

# ***IT'S TIME***

***WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL***



***PLEASE READ THE ENCLOSED INFORMATION CAREFULLY. A COPY OF YOUR TRANSCRIPT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU IN SEPTEMBER. PLEASE CHECK FOR ERRORS. A TRANSCRIPT FEE WILL BE ASSESSED FOR EACH ADDITIONAL TRANSCRIPT REQUEST.***

**WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL**  
**School Counseling Office: 301 320-6590**

Dear Rising Seniors and Parents:

The time seems ripe to remind students that they should now begin planning for life after high school. For most of the seniors, college or some kind of education program lies ahead; for others, work, travel or perhaps a “Gap Year” is planned. This letter will focus on the process of college selection, application and admission.

Now is the time to develop a slate of colleges to which you may wish to apply and to contact colleges for information. Applications and admissions information are also on-line at college websites. Students may contact the Admissions Office of the colleges that interest you by e-mail or phone as well.

Montgomery County Public Schools has an online college planning guide entitled Getting Ready. It can be found at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/careercenter](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/careercenter) under College Readiness.

Several commercially produced college handbooks offer valuable information. They include the current editions of:

- The Fiske Guide to Colleges
- The College Handbook
- Peterson’s Guide to 4-Year Colleges
- Insider’s Guide to the Colleges
- Colleges That Change Lives

These and other handbooks are available for purchase at most bookstores. Our College Information Center (CIC) also has a limited number of copies.

Visit the CIC and become acquainted with our College/Career Coordinator. The College/Career Coordinator is there to help you find the materials that you need to make wise, informed decisions. Many students find the Family Connection web site (<http://connection.naviance.com/whitman/>) especially helpful. Contact the College/Career Coordinator or your Counselor for your personal access code. Remember that students and parents are always welcome to use the Career Center and its many resources.

Other sources of valuable information include:

- Parents (a special resource because of their knowledge of and care for their children!)
- Siblings    -Friends    -Teachers    -Family Friends    -Employers
- Evening programs held at Whitman featuring interesting, expert speakers
- College Admissions Representatives (check the Family Connection website or the CIC for the schedule of fall visits to Whitman HS)

As you forage for the “**right choice**”, some probing questions that you must ask are:

1. “**What location do I prefer?**” City, rural, New England, Mid-Atlantic, Mid-West, South, West, Foreign?...Does it matter? Remember to consider travel costs and distance from home.
2. “**Where can I be sure of having programs that interest me?**” There are many resources, including handbooks, college bulletins, and computer programs for discovering college majors and specialties. Many, perhaps most, students are not decided on a specialty and are planning to begin with a broad liberal arts program.
3. “**What size college do I desire?**” Small, medium, large, extra large? Does it matter?
4. “**Would I feel comfortable at a certain college that I am thinking about?**” For some students the amount of personal and academic freedom or the amount of structure may be issues. Some students feel that it is important there be at least some significant number of other students who share their religious or other important values. Some seek a school with students from varied cultures and traditions.
5. “**What should I do if I have learning difficulties?**” Many colleges provide programs for students who have a variety of learning difficulties. Programs vary significantly in type, scope and quality. A great deal of helpful material is available in the CIC and online. Contact your counselor if this is a concern.
6. “**How about college costs?**” College tuition costs continue to escalate at a much faster rate than the rest of the American economy. More and more families are interested in the possibility of financial aid.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be submitted if one hopes to become eligible for any form of federally subsidized financial aid. It is highly recommended that you submit the FAFSA **BY February 15<sup>th</sup>**. Federal aid is need-based and almost all colleges dispense these funds. Some, but not all, colleges also require CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE and/or a form of their own to determine eligibility for need-based aid derived from the colleges’ own funds. Note that the FAFSA formula for aid eligibility does not take into account the market value of the primary family residence. This may result in making financial aid more accessible to some middle class families.

Some non need-based aid, usually referred to as scholarships, is offered by many colleges and a wide variety of public and private organizations. The monetary value of and eligibility for such awards vary widely. A great deal of scholarship information is available online at [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) and [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). Some information is also available in the CIC. **ADHERING TO DEADLINES IS CRITICAL.** Students should contact the financial aid office of each school to find out their individual deadlines.

Some colleges are willing to discuss particular financial situations with families of students who have been admitted.

7. **“What are my chances for admission to a particular college?”** To answer this, additional hard questions must be faced and answered:

“What does my academic record look like?” This is the most important issue!

“What are my SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Test scores or ACT scores?”

“How prominent have I been in school and community activities?”

“What contribution have I made to the school?”

“How can I best present myself in the essay question of my college applications?”

“Are my parent(s) or sibling(s) affiliated with this college?”

.....These are the areas that colleges evaluate very closely. You must evaluate them closely, too.....

There is often uncertainty as to whether or not one may qualify for admission to a certain college. Uncertainty is compounded by the reality that admission prospects can change considerably with changing demographic and economic realities. The Family Connection website (<http://connection.naviance.com/whitman/>) can assist you in determining which schools may be appropriate for you. It is acceptable to risk an application to a college, if your credentials are close to their requirements. But if you conclude that you really do not have a reasonable chance at a certain college, then you should plan to apply elsewhere.

8. **“Have I taken the tests required by this college?”** SAT or ACT taken? SAT Subject Tests where necessary? - College Board test applications and materials are available in the Career Information Center and online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), or [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). It is your responsibility to register for the SAT Reasoning Test or Subject Tests or ACT tests on time. **The WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL CEEB NO. IS 210-271.** Required admissions testing should be completed in junior year if you plan to submit Early Action or Early Decision applications. Sometimes scores from the October or November senior year testing are too late. All colleges accept ACT scores in lieu of SAT scores. Certain students are eligible for special testing accommodations because of documented learning disabilities or a 504 plan. Such students should contact their counselor long before test deadlines.

It is your responsibility to make certain that scores are sent by The College Board or ACT to your colleges. Request that your scores be sent at least one month in advance of deadlines.

9. **“To how many colleges should I apply?”** There can be no definitive answer to this question, only a few guidelines. If you choose prudently and realistically, a very few applications may be ample. If you apply frivolously and imprudently, many may be too few.

In general, we counselors urge our students to cover a reasonable range of possibilities in their applications: (1) dearly desired, long shot hopes; (2) solid, target schools; (3) comfortable, safe choices. It is very important that you apply to some colleges where you feel quite certain of admission. If you narrow down your choices in the fall, your final decision in the spring will be easier for all concerned!

10. **“Should I make an early application?”** Many colleges have early application programs and many students are interested in participating in these programs. Most deadlines are in November, though they may be as early as October or as late as December. There are, in general, two types of such programs: EARLY ACTION AND EARLY DECISION. The programs are similar in that you would receive at an early date, usually before the end of December, some information about your application status. But there are some important differences:

**EARLY ACTION** programs are informational only as far as you are concerned. Some colleges will inform you that you are accepted or not accepted for admission; others, however, may defer a decision until later in the school year. If you are accepted, you are usually allowed until the spring before you need to commit yourself.

**RESTRICTED EARLY ACTION** means you apply to a school and receive a decision well in advance of its regular response date. Institutions with restrictive early action plans usually place limitations on your application to other early plans (check with your choice school for details). If you are admitted under restrictive early action, you are not obligated to accept the offer or submit an early deposit.

**EARLY DECISION** programs stipulate that, if you are accepted, you will, in fact, attend that college. You are expected to withdraw any other applications that you may have submitted when you receive an acceptance. Therefore, apply to no more than one program of this type and be certain, if you apply, that you prefer this college over all others. It is your responsibility to withdraw all other applications. Furthermore, Whitman will not process any further applications to other colleges. Although you can submit your part of the Early Decision agreement online, you must print the Early Decision form and give it to your counselor to sign for your application to be complete.

**PRIORITY DEADLINES** are the date by which an application must be received to be given the strongest possible consideration. For example, University of Maryland-College Park has a priority deadline of **November 1**. Students should apply by this date for consideration for the Honors programs, financial aid and on-campus housing.

### **NOW FOR A GRAB BAG OF STRONG SUGGESTIONS:**

**..Visiting Colleges.** Remember to bring to the Whitman Attendance Office a written parent request along with a blue “Request for Pre-Approved Absence” form signed by your teachers for any school absence entailed in your college visits. The request must be submitted prior to the visit. You may find that a visit gives you the “feel” of the college in a way that no amount of reading or discussion could. If you plan to visit, attempt to arrange an interview with an admission officer. Most of them will want to know what you can contribute to the college atmosphere. Put yourself forward positively. Dress neatly; know specifics about the college in question; show respect for the college you are visiting. Interviews call for neither shrinking self-effacement nor obnoxious brashness. Present yourself confidently, pleasantly, stating anything pertinent that may be to your advantage. Be honest, open, and straightforward. Ask questions that you have about the college. Afterwards, write a note of thanks to the interviewer. While at the school, do not spend all of your time in the admissions office. See the dorms, mingle with the students, try to attend some classes, and take a campus tour. Imagine how you would feel living and studying in this environment.

**..Meet With College Representatives At Whitman.** During the fall over two hundred colleges send professional representatives to Whitman. Meeting with them can be informative and helpful in your decision making. The dates of the representative visits are publicized on The Family Connection website (<http://connection.naviance.com/whitman/>) and on the morning announcements. Sign up and get a permission slip 24 hours in advance in the CIC in order to meet with the representatives of those colleges that interest you.

**..Use A College Checklist.** Such lists help keep you up to date on what needs to be done. There is an excellent checklist in *Getting Ready*, an MCPS publication available online at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/planningguides/>. Additional checklists will be provided during the school year.

**..Fill Out Applications Carefully.** Take them in the spirit of a major assignment. Make sure your essays are thoughtful, technically correct and that they say what you really mean. Read them aloud to yourself as critic. Ask a parent, teacher, or knowledgeable fellow student to check the grammar and spelling. Make sure that your application is neat. If your handwriting is poor, print or preferably type your application. Most colleges prefer online applications. Make sure you've fully completed and signed if necessary your portion of the Secondary School or Counselors Report.

**..Student-athletes who plan to apply to NCAA Division I colleges** must complete the NCAA Clearinghouse forms. These are available online at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net) and should be submitted to the WWHS Registrar early in the fall of their senior year. Student-athletes must also contact the Registrar to have a final transcript sent to NCAA in July.

**..Be Well Acquainted With Your Counselor.** Most colleges require that your counselor write a summary appraisal of you as a candidate. If your counselor knows you well, he or she can usually offer more perceptive comments to the college about you. Complete the College and Career Self-Evaluation Form (attached blue sheets) fully and carefully and make an appointment with your counselor to discuss it at least 3 weeks before your first college deadline.

**..Choose Teacher Recommendations Thoughtfully.** In most cases the teacher(s) should be chosen from academic subjects taken during the junior and senior years. Choose those who know you rather well and in whose classes you had a degree of success. The same teacher(s) can usually do all of your college recommendations. You should not need more than two teacher recommendations. Ask the teachers well in advance if they will write your recommendation and then give them forms and stamped, addressed envelopes with a WWHS return address 3-4 weeks in advance of college deadlines.

**..Keep Up Your Grades And Attendance In Senior Year.** Colleges do consider your senior year grades! In fact, the first semester of senior year is often the decisive influence, one way or the other, upon a student's candidacy. Many students come to grief because they take the importance of senior year too lightly. Colleges are sent a copy of your first semester grades. Another word of caution: In recent years some colleges have called into question or even rescinded acceptances because of unacceptable second semester senior year performance.

**..Try to Keep The College Admissions Process In A Sane And Healthy Perspective.**

It is an important decision but not life's ultimate moment. A calm, businesslike approach with a dab of humor will serve you better than a frenzied, frantic, doomsday outlook. Don't stew. This should be fun! You are doing something positive for yourself and you deserve to enjoy it!

**..Check Early To See That You Will Have All Required Credits For Graduation.**

<u>SUBJECTS</u>	<u>UNITS</u>
English	4 credits
Science	3 (including 1 biology and 1 physical science credit)
Mathematics	4 (including 1 algebra and 1 geometry credit)
Social Studies	3 (including 1 U.S. History, 1 NSL, and 1 World History credit)
Physical Education	1 credit
Fine Art	1 credit
Technology Education	1 credit
Health	½ credit
Foreign Language OR Advanced Technology Education	2 credits
Electives	<u>2 ½ credits</u>
TOTAL CREDITS	22

\*Also, 75 hours of Student Service Learning are required beginning with the class of 2011.

\*You must pass the Maryland High School Assessments in Algebra, Biology, and English for a diploma to be issued.

Remember that contrary to a lot of your own preconceptions, there is no "best" college. There are only "right" colleges for the right people. Often there are many "right" colleges for each student. What was best for your parents, siblings or friends may not be the most appropriate for you. Try to put this process into proper perspective. Remember that, although important, the choice of college is only one of many decisions you will be making throughout your life.

I wish you success in your college planning and applying. Remember that you have a lot to offer to a college. Whitman's counselors are eager to help you in any way possible. Your worst enemy is procrastination. **START TODAY! GOOD LUCK!**

Sincerely,

Frances Landau  
Resource Counselor

**WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT OFFICE**  
**(301) 320-6610 – RM A-119, inside the CIC**

TO: SENIORS  
FROM: SENIOR TRANSCRIPT OFFICE  
SUBJECT: **Processing Senior Transcripts**

Please stop by and become familiar with the transcript/college application process. It's very simple and staff is available to help you.

**There are FOUR key forms for this process:**

1. In Mid-September, seniors will be notified through morning announcements to **pick up a copy of their transcript for review**. ONLY THE FRONT OF THE TRANSCRIPT IS SENT TO COLLEGES. The back, including SSL hours completed, is NOT sent – students are responsible for including that, if they wish, in their supplemental information. Students should review their transcript carefully and notify the Transcript Secretary and their counselor **immediately** of any problems, as new transcripts can take up to three weeks to receive.
  
2. **College and Career Self-Evaluation form (blue)**  
Schedule a conference with your counselor **at least 3 weeks** before your first deadline to discuss the high school counselor recommendation. Your counselor will use the information on your completed College and Career Self-Evaluation (blue sheets) for your recommendation. Parent comments are a vital part of the Self-Evaluation. Give this to your counselor before or at the time of your conference.  
Inform the Transcript Office of any school that does NOT require a recommendation.
  
3. **Secondary School Report (sometimes called the Counselors Report or Transcript Request form)**  
**DO NOT GIVE THESE FORMS TO YOUR COUNSELOR.** You will find these forms on each school's admissions web site. Bring them, along with the envelope addressed to the college (see #3 under step-by-step directions on the next page), to the Transcript Office. Fill in your name, address, etc. on the top of the forms and sign them before submitting. If you are applying Early Decision, include the ED agreement requiring a counselor signature. If the school does not accept the Common Application, do not use Common Application forms.
  
4. **Release of Records form signed by parent/guardian (yellow)**  
At the beginning of senior year, seniors must turn in this form to the Transcript Office to give permission to send out transcripts. PLEASE PRINT clearly in pen. Include the student's email address on this form – that is how the Transcript Secretary will communicate with the students to resolve any errors as transcript requests are turned in.

## STEP BY STEP PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS:

1. Fill in your name and address, etc., on the top of the Secondary School Report or Counselor Report Form and sign it if necessary. The Transcript Office will fill in the rest of the form. Whitman's CEEB code is **210271**. If applicable, include the Early Decision agreement with student and parent signatures. Staple the application fee to the application only if you will not be paying that to the college online or in a separate mailed application. Fill this out carefully – this is your first impression.
2. Fill out one transcript request **purple card** for **each college application**. Include the deadline for each school and note whether it is early decision, early action, regular, rolling, etc. Do not fill in the Transcript Request # yet.
3. Paperclip each purple card and the Secondary School/Counselor Report form to a 9x12" envelope addressed to each Office of Admissions with a **Walt Whitman H.S. return address** (7100 Whittier Blvd, 20817) and three first class stamps or \$1.28 postage on it. Please retain copies of applications, test scores, resumes and other college - related documents. For applications sent to Canada, postage is 4 stamps.
4. Log your request onto the clipboard at the Transcript Office and write your log number (the Transcript Request #) on the purple card.
5. Hand all of the above directly to the Transcript Secretary along with the required fees. **The first transcript is free, additional copies are \$5 each.** Checks should be made payable to Walt Whitman H.S. **TRANSCRIPTS WILL NOT BE MAILED UNTIL FEES OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS ARE MET.**

Transcript fees cover mid-year grades (automatically sent mid-February to each college we have sent a transcript to) and one final transcript sent in July to the school you will be attending after graduation.

Colleges require that the College Board or ACT send college entrance test scores to them. This should be arranged at the time of the test registration or at least one month before the college application deadline by contacting the College Board or ACT.

**The Transcript Office does not send test scores to colleges.**

### **TIMING**

**PLEASE ALLOW AT LEAST 3 WEEKS FOR PROCESSING OF TRANSCRIPTS** (see attached schedule). **More time is required for Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> and Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> deadlines.** Because of the large volume of Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> college applications deadlines, transcript requests are due in the Transcript Office on Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>. Because of Winter Break, Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> requests are due Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>.

**The same 3-4 week lead-time should be observed in requesting teacher recommendations and in making an appointment with your counselor to discuss their recommendation.**

Remember that the counselor recommendation requires the thoughtful completion of the College and Career Self-Evaluation Form. **We expect the STUDENT, not the parent, to complete the College and Career Self-Evaluation Form in the "It's Time" packet.**

# WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL

## RELEASE OF RECORDS

Due to Maryland House Bill 299 and Federal legislation, the school must have appropriate written consent for release of student records. This consent is required from the parent or guardian of a student who has not reached the age of eighteen. A student who has attained the age of eighteen may declare his/her majority and sign the release of pertinent school records to all post secondary educational institutions and to prospective employers. NO records will be sent anywhere without completion of this form.

Permission is granted to release the school records of:

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First name

M.I.

Last name

to post secondary educational institutions or prospective employers upon the request of the student. Counselors reserve right of confidentiality for all recommendations.

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Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

**STUDENT'S EMAIL ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**(This is how the Transcript Secretary will communicate with you in case of problems)**

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## DIPLOMA INFORMATION

Request for changes on or corrections to diplomas issued at graduation after they have been printed will cost the student \$20.00. Please type or print your name exactly as you wish it to appear on your diploma.

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First name

Middle Name

Last Name

**RETURN THIS FORM TO TRANSCRIPT OFFICE**

**TRANSCRIPT/RECOMMENDATION REQUEST DUE DATES**  
**September 2011**

<b><u>College Deadline</u></b>	<b><u>Due in Transcript Office</u></b>
OCTOBER 15	SEPTEMBER 23
NOVEMBER 1	OCTOBER 7*
NOVEMBER 15	OCTOBER 25
DECEMBER 1	NOVEMBER 10
DECEMBER 15	NOVEMBER 23
JANUARY 1	DECEMBER 1*
JANUARY 15	DECEMBER 15

**The same 3-4 week lead-time should be observed in requesting teacher recommendations AND in making an appointment with your counselor to discuss their recommendation.** Remember that the counselor recommendation requires the thoughtful completion of the College and Career Self-Evaluation Form. **We expect the STUDENT, not the parent, to complete the College and Career Self-Evaluation Form in the “It’s Time” packet.** The parent essay is due to the counselor at least 3 weeks before the application due date as well.

\*Due to the large volume of requests and Winter Break, November 1<sup>st</sup> and January transcript requests are due more than 3 weeks in advance.

**WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL**  
**COLLEGE SELF-EVALUATION FORM**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ COUNSELOR \_\_\_\_\_

1. PSAT scores: V \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ WR \_\_\_\_\_ SAT II scores: subj \_\_\_\_\_ score \_\_\_\_\_  
SAT I scores: V \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ WR \_\_\_\_\_ subj \_\_\_\_\_ score \_\_\_\_\_  
V \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ WR \_\_\_\_\_ subj \_\_\_\_\_ score \_\_\_\_\_

ACT: English \_\_\_\_\_ Reading \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_ Science \_\_\_\_\_ Composite \_\_\_\_\_  
ACT: English \_\_\_\_\_ Reading \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_ Science \_\_\_\_\_ Composite \_\_\_\_\_

Other high schools attended, if any \_\_\_\_\_

Are you fluent in any foreign languages? Please list them:

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you using a private college counselor? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, name: \_\_\_\_\_

Which teacher(s) is/are writing your teacher recommendations?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. COMPLETE THESE GENERAL COLLEGE PLANNING ITEMS:**

A. Academic information: \_\_\_\_\_ first choice major  
\_\_\_\_\_ second choice major

B. Intercollegiate athletics: \_\_\_ Important Area of interest: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ Not important

C. Religious affiliation: \_\_\_ Important Which religion? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_ Not important

D. List other features important to you: e.g., study abroad, co-op,  
learning disabled programs, newspaper, drama.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



8. Discuss the extracurricular activities that had the most meaning for you and why.

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9. How have you used your time out of school? Examples: hobbies, organizations, etc.:

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10. Have you held any jobs? If so, state dates of employment, approximate hours per week, and the name of the business. What do you do there?

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11. Tell about your travel experience. Any memorable trips?

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12. Name your three most challenging courses and grades in these courses:

COURSE

GRADE

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

13. Describe what you believe are your academic strengths & tell us how do you show these strengths. \_\_\_\_\_

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14. In what academic areas do you need to improve?

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15. What courses did you enjoy the most? Why?

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16. What are your tentative career plans? What are you interested in studying in college?

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17. Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability? Are there any health problems or personal problems which may have affected your school performance that you would like to share with your counselor?

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18. Discuss any scholastic distinctions or honors you have won in high school:

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