

The College Application Process at FCHS: Everything You Need to Know



1. Stay Informed!

Check your PSD student email often! Important information will be sent to that address all year.

2. Schedule your Senior Meeting

Schedule a Senior Meeting with your counselor. At this required meeting, you will discuss post-graduate plans and get personally specific information about the college application process. Please allow 45 minutes for this important appointment. Schedule it directly with your counselor or through Leanne Jones Student Services Secretary: leannej@psdschools.org

3. Deadlines

College application deadlines are real deadlines. Plan ahead! Your deadlines are your responsibility. Know that computer systems and servers often crash nationwide on deadline days. Do not wait until the last moment to submit your application.

4. Letters of Recommendation

Please give teachers and counselors **AT LEAST two weeks'** notice to allow them time to craft a good letter for you. Provide more notice if you can. Complete an Academic Profile Sheet for your recommenders (available in Student Services and on the FCHS website). A resume is also helpful. Teachers and counselors will upload their letters directly to your colleges via secure links that are sent to them after you add their names to your applications.

5. Types of Applications

The Common Application and the Coalition Application are clearinghouse agencies that allow you to apply to multiple schools with one application. Most colleges and universities also offer their own online applications.

No preference is given to one type over the other. Online applications found on college websites are easier to complete than either the Common App or the Coalition App. That said, if you are applying to several schools that belong to those agencies, it is worth the extra effort to use them.

Both the Common App and Coalition App require additional high school forms and counselor documents. To start that process, visit the FCHS Career Center and request that your official transcript be sent. We will take it from there, based upon the information you provide.

- You do not need to wait until you have finished your part of an application to have your transcript sent. You can do that ahead of time. The college will start a file for you and monitor it until it is complete.
- Schools that do not use the Common App or the Coalition App will also sometimes require additional high school forms. You will need to let us know if that is the case.

Every college and university have its own unique rules and regulations. It is your responsibility to read and understand the requirements for all the schools to which you are applying.

6. Official Transcripts

Please fill out a PSD Official Transcript Request form and return it to Ms. Dunlap in the College & Career Center (Student Services). She will submit your transcript, work with your counselors to complete other necessary forms, and then track everything for you. Your counselor is your big-picture guide; Ms. Dunlap is here to help you with the details. Stop by the College & Career Center anytime, or reach her at shannond@psdschools.org

7. Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Fill out your FAFSA, which opens on October 1. Find more information here: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>

8. How to Report your GPA

FCHS uses an **Adjusted Cum GPA** based on a weighted 4.0 grading scale. We report exact rank. You will find specific information on your transcript and on the FCHS School Profile.

Do not report your Cum GPA (which does not include extra points for college-level work), or the 5-point GPA listed on your transcript (which some colleges use for scholarship purposes).

9. How to Report College-Level Classes

Your Advanced Placement and Concurrent Enrollment classes are clearly marked on your transcript as college-level courses. You do not need to provide separate transcripts or score reports to colleges until you know for sure which one you will be attending. To be granted college credit once that is settled, you will have an official transcript for the class/es sent to your school from CU, FRCC, or CSU. To get credit for AP tests, you will have an official score report sent to your school from College Board.

10. First Things First – but the process is counter-intuitive!

You apply to colleges during the first semester of senior year and figure out financial aid and scholarships during the second semester.

It is generally wise to apply to at least three colleges: a good-fit school for which you are qualified, a fall-back-position school, and a dream school.

Once accepted, you will receive a Financial Award Letter from each college outlining exactly what your costs will be, what aid they can offer, and what loans you will be expected to take out.

You have until May 1, National College Decision Day, to commit to colleges that offer you admission. This allows you time to compare the offers you receive and make the best decision for you and your family.

Remember that private schools often have the resources to offer far more financial assistance than public institutions – grants and scholarships that you do not have to pay back. The bottom line in a college brochure is very rarely the bottom line paid for by students. Apply even if you think tuition costs are way too high – you will not know what offers are available to you until you do.

Help is available, and resources are plentiful:

- Schedule your senior meeting with your counselor!
- Visit college websites for a wealth of information.
- Both the Common Application and Coalition Application have helpful and informative websites.
- Visit THE WALL in Student Services for detailed handouts on each of these topics.
- Attend college fairs.
- Meet with college representatives who visit FCHS.
- Attend workshops and presentations – check your email for updates!
- Contact your counselor or Ms. Shannon with any questions.

You have already done the challenging academic part, working hard to get where you are. Now, it is just a matter of jumping through a bunch of bureaucratic application hoops.

To minimize stress, take things one step at a time and do not procrastinate. **You have this!**