores.
2. Honors and awards
3. Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities
4. Employment, internships, and summer activities. (Some colleges allow you to submit a résumé to supplement the activity section of their application.)
5. Essays: Both short-answer and a longer personal essay are sometimes required.
6. Disciplinary information
7. Application fee: Many colleges will accept fee waivers which can be obtained from your counselor.
8. For certain majors, students might be required to audition or be asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work.

Standardized Test Scores- SAT/ACT/AP

-Testing agencies will send your scores to the colleges that you request.

All Financial Aid Documentation- FAFSA, CSS

-FAFSA opens in October 2024.

Submitted by Counselor/School

Official Transcript

Your transcript is a record of all your high school courses, grades, and credits. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.

School Profile/ Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form

If required, the high school is responsible for submitting this form to the college. However, you will need to request that it be sent. It is important to know and follow your school's procedures.

Mid-Year Report Form

If required, it will be submitted by your high school. This report will usually be sent after semester 1 grades have been finalized.

Teacher Recommendation Form (*once uploaded by teacher*)

The teacher is responsible for uploading their letter of recommendation to Naviance. However, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving that teacher all the necessary information. Look over the form and imagine what one of your teachers would say about you. Colleges want to hear from teachers who know you well and can share examples of your work ethic, inquisitive nature, and motivation to learn.

****Tracking your Application Submission Status****

Through Naviance, you are able to check the submission status of all of your applications.

- To track, log in (to the student's account) -> Click on the "Colleges Tab" at the top of the screen -> under

My Colleges, click on “Colleges I Am Applying To.” All schools for which you have requested a transcript will be listed under “Colleges I Am Applying To.” On this graph, you can track:

- Transcripts: whether transcripts were requested by the student and sent by the guidance office.
- Office Status: whether initial materials (profile, recommendations) were sent by the guidance office.
- My Applications: the student must indicate if they have submitted their part of the application.

colleges I'm applying to										
+ add to this list request transcripts view detailed status compare me										
College	Type	Applying via Common App?	Submissions	Expected Difficulty*	Deadline†	Transcript	Office Status	My App.	Results	EDIT
<input type="checkbox"/> Amherst Coll	RD	Yes		N/A	1/1/11	requested	Pending	have you applied?	Unknown	
<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Univ	RD	Yes		N/A	1/1/11	sent	Initial materials submitted	app submitted	Unknown	
<input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut College	RD	Yes		N/A	1/1/11	requested	Pending	have you applied?	Unknown	
<input type="checkbox"/> Kenyon Coll	RD	Yes		N/A	1/15/11	sent	Initial materials submitted	app submitted	Unknown	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tufts Univ	RD	Yes		N/A	1/3/11	sent	Initial materials submitted	app submitted	Unknown	
<input type="checkbox"/> Vassar Coll	RD	Yes		N/A	1/1/11	sent	Initial materials submitted	app submitted	Unknown	
<input type="checkbox"/> Washington Univ in St Louis	ED	Yes		N/A	11/15/10	sent	Initial materials submitted	app submitted	Accepted	

EXPECTATIONS

- Mr. Nomura is a great resource during the college admissions and scholarships process. If you have any questions or just want to chat, please reach out via email to schedule an appointment. While there are occasional check-ins, emails, and in-person appointments, it is your responsibility as the applicant to keep checking in with Mr. Nomura and to be aware of deadlines!
- Please monitor and check your email! Colleges, Scholarships/Financial Aid Offices, and your College Counselor will usually reach out via email so you want to keep checking your inbox to make sure you don't miss anything!
- Scholarship information will be posted online or emailed, so students please keep checking your email. As not every scholarship will apply to everyone, it is your responsibility as the student to read through to check if they apply to you and to submit appropriate applications (remember to give your letters of recommendation people enough time to write, edit, and send their letters to these organizations).
- Keep your Activity Sheet accurate and up to date. Information from this sheet will go on your transcript and on your resume.
- If you are submitting electronic applications, you will need to keep your Naviance account updated.
- We recommend that you keep a copy (hard copy or e-copy) of all applications you send as well as keep your receipts for all test scores sent out to your schools.
- For teacher/counselor recommendations, give the forms or send the electronic invitation to your teachers at least 6-8 weeks in advance (recommended by early September). All recommendations will go directly to the colleges or are turned into Mr. Nomura, who will send them out in 1 packet to make sure nothing gets lost.
- If you would like any help with your essays or the activities portion outside of the unit covered in Senior Seminar, or you would like to request assistance with reviewing additional college/scholarship essays, you will need to talk with Mr. Nomura in person; please do not just email it to him. He should be given at least one week's notice.
- Make sure your ACT/SAT scores are sent directly from College Board or the ACT organization to your schools! This is the student's responsibility to send.

- If you have any early January deadlines and need Mr. Nomura’s assistance, or if he needs to submit something for you, contact him no later than December 20, 2024.
- We know the college admissions process can be a stressful one with many requirements and hard work but keep working hard! We know that you will be successful this year with hard work, patience, and diligence!

ADMISSIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Many colleges and universities will ask for similar information, but please be aware of the specific requirements of the schools to which you are applying. Visiting or talking with the school in person can help clarify any confusion.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- **What are the differences between Early Action (EA), Early Decision (ED) and Regular Decision processes?** Early Decision plans are binding — a student who is accepted as an ED applicant must attend the college. Early Action plans are non binding — students receive an early response to their application but do not have to commit to the college until the normal reply date of May 1. Applying Early can help students reduce stress about the process, gain more time when making a final decision, and signal to their schools that the student is committed and excited about that institution. Regular Decision students apply by the normal deadline.
- **What does Rolling Admissions mean?** This is a policy in which applicants are invited to submit their applications to the university within a large window of time. The school reviews and continues to admit students until they have met their class enrollment goals.

TESTING/TRANSCRIPTS

- **What standardized tests are required for admission? Do schools prefer which one I take?** Many schools will require applicants to submit the SAT Reasoning Test or ACT with Writing. However, some schools have become ‘test-optional’, which means they look at the application holistically to come to a decision on admission. Ask whether SAT II Subject Tests are required or optional. Most schools will indicate if there is any preference, but schools also want you to do your best in whichever one you prefer. Try practice tests in both to see which one is best for you.
- **I scored better in Math when I took the SAT Reasoning in June than when I just took it this fall. Do you take the best score from each section regardless of test date?** This is called ‘superscoring’, where schools will take your best score from each test and disregard the others.
- **Do I need to request an official Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) Score Report? Does School XYZ accept AP or IB credit?** Some schools may require AP or IB scores for admission, or to give credit for the equivalent college coursework. You will want to check if AP/IB scores are accepted for credit.
- **What is the difference between weighted and unweighted high school coursework?** In a *weighted* grading system, AP and Honors classes are given extra points so that a student is rewarded for challenging coursework. In an *unweighted* grading system, all courses are measured equally, and only the grade received is factored into the Grade Point Average (GPA). Schools may look at one or the other, or recalculate to get their own GPA, based on academic classes or college-level coursework.
- **Do colleges like to see more AP and Honors classes or higher grades in lower level classes?** Ideally, schools want to see you succeeding in whatever coursework you are taking. However, schools will consider your grade trend (*how your grades progress from year to year*), look for increasing level of difficulty in classes into senior year, and your overall GPA when reviewing transcripts. We want to see you well prepared!

ESSAYS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- **What should I write about, and what do schools look for in an essay?** The essay should tell the school about you as a person beyond your transcripts or activities and make you “stand out from the crowd”. Think about what qualities or talents you have, and the story you are trying to tell about yourself to the admissions committee. Make sure the grammar, spelling, and punctuation are correct.
- **How strict are the word limits on the essays?** Most schools will not be too strict about the essay length, but will expect you to abide by guidelines as closely as possible. If you go over by a *couple* words, it is usually not an issue.
- **Whom should I ask for a letter of recommendation? May I send additional recommendations?** Check with the school about requirements for academic versus personal or professional recommendations. Consider asking the teacher who knows you best, and one that can give insight into who you are as a student. Schools look for the quality of the letters and how well people know you, not the recommenders’ titles. If you’d like to submit an additional recommendation, it can add dimension to your application but limit the number to the school’s recommended limit.

ACTIVITIES

- **What are some of the types of activities that most students include in their applications?** Some of the most popular activities include school clubs, sports, music, summer programs, youth groups, community service and hobbies, or passions. You can include anything you deem relevant on the activities list if you think it will let the school get to know you better. Keep this in mind: *What makes you stand out?*
- **I participated in WXYZ in seventh through ninth grades. How should I put this on my Extracurricular Activities list?** Be sure to let schools know what any acronyms mean! You may arrange your activities chronologically, by activity type or any way that makes sense to you. Also, limit the activities you list to those in which you participated in high school.
- **I wasn’t able to participate in a lot of activities because I spend most of my time working after school. Does that go on my Extracurricular Activities list?** Part- or full-time work and volunteering should be included, as well as working on a family farm or caring for siblings. We want to hear the details about your jobs, including when (the months and years) you worked.
- **What kinds of awards should I put in my application?** Please include any regional, state or national awards or commendations you have received. Published or acclaimed works are also important to mention.

COMMON ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AA / AFA / AS / AAS / AGE: Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Fine Arts (AFA), Associate of Science (AS), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Associate in General Education (AGE) are two-year degrees granted by a community or two-year college.

ACT: The ACT is a college entrance exam covering English, math, reading and science reasoning.

AP: Advanced Placement courses are challenging high school courses that focus on a particular subject. Students may receive credit or receive a higher placement within college courses.

BA / BS / BFA: A bachelor’s degree, also called a baccalaureate or undergraduate degree. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) & Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) differ in requirements.

CEEB Code: A standardized ID number that is assigned to a high school, college, or university. CEEB codes are issued by the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

CLEP: College Level Examination Program offers college credit for independent study or life experience.

COA: The Total Cost of Attendance to attend an institution, including tuition, fees, room, board, books, & other expenses.

EA: Early Action Application Process – non-binding agreement, provides students flexibility to attend if admitted, and to find out sooner.

ED: Early Decision Application Process – binding agreement that student will attend that school if admitted.

EFC: Expected Family Contribution – Data provided on the FAFSA (see below) used to calculate a family's ability to pay for college expenses

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid – go to <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> to apply. Usually used by schools to provide a financial package of grants and loans.

GED: General Equivalency Diploma – A certificate students receive if they pass a high school equivalency test, which acts as an alternative to a high school diploma.

GPA: Grade Point Average - grades students earn in high school and college are assigned points (ex. A=4, B=3, etc.), and additional points may be given for advanced courses (weighted average). A student's GPA is the sum of all earned points divided by the # of courses taken.

IB: International Baccalaureate courses are challenging high school courses that focus on a holistic approach to a particular subject. Students may receive credit or receive a higher placement within college courses.

NCAA: National Collegiate Athletic Association – partially funds most athletic scholarships and schools participate in athletic conferences and divisions (or levels) between schools.

PSAT/NMSQT: Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test – measures verbal reasoning, critical reading, writing and math skills. Familiarizes students to questions asked on the SAT – taken in sophomore or junior year.

SAT: The SAT Reasoning Test measures critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills that are considered vital to academic success in college and beyond.

SAT Subject Tests: SAT Subject Tests measure knowledge in specific subject areas.

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language – a proficiency exam used in international admissions.