Southern Regional High School
School Counseling Office

College Application Process Resource Guide

2024-2025

Southern Regional High School

2024-2025 School Counseling Department Information

School Counselor	Caseload	Ext.	E-mail Address
Jeffrey Reilly	C (2027)	4457	jreilly@srsd.net
Molly Albanese	A-B	4307	malbanese@srsd.net
Christine Ryder	C – D	4318	cryder@srsd.net
Jody McLennan	E-G & ESL	4326	jmclennan@srsd.net
Brian Zatorski	H-K	4325	bzatorski@srsd.net
Heather Henry	L – M	4321	hhenry@srsd.net
Russell Short	N-Rn	4462	rshort@srsd.net
Sarah Simonson	Ro-St	4241	ssimonson@srsd.net
Lynn Lapsley	Su-Z, C (2026)	4581	llapsley@srsd.net

	Title	Ext.	E-mail Address
Megan Vile	Supervisor	4559	mvile@srsd.net
Sharon Bialecki	Prof. Assistant	4315	sbialecki@srsd.net
Briana Ott	Prof. Assistant	4602	bott@srsd.net
Christine Purdon	Prof. Assistant	4316	cpurdon@srsd.net

Application Information

The following information is often required on college applications:

Southern Regional High School

90 Cedar Bridge Road

Manahawkin, NJ 08050

Phone: (609)597-9481

School/CEEB Code: 310743

Class Rank: Weighted/Exact

GPA: Weighted/100-point scale

The College Application Process

1. **Complete the *Academic Records Release* Form in the Genesis Parent Portal**

2. **Complete the following steps for EACH college:**

   - List the college/university under <u>"Colleges I'm Applying To"</u> in Naviance:
     - Indicate what application deadline you are utilizing (Early Action, Regular Decision, etc.).
     - Indicate if you are using the Common Application or applying directly to the institution via the Institutional Application.
   - Apply to the college via the Common App or Institutional Application.
   - Send your standardized test scores (SAT and/or ACT) to the college directly from your College Board (SAT) or ACT account.
   - Notify your school counselor to let them know that you have applied:
     - Request a meeting with them **(OR)**
     - E-mail them directly to advise that you applied to a college **(OR)**
     - Request your transcript in Naviance under <u>"Colleges I'm Applying To"</u> choose "Request Transcripts."
     - Requests must be made two weeks before the deadline. Requests with January 1st deadlines must be completed by December 12th!

3. **Letters of Recommendation**

   - Ensure your resume is updated in Naviance.
   - Check how many letters of recommendation the colleges you are applying to require. You typically need TWO letters from high school teachers who have taught you in the classroom and ONE from your school counselor.
   - Request letters of recommendation from your teachers IN PERSON. If you are using the Common Application, tell your teachers that they will need to upload a letter AND complete a Common App Teacher Evaluation in Naviance. **Please give teachers and school counselors two to four weeks' notice to complete letters of recommendation.**
   - If your teachers agree to write recommendation letters, add requests in Naviance under "Colleges, there is a <u>Letters of Recommendation</u> section:
     - Select "Teacher"
     - Choose "General Request" for letters, not "Specific"
     - Submit request
     - An e-mail will be sent to your teacher, and they will upload your letter directly into your Naviance account.
   - Write notes to your teachers to thank them for writing letters of recommendation.

The Common Application

1. **Go to www.commonapp.org and create an account.**

   - **Use a personal e-mail address, not your school e-mail.**

   - Complete each section under the "Common App" tab (Profile, Family, Education, Testing, Activities).

   - You will submit your Common App essay under the "Writing" section:

     o Choose one of the provided prompts or write about anything you want. This is your opportunity to tell colleges something unique about yourself that sets you apart from all other applicants.

     o Ask an English teacher to proofread your essay (your current teacher, a former teacher, or bring the essay to the Writing Lab).

2. **Add Colleges to your Common App.**

   - Add any colleges you are applying to under the "My Colleges" tab.

3. **Complete the "FERPA Release Authorization."**

   - Select any college you have added to the "My Colleges" tab and select the "Recommenders and FERPA" tab. Select "Release Authorization" and follow the instructions.

   - PLEASE NOTE:

     o You cannot complete the FERPA release unless you have completed the "Education" section under the "Common App" tab.

     o FERPA Waiver: You need to indicate whether or not you want to waive your right to access the letters of recommendation written on your behalf. Waiving your right lets colleges know that you do not intend to read your recommendations, which helps reassure colleges that the letters are candid and truthful.

     o The FERPA release only needs to be completed once.

4. **Please ignore the "Invite Recommenders" section, under the "Recommenders and FERPA" tab.**

   - Southern utilizes Naviance to send letters of recommendation, so you do not need to do anything with this section.

   - Speak with your counselor if you are asking for a letter from someone who does not work for Southern Regional.

5. **Match your Common App with your Naviance account.**

   - Log into your Naviance account, click on the "Colleges" link, then select "Colleges I'm Applying To."

   - Click on the "Match Accounts" link

   - Enter the e-mail address you used for your Common App account, and then click on "Match Accounts." You only have to do this once!

6. **Submit your application**

   - Choose the college you want to apply to under the "My Colleges" tab.

   - Complete the "Questions" tab under the college you are applying to.

   - Ensure you have a green check mark next to "Recommenders and FERPA."

   - Under "Review and Submit App," look over your completed application to ensure its accuracy. Please take your time with this and have someone check your work to ensure there are no errors!

   - Pay the application fee.

   - Submit the application.

Post Application Steps

1. After you submit your application, and test scores, and notify your school counselor that you have applied, your counselor will send your transcript and all supplemental materials to the school you have applied to via Naviance.

   > **Be patient…don't panic!!!** The materials are sent electronically. It may take time for the college to upload those documents into your file.

2. **Check your personal e-mail regularly** for notifications and instructions from colleges.

3. Most colleges will require you to set up an **application portal** to provide information on your application status. Please monitor your portals regularly.

4. Mid-year transcripts will be sent to every school you applied to by your school counselor. This will occur during the first two weeks of February.

5. Update your Naviance account with your college admissions decisions (accepted, denied, etc.)

6. Decide where you will attend college. May 1st is typically the deadline for making a formal decision regarding what college or university you will attend in the Fall.

7. Complete your senior survey and indicate the college you will be attending. Your school counselor will send your final transcript to the college. Final transcripts are sent shortly after graduation.

General Application Information

Types of Applications

Common Application (Common App)

An online application platform that allows students to apply to many colleges and universities (accepted at over 950 colleges). Go to www.commonapp.org to access the application.

Institutional Application

Institutional applications are designed by a college for use specifically and exclusively for their school, to gather information most relevant to their admissions criteria.

Self-Reported Academic Record (SRAR)

Many larger colleges require students to fill out a SRAR. It allows applicants to record and submit courses, grades, and credits as part of their college application. You are self-reporting your transcript. Each school that requires one will direct you to a link where you can fill out and submit your SRAR.

Fee Waivers

Some students are eligible for SAT, ACT, and application fee waivers. Please check with your school counselor to see if you qualify.

Resume

Many colleges allow students to include their resumes in their applications. A resume lists your education, work experience, clubs, sports, extracurricular activities, leadership positions, etc. You can create a resume in Naviance. It is helpful to have a PDF version of your resume for uploading ease.

Supplements for Applications

Some colleges require additional information, depending on the major you are applying for. The application will outline additional information they will need. Common examples of supplemental materials include digital submission of art portfolios, photography portfolios, auditions, or audio recordings of music or voice, etc.

Electronic Requests for Recommenders

Some applications allow you to invite teachers and/or school counselors to complete electronic recommendation forms. Please DO NOT utilize these forms, as Southern uses Naviance for all recommendations.

Letters of Recommendation

Counselor Letter of Recommendation

Your school counselor will write you a letter of recommendation, at your request, if you are applying to a four-year college. Their letter serves as an overview of your academic and extracurricular accomplishments and describes who you are as a person, outside of the classroom. Many colleges require a counselor's letter of recommendation.

Teacher Letter of Recommendation

Many colleges require letters of recommendation from teachers you have had in the classroom during high school. Their letter speaks to the type of student you are in the classroom, your academic ability and work ethic, how you interact with your peers, your intellectual curiosity, and the success they believe you will have academically in college.

Students typically need TWO teacher letters of recommendation, one should be from a teacher you have had in 11th or 12th grade, and the other can be from a teacher you had from 9th-12th grade. If you know what you want to major in, a letter from a teacher in that subject area can strengthen your application.

Other Letters of Recommendation

You can obtain additional letters from travel team coaches, employers, clergy, etc. The best way to send this information is to e-mail the letters directly to your respective admissions counselors at the colleges you are applying to.

Sending Standardized Test Scores

Although many colleges have been test-optional for the past few years, colleges are returning to requiring students to submit their SAT or ACT scores for admission. Although some may not require test scores for admissions, **many do require test scores for merit scholarship consideration!**

Colleges require official test scores, which can only be sent by YOU through your College Board (SAT) or ACT accounts.

How to send your test scores:

- **Before Test Day:** You can send four FREE score reports to colleges every time you register for the SAT and ACT. You will not be able to view your scores before they are sent to the college.

- **After Test Day:** You can still send four FREE score reports nine days after the SAT.

- **After You Receive Your Score**: You can send your scores to any college, for a fee of $14.00 PER COLLEGE for the SAT, and $19.00 PER COLLEGE for the ACT.

It can take 2-4 weeks for the college to receive your score after you have sent it.

College Admissions Terms

Demonstrated Interest

An action that demonstrates you have a sincere interest in attending a particular college. Many admissions committees consider this a factor in making their decisions. Some of the ways you can demonstrate interest include a campus visit or virtual tour participation, having an initial interview, conversations or e-mails with admissions representatives, and applying for early admission.

Early Action (EA)

A non-binding option to apply to some of your top choice colleges before the regular decision deadline. When you apply early action, you get an admissions decision earlier than usual. Early action decision plans are non-binding, so students typically do not have to commit until May 1st.

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

A non-binding option to apply to your first-choice college before the regular decision deadline. Colleges ask that students apply only to that institution early.

Early Decision (ED)

A binding option to apply to your first-choice college before the regular decision deadline. When you apply early decision, you get an admissions decision earlier than usual. Early decision plans are binding, and you agree to enroll in the college immediately if admitted. Some colleges have an early decision option called ED II, which has a later application deadline than their regular ED deadline.

Priority Deadline

The date by which your application, whether it's for college admission, student housing, or financial aid, must be received to be given the strongest consideration.

Regular Decision

Students must apply by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time. Students typically have to commit by May 1st.

Rolling Admissions

An admissions policy of considering each application as soon as all required information has been received, rather than setting an application deadline and reviewing all applications at once. Colleges that use rolling admissions usually notify applicants of admissions decisions fairly quickly. Students typically have to commit by May 1st.

Conditional Acceptance

Admission is offered on the condition that a student completes specified requirements such as attending a summer program, taking remedial courses, or maintaining a specific GPA during their first semester of study.

Deferred Admission

Permission from a college that has accepted you to postpone enrolling in the college. The postponement is usually for up to one year. Colleges often ask for a good faith deposit to hold your place and may ask for information regarding your deferment.

Waitlist

A response to an applicant indicating that their application was acceptable, but the limit of students has been reached at that college. A student may be admitted off the waitlist if space becomes available, typically after May 1st.

Financial Aid Information

The financial aid timetable for 12th grade students will work in conjunction with completing college applications. All students who wish to be considered for any type of financial need-based aid must complete the FAFSA. Some of our students will also complete the CSS Profile. If your college requires you to complete the CSS Profile, they will include those instructions with their admissions information. Many of our students will also search for local and general scholarships.

Two types of financial assistance are available to students:

Need-Based Financial Aid

Based on the student's financial need to pay for college. This evaluation will be determined by the completion of the FAFSA. Financial aid can come in the form of grants, loans, and work-study. Upon completion of the FAFSA, the federal government, the state government, and the institutions will review each application to determine what type of need-based aid can be offered for the upcoming academic year.

Merit-Based Financial Aid

Based on a student's academic, athletic, or extracurricular achievements. Merit-based awards are not based on a student's financial need. Institutions still *may require* a FAFSA be filed for students who seek merit-based awards.

Financial Aid Terms

Grants

Financial aid money that you do not have to pay back, also known as *gift aid*. Grants are generally need-based aid determined by the financial situation.

Scholarships

Scholarships are also considered *gift aid*. In general, scholarships are awarded to students based on merit-based criteria. Many scholarships have requirements to maintain the award (G.P.A etc.).

Grants and Scholarships can come from the following sources:

- Federal government
- State government
- Colleges/Institutions
- Private organizations

Loans

Money that must be repaid with interest. Student loans can come from the federal government, state government and from private sources such as banks or lending institutions. The goal is always to limit your loan debt as a source of paying for college.

Subsidized Student Loan

A federal loan that does not accrue interest while the student is enrolled in school. Student eligibility for subsidized student loans is awarded based on financial information collected from the FAFSA.

Unsubsidized Student Loan

An unsubsidized student loan will begin to accrue interest from the date of the first loan disbursement. Student loans can come from the federal government, state government and from private sources such as banks or lending institutions.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The FAFSA is the primary document that all students and their families will complete to be considered for financial aid at all post-secondary institutions in the United States. The document is free to complete and must be completed each year by the student to be eligible for need-based financial aid. The FAFSA will generally open on October 1st before the next academic year. The FAFSA can be accessed via www.studentaid.gov.

Federal Student Aid Identification Number (FSA ID)

All students and parents will need to create an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA. Each student's FSA ID is unique to the student. The parent will be able to utilize their FSA ID for all of their children who will be utilizing the FAFSA. FSA ID numbers are free to create. The FSA ID application can also be found at www.studentaid.gov.

College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS Profile)

The CSS Profile is an additional financial aid document that is required by some universities in their financial aid process. There is a fee associated with the CSS Profile so it is important to check to see if your school will need this document. The CSS Profile usually opens around October 1st. All information on the CSS Profile can be found at cssprofile.collegeboard.org.

NJSTARS

NJ STARS is a grant program sponsored by the state of New Jersey. High school students who complete 11th grade ranked in the top 15% of their high school class or 12th grade students who move into the top 15% upon graduation are eligible for NJ STARS. NJ STARS will cover the cost of tuition at their home county college for up to five semesters. The NJ STARS fact sheet is available on the HESAA home page.

Financial Aid Award Letter

This is the document you will receive from a college that will detail the financial aid package at a particular school. You will receive a different letter from every school that offers a college acceptance.

Student Aid Report (SAR)

This is an electronic document that summarizes the information that students provide on the FAFSA.

Cost of Attendance (COA)

The average annual cost to attend a particular school. This will include the cost of tuition and fees, room and board, books, supplies, and other expenses.

Student Aid Index (SAI)

This is an index number used by the financial professionals at each school to determine the financial aid offer. The SAI is calculated via information provided on the FAFSA. This term is replacing the term Estimated Family Contribution on the new FAFSA.

Net Price Calculator

A net price calculator is an online tool designed to calculate how much a particular college is likely to cost. All schools are required to have a net price calculator on their website.

PLEASE NOTE: All colleges and universities have extensive admissions and financial aid websites. Students and parents need to familiarize themselves with these sites. Colleges will post all of their costs and will also publish many of their merit-based scholarships through the financial aid office's website.

Financial Aid Resources

Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA)

HESAA is the only New Jersey state agency with the sole mission of providing students and families with financial and informational resources for students to pursue their education beyond high school.

HESAA is an outstanding resource for all students who are continuing to higher education. All of the New Jersey state financial aid programs are run by HESAA.

HESAA administers all grants, scholarships, and state-sponsored loan programs. HESAA can be found at: www.hesaa.org.

New Jersey Financial Aid Management System (NJFAMS)

All students who apply for state financial aid will need to set up an account with NJFAMS. NJFAMS is managed by HESAA. All information can be accessed via the HESAA webpage.

Scholarship Information

Southern Regional Local Scholarship Program

All members of the Southern Regional senior class are eligible to apply for the local scholarship program.

To be considered for a scholarship, students must complete the online scholarship application that will be available in mid-December.

The application deadline is January 31st at 5:00 p.m. To be fair to all participants, there will be no extensions to this deadline.

Approximately 90% of the donor organizations select the award recipients based on their unique criteria. Some donor organizations require additional student information (essays, transcripts, etc.).

Students must regularly review the list of local scholarships on our website to determine if additional information is required by the donor groups. Local scholarship information will be updated as it is received from the donors Go to www.srsd.net/Guidance/Scholarship/Local.

General Scholarships

General scholarships are offered by a variety of national, regional, and local private corporations and businesses. Students can begin to search for these scholarships during the summer prior to 12th grade. The rule of thumb with general scholarships is that all of these applications should be FREE to apply for the award. Our recommendation is to avoid any scholarships that ask for a student to pay to apply for these awards.

Students can find these general scholarships in a variety of ways. Many internet search engines will help provide a scholarship search.

There are helpful websites that assist with college scholarship searches. Some examples are www.scholarships.com and www.fastweb.com Both sites provide search engines and free registration for their service. Big Future bigfuture.collegeboard.org is the service provided by the College Board that can assist in the college search.

The Southern Regional School Counseling Department will receive various general scholarships throughout the school year. We will post these scholarships on our guidance website under General Scholarships. If interested in searching for general scholarships, it is good practice to check the General Scholarships regularly during the school year.

College Application Checklist for Students

Utilize this checklist for each college to ensure you have completed all of the required tasks in the college application process.

College: _____   Deadline: _____

- ☐ Complete the *Academic Records Release* form (one time only)

- ☐ Select application type: Common App or Institutional Application

- ☐ Select application deadline: Early Action, Early Decision, Regular Decision, or Rolling

- ☐ Add College into Naviance under "Colleges I'm Applying To"

- ☐ Letters of Recommendation

- ☐ Submit application

- ☐ Create/monitor college portal

- ☐ Notify your school counselor that you applied

- ☐ Send your SAT or ACT scores

- ☐ Send supplemental materials, resumes, art/music portfolios, auditions, etc., if applicable.

- ☐ Complete the FAFSA (one time only)

- ☐ Add the college to your FAFSA form

- ☐ Indicate your admissions decision on Naviance