

# **Rising Senior College Planning**

## **Summer “To Do” List**

### Wissahickon High School

The following is a list college-related things to do at the at the end of your junior year and over the summer before senior year. If you have any questions, please get in touch with your counselor. The counselor summer schedule will be posted on the counseling website.

#### **Big Picture**

Student is responsible for coordinating/sending:

- ✓ application
- ✓ SAT/ACT scores directly from collegeboard.org or act.org
- ✓ any outside recommendations from non-Wissahickon High School teachers
- ✓ self-reported transcripts (if applicable)

WHS is responsible for sending:

- ✓ official transcript (for schools requiring an official transcript)
- ✓ teacher/counselor recommendations and relevant forms
- ✓ fee waivers (if eligible)

#### **General Timeline**

Summer 2024:

- Complete SENIOR QUESTIONNAIRE (see page 6 for more details)
- Work on essay – prompts available through application platforms
- Ask two teachers to write letters of recommendation
  - Once confirmed, send Scoir request. See *How To Request Teacher Recommendations* below.
- Research colleges/programs through Scoir or college websites. Visit, if possible.
- Start applications (officially around August 1)
- Search for scholarships on sites like goingmerry.com, scholarships360.org, fastweb.com, and raise.me (or apps like Scholly).
- If submitting scores, request SAT/ACT scores to be sent from respective companies (can wait until after school starts also)

Fall 2024:

- Take ACTs/SATs, if necessary, and send scores to colleges
- Add colleges to Applying column/list on Scoir
- Submit applications. Pay attention to deadlines for both applications and financial aid.
- Request transcripts/letters of recommendation to be sent from Counseling Department (begins 2<sup>nd</sup> week of school)
- Complete the Self-Reported Academic Record (SRAR) or specific school form for schools that require a self-reported transcript.
- Follow-up on letters of recommendation and provide timeline to teachers for completion
- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) using tax data from 2023 (should release on October 1)
- Complete the PA State Grant application (must submit FAFSA first)

- Complete CSS Profile (if needed). For a list of schools requiring CSS Profile, go to <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>.
- Set up application status check/portal for each college (when available). Check on status of submitted applications. Review each college's checklist to ensure all items have been received by deadline.

Winter 2024/Early 2025:

- Search/apply for scholarships
- Regularly check email to watch for updates, additional information requested
- Submit midyear grades, if required

Spring of senior year:

- Attend accepted student days to make informed decisions or to gather more information
- Compare financial aid packages
- Make a final decision and deposit to your school by May 1!

## MORE COLLEGE DETAILS

### **COLLEGE APPLICATIONS**

Most applications get updated and released in early August. Common App and Coalition App (through Scoir) will be released around Aug. 1. Feel free to use August to start filling out applications online. You may submit these and send SAT/ACT scores, but transcripts and recommendations will not be sent until the beginning of school. Some colleges require students to self-report their transcript. We can always give you an unofficial copy of your transcript, but know that senior schedules are typically not complete until late-August and you will need your senior classes, including electives, for the self-report. All students should receive a copy of their transcript during the first week of school.

### **COLLEGE VISITS**

Summer can be a good time to visit colleges. Make sure you visit the college website and verify their event schedule. Usually, they will likely offer a 1-hour information session followed by a tour. Many schools will also require that you sign up in advance on their website, so check their schedules and register.

### **DEADLINES**

Each college will have their own admission requirements and deadlines. Rolling admission colleges will begin accepting applications as soon as they open and will make decisions as soon as possible. Rolling schools may have a priority deadline as well. Early Action and Early Decision deadlines are typically Nov. 1 or 15<sup>th</sup> (except in the south where it may be October 15<sup>th</sup>). Regular Decision deadlines are in January or February. We strongly encourage seniors to complete rolling applications and transcript requests no later than Thanksgiving. If for no other reason, most scholarship money is given out early in the rolling application process and then the pressure of applying is off your shoulders. Do not rely on listed deadlines of March, April, or May – these are too late!

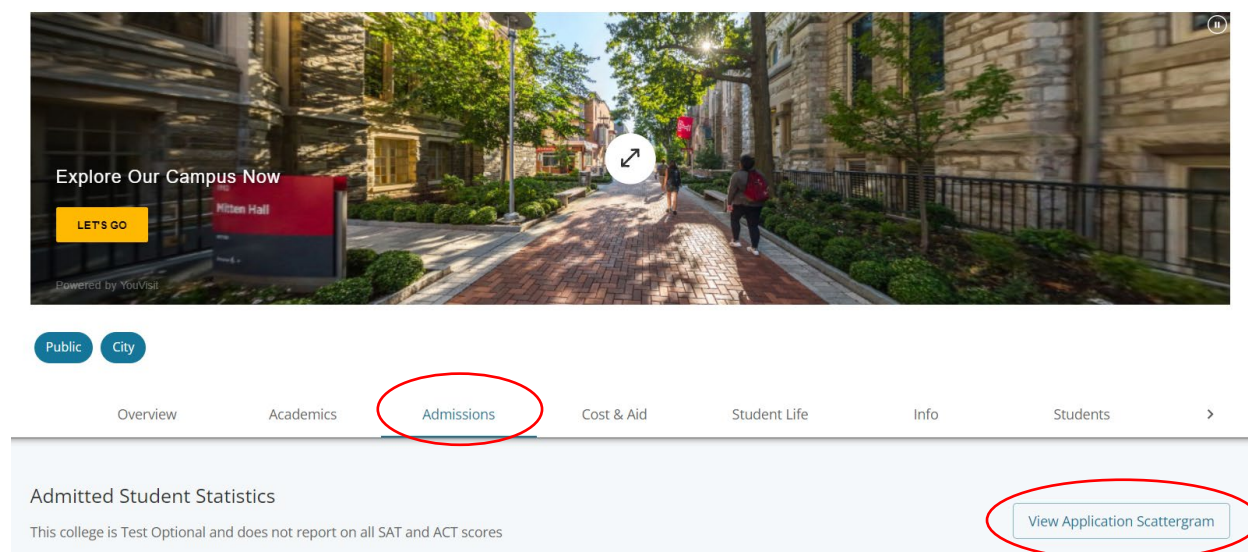
### **ESSAY**

Summer is a great time to work on your personal statement/essay. Common App and Coalition essay prompts are available online. Even if you are not applying to a Common App or Coalition App school, they could still provide good prompts to use for other schools without a specific prompt. For schools that have

supplemental essays, you will find those in the school-specific section of the Common App or Coalition App. Supplemental essays are often where colleges review your fit for their institution. Be **specific**, do your research, and show them why you are a good fit for their school. Keep in mind that English teachers, counselors, and the writing lab are all great places to have your essay reviewed. Make sure to have one or two people read your essay before you submit. Not every college will have supplemental essays, and not all colleges even require a college essay. However, if given the option, and you have one, submit it! If you are looking for some free, web-based resources, check out The College Essay Guy ([www.collegeessayguy.com](http://www.collegeessayguy.com))

## SCOIR

Scoir is our online post-secondary planning resource. To access Scoir, go to [www.scoir.com](http://www.scoir.com). To see if a college may be a good fit based on academic profile, check out the school's scattergram by looking up a college under the Discover tab, clicking the Admissions link, and then "View Application Scattergram" (see picture below for an example). On the scattergram, students will see the SAT/ACT score and GPA from former Wissahickon students who have applied. The GPA that is listed is the GPA that students had at the end of their junior year. If no data is available, it may be because fewer than three students have applied in the graduation years selected. Test score data is included but remember that many students in the past couple years have not applied with test scores so it may not be accurate with regard to admissions. As you identify schools that you'd like to bookmark (or may ultimately apply to), it would be very helpful to save them to "My Colleges" so that you can easily move them to your Applying list in the fall.



The screenshot shows a website interface for Scoir. At the top, there is a banner image of a campus walkway with a red sign that says "Witten Hall" and a yellow button that says "LET'S GO". Below the banner, there are two circular buttons labeled "Public" and "City". A navigation bar contains several tabs: "Overview", "Academics", "Admissions", "Cost & Aid", "Student Life", "Info", and "Students". The "Admissions" tab is circled in red. Below the navigation bar, there is a section titled "Admitted Student Statistics" with a subtext: "This college is Test Optional and does not report on all SAT and ACT scores". To the right of this section, there is a button labeled "View Application Scattergram" which is also circled in red.

## FERPA

When you apply to college, your application file typically includes information considered to be confidential, such as letters of recommendation and notes made by college admissions officers. Under a regulation known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, you might obtain the right to access some of this information. These rights only apply to documents held by the college you attend, so it is unlikely you will have a need to see them. Colleges prefer to know that the information they compile in your application file will remain confidential, so it is recommended that you sign a "waiver" to give them this assurance. Some high school teachers will not submit a letter of recommendation to a college program if students do not agree to the waiver. Students will be asked about FERPA through Scoir, but also through various application platforms like the Common Application. When students log into Scoir, there will be a FERPA waiver prompt. If no prompt appears, students can find the FERPA waiver by clicking "Me" and then View Profile. Students can sign off on this at any time prior to requesting transcripts in the fall. We recommend that students choose "GRANTED – I WAIVE my rights..."

**FERPA**

Waiver of Rights Unsigned

[Review and Sign](#)

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**Application ID** ✎

Common App ID: —

**Granted**  
 I WAIVE my right to inspect and review any confidential letters and confidential statements, such as letters of recommendations, assessments, and application review notes that relate to my admission to an educational institution.

**Not Granted**  
 I DO NOT WAIVE any of my right to inspect and review confidential information relating to my admission to an educational institution.

## GPA

Your unweighted and weighted GPAs will be updated and listed on Scoir by mid-summer. To see them, click on “Me” and then “My Profile” on the homepage. Your GPA is listed under Academic Overview. Colleges will see both the unweighted and weighted GPAs on your transcript but may recalculate them based on their own system. For example, they may take out elective courses, gym, and health.

### Academic Overview

**High School**

**Wissahickon High School** Active

Ambler, PA  
Class of 2021

Not your high school? Notify Scoir support.

**Counselor:** Felicia Glover

Inaccurate academics? Notify your counselor.

GPA	
Weighted	Unweighted
4.11	3.7

Updated by a counselor 4 months ago

**Test Scores**

PreACT
Highest
25

[Show Details](#) ▼

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Most students applying to a 4-year college/university should have **two** teacher recommendations to submit to colleges. These teachers are preferred from junior year and include core teachers or subjects related to your intended major. Freshmen and sophomore year teachers are generally not recommended but can be used in certain situations. If you did not already talk to teachers before school ended, then email them over the summer and politely ask that they write you a recommendation. You will need to officially request them through Scoir. Any non-Wissahickon recommendations should be treated as extra and sent directly by the writer. Students who plan to apply only to Montgomery County Community College will not need letters of recommendation as part of the application process, unless you plan to apply to the Honors Program.

## HOW TO REQUEST TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

After you talk or email with a teacher to confirm that they are okay writing a recommendation for you, please request them officially through Scoir. Here's how:

1. Log into a Student Scoir account
2. Click on **My Colleges** (top of homepage)
3. Click on **Application Documents** (small blue, top right)
4. Click **Request a Recommendation**
5. Search for the teacher by first or last name (make sure you have personally asked this teacher prior to this request)
6. Add any notes to the teacher(s) in the message box (e.g. "Please mention my passion for Biology and my interest in Medicine.") or just say thank you!
7. Click **Send** – this will send an email to the teacher stating your request and will add the request to the teacher's Scoir account. It will also record that you have requested it in your Scoir account. When the teacher has completed the recommendation, it will be marked as "complete" and it will show in your Scoir account so you can keep track of your application materials.
8. Recommendations from people who do not work at Wissahickon High School must be sent directly from the writer through the application (Common App or Coalition) or via email.

Note: School counselors will automatically write a recommendation for schools that require it - you do not need to ask them or add a request in Scoir. Be sure to complete your Senior Questionnaire on Scoir to provide thorough information for counselors (see below for more on the "Senior Questionnaire" topic).

### STANDARDIZED TESTING - SATs/ACTs

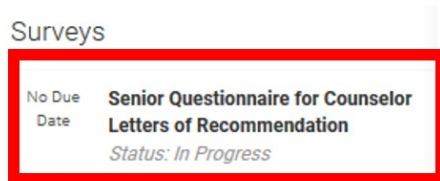
Standardized test scores are sent by the family to each college. Many colleges will take the highest score in each section (e.g. Reading, Math), also called "superscoring." Rising seniors with fall application deadlines will have time to take the July/September ACT or August/October SAT. Some colleges will allow students to self-report test scores. Determine if scores need to be sent directly from the testing service or if self-reporting is available. Applications allow students to include test score information but some institutions still require this information be submitted in another way. You may need to send the scores directly to the schools when you sign up for the October SAT if you have a November 1<sup>st</sup> deadline and self-reporting is not available. Test optional admissions remain at many institutions. Students who opt not to send test scores will not be penalized in the process. Students can choose to send scores by school. In order to determine whether or not scores should be included, it is advised that students research average scores from the previous admissions cycle. Be sure to take into account that higher scores may be tied to more selective majors and/or colleges at a university. Students should visit individual admissions websites to stay current with testing policies.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

There are three main places to look for scholarships. One of them is the college that you are applying to. They may have special scholarships with deadlines or requirements. These scholarships will be listed on the admissions page. The second place to look is on third-party websites such as goingmerry.com, scholarships360.org, fastweb.com, scholarships.com or raise.me. Some deadlines are early, so look over the summer and be prepared to apply. The third source is on Scoir under **My Profile**. In the fall, we will be posting a link in the **My Drive** section to a document where you can view scholarships sent to WHS. These will not get updated until the school year starts.

### SENIOR QUESTIONNAIRE

**All seniors** must fill this out if they need a letter of recommendation from their school counselor. Summer is a great time to do so. It is used by the school counselor for recommendations. Ideally, the senior questionnaire is finished before school starts. You can find it in Scoir on the homepage under **Surveys** (right side). Parents can fill out a similar survey called the “Parent Brag Sheet” in their Scoir account following the same directions.



### **TRANSCRIPTS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

The counselors provide additional information to the seniors as a class during the first week of school in the fall. They will go over the logistics of applying and requesting transcripts/recommendations. Every student will be asked to verify their transcript for accuracy before documents will be sent to college. We will begin the transcript request process during the second week of school. A program for parents will be held in the fall to review the application procedures. More information and details will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

### **FINANCIAL AID**

More information around the financial aid process will be provided in the fall. Typically, the FAFSA and CSS Profile forms used for financial aid are available on October 1. Families should be prepared with their 2023 tax return. Some colleges requiring additional forms may have those available earlier in the school year.

### **MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE OR OTHER COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

Community colleges do not have the same type of requirements as four-year colleges. Students planning to apply only to MCCC or another community college will only need to complete the application, send a transcript, and meet with an advisor. Families hoping to receive financial aid will also need to complete the FAFSA. WHS and MCCC work closely together through the senior year to offer opportunities for students to visit campus, meet with the admissions representative, and meet with academic advisors. Students with this plan should pay attention for dates and sign-ups for these activities. Community colleges have open enrollment (meaning no deadlines), so this process will begin later in the fall.

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!