

# **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

## **for Senior Students & Parents**

### **Open Lunch:**

**Q: Are seniors allowed to leave campus for lunch?**

A: Yes, with parents and all teachers' permission. This privilege is only for seniors in good academic and conduct standing, including attendance and/or tardies. If abused, this privilege may be revoked by school administrators. Students must get approval from all of their Senior teachers as well. Students are not allowed to go to open lunch on A/B days or days they are scheduled for Directed Studies, nor on days when Homeroom is scheduled during Study Hall.

### **Volunteer hours:**

**Q: Are volunteer hours required senior year for both students AND parents?**

A. **Yes, for students.** 20 volunteer hours are a required component of Senior Project. Students are expected to complete 5 volunteers hours each quarter, beginning as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school senior year. (Hours completed in the summer will not be approved).

**Yes, for parents.** The typical 18 volunteer hours are required for CCA parents. Seniors may not be allowed to participate in some senior celebrations or May's graduation ceremony if this commitment is not fulfilled.

### **Senior/Graduation Fee:**

**Q: What does the CCA senior/graduation fee of \$130 cover or pay for?**

A: The Senior fee covers the diploma, the cover, decorations, speaker honorariums, and cap/gown/tassel for graduation plus other Senior activities throughout the year.

**Q: When is the Graduation Fee due?**

A. This fee is due by April 1. Parent may pay the amount in the fall or may make payments toward this fee during Senior year. Payments may be made online, in cash or by check (payable to CCA) then turned into Ms. Johnston.

### **College Visits:**

**Q: How many excused absences are allowed for college visits?**

A: You may have 2 days, excused, for college visits; any college visits beyond the two excused must be approved by Mrs. Smith. When you visit your college, ask for a school excuse note or some type of documentation to verify you attended the college.

### **Senior Trip:**

**Q: Is a Senior Trip planned for graduates? If so, how can I learn about the details?**

A: Hamilton County Department of Education stopped allowing school-sponsored Senior trips in 2012. Should there be a future opportunity to sponsor a senior trip for CCA students, parents and students will be advised.

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### **Jostens**

**Q: What are students required to purchase from Jostens in regard to graduation?**

A: Jostens is the sponsoring company for CCA caps and gowns. However, parents do NOT pay Jostens for cap and gown items. The cap and gown, standard tassel and stole are included in the \$130 graduation fee paid to CCA. At senior retreat, students will submit the information required to reserve a cap and gown for their graduation. This will include:

- Student demographic information (name, address, cell phone number, etc.)
- Student height
- Student weight
- Student gender

While seniors may want to purchase additional memorabilia from Jostens, no purchase from Jostens is required for any CCA senior. However, Jostens is the vendor for our official CCA graduation invitations.

**If you lose your order form** for Jostens products, you may order online at [www.jostens.com](http://www.jostens.com). You can access the order forms and view all of Jostens' offerings for CCA students online at [www.jostens.com](http://www.jostens.com). In the "Let's Get Started" bar, type "Center for Creative Arts School" and click go.

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## **Senior Portraits:**

### **Q: Are seniors required to purchase photos from Prestige Portraits?**

A: No, there is no requirement for seniors/parents to purchase photos from Prestige Portraits. However, the only photos that will be in the yearbook are those taken by Prestige. CCA holds a contract with Prestige Portraits. CCA suggests parents make an appointment with Prestige (as early as June following their Junior year but no later than November of their Senior year) and pay a small sitting fee in order to select their yearbook pictures. No further obligation to purchase picture packages is required.

### **Q: Are there any requirements for the format of the two photos to be obtained for the yearbook?**

A: Yes, CCA requires the formal yearbook choice be made with a sky blue background and both formal and casual yearbook choices must be in a vertical format. Yearbook poses/photos must be chosen with the Yearbook Sponsor, by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Q: What is the cost for the required photos from Prestige Portraits?**

A: Parents are advised to contact Prestige Portraits directly to obtain detailed information on the costs for sitting fees, how many poses/portraits are included, possible portrait packages, etc. Contact info: phone 423.892.1332 or toll-free 1.800.566.0783.

### **Q: Are seniors required to have a photo made on "Picture Day"?**

A: Seniors should have a photo made on "Picture Day" if they do not intend to take formal Senior pictures at Prestige. If a student does not submit their Prestige "formal" and "casual" choice by Dec. 1 to the Yearbook Sponsor, the photo taken on "Picture Day" will be used as the senior portrait in the yearbook.

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## **Senior Seminar/Project**

### **Q: What are students learning/doing in the Senior Seminar course?**

A: The Senior Seminar teacher, in conjunction with the College Advisor, works toward several objectives: Assisting students in the college application process, identifying scholarships and financial aid opportunities, supporting students as they progress through senior projects, helping students mature in their reflective thinking and understanding of the role and responsibilities of adulthood. Students are required to seek connections to the community through quarterly community service. Speakers from the community are also invited into the classroom representing colleges, professions, business, industry.

### **Q: What are the requirements and/or guidelines for Senior Projects?**

A: Senior Project represents the students' year-long effort and should be regarded as a capstone piece representing their best possible work. The best topics are those that represent social or political significance, spark curiosity, have global or community impact, require higher order thinking, can be deeply researched, and focuses on new (rather than common), knowledge. All phases of students' work should represent a stretch for the student.

Senior Project is completed in phases during the senior year. The components include:

Determining a topic and essential question (the question that will focus their research), preparing a Letter of Intent (a letter to the review committee for feedback and approval of proposed research), completing a Research Paper (answering the essential question through research), finding a Mentor (a member of the community who is familiar with the topic and who will meet with and help the student develop research into a product), preparing a Prospectus (product proposal), completing Verification Forms (forms that the student and mentor complete together at meetings), preparing an Oral Presentation (students' delivery of their research findings and product).

### **Q: When are Senior Projects due?**

A: Due dates vary and are assigned for each component during the year. Typically, the Letter of Intent is submitted in October, the Research Paper in December, the Product Prospectus in January, the Presentation and Product in March.

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## **Recommendation Letters:**

### **Q: What is the best way to request a letter of recommendation from CCA faculty and/or staff?**

A: Always choose a teacher with whom you have had a successful and long-running relationship. It is best to request your recommendation 1-2 months prior to the deadline. (Many teachers spend a lot of time creating good letters and can only commit to doing a certain number due to time constraints). If the teacher declines, it gives you an opportunity to seek another

person for reference. Request your recommendation in person then follow up by sending your request to teachers/staff through Naviance.

For a teacher to write a quality letter, you must give that teacher:

1. a copy of your transcript, personal statement, resume, college questions (from Naviance) or other hard-copy information about you.
2. Put in writing the **school/schools the letter is for and the deadline for each school.**  
(This is very important!)

*If using letters for Common App or Multiple Applications -Ask for a generic letter of recommendation that favors you for BOTH COLLEGES AND SCHOLARSHIPS. This will allow you to send the same letter in for both. The teacher or counselor may write "Jane will be a great candidate for your program." Or "I highly recommend John to your organization."*

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## **Transcripts:**

**Q: When does CCA send out transcripts to colleges?**

**A:** This begins mid to late September. There are various tasks that have to be completed before they can be sent via Naviance program.

**Q: How do I request a transcript be sent to colleges for which I'm applying for admission?**

**A:** Log on to <http://connection.naviance.com/chscca>. (If you have forgotten your password, use the "forgot password" function under the log in prompt. Or if your email is not correct –contact the College Advisor.) Students are required to add all colleges to which they plan to apply into the "Colleges I'm Applying To" list in their personal Family Connections account in Naviance. This creates a portal which allows the transcript to be submitted directly to the college.

Once a student has added that college to the "Colleges I'm Applying To" list, he or she can click the link "request transcripts" above this college list to request that a transcript be sent on his/her behalf. Students may access this function either through the "transcripts" or "colleges" tabs.

*Once applications are submitted to colleges, expect automated emails requesting transcripts from CCA. **Please do not be alarmed if these are not sent immediately**, colleges will not deny admission if the transcript is not sent immediately after the application is submitted. CCA has a detailed process to follow to submit these and, at times, they may be delayed.*

**Q: What if I need a transcript for scholarship applications or any other reason?**

**A:** Please contact the 12<sup>th</sup> grade School Counselor in person or by email for electronic or paper copies of transcripts.

**Q: What is a "weighted GPA"? Do CCA's student transcripts use this format?**

**A:** No, CCA is on a 4.0 scale which is unweighted.

*However, extra points are added to the final grade before being entered on the transcript. 3 points are added for Honors classes, 4 points for Dual Enrollment, and 5 points for AP classes IF they take the AP test in May. (It typically costs \$95 and payment/registration is due in February to Guidance Dept.)*

**Q: My college admissions office requires that the arts course names on my transcript be more detailed than CCA's standard naming conventions (for example, Visual Arts 2). How can I request this kind of modification to my transcript?**

**A:** For modifications to student transcripts of this nature, contact the Assistant Principal by email.

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## **Naviance:**

**Q: I've heard other parents/students talking about the Naviance website.**

**What is it and how can CCA parents/seniors access it and what resources are available there?**

**A:** Naviance is a program used by College Advisors in Hamilton County. It is the primary communication tool to inform you and your student about the college process and is used as **the method for sending official transcripts directly from CCA to colleges.** The Naviance website also has links for colleges, college matches, scholarship/financial aid information and much more.

All Seniors register for a Naviance Student account during class in August. This account is named **Naviance Family Connections**. The College Advisor sends emails via Naviance and is the primary way of communicating important deadlines or information regarding college applications, application statuses, scholarships opportunities, financial aid, etc.

## **Common Application**

**Q: Is Common Application for me? If so, what is the “Common App” process for college applications?**

A: While most schools will allow you to apply to their school online directly from the college site, some colleges will only accept applications through the Common App website. This is a highly intensive process and is only recommended and used if you are applying to multiple schools REQUIRING Common App. Students do one VERY detailed application and send it to all the schools instead of applying individually.

*Please meet with the college advisor to see if this process is the most efficient application process for you.*

**The Common App process consists of submissions from 3 different parties: student, counselor and teacher.**

### **1. Student Application**

- A. After creating an account, the student will complete their Common App application online at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).
- B. Students will include all their demographic information and essay, as well as listing the colleges they are applying to through Common App.
- C. Then, Seniors must submit their Common Application to the colleges they have chosen. They can send the application at different times based on the college’s deadline, but the supporting documents (school report, transcript, teacher evaluation, and letter of recommendation) must be sent through their **Naviance account**.

**\*\*Students MUST link ALL the colleges that you are applying to through Common App into their Naviance accounts under “Colleges I’m Applying To.”** If Naviance doesn’t know which colleges the students are applying to, it cannot communicate that information with Common App. There is a box requiring that the student match/link his or her Common App applications with the ones entered into their Naviance account.

### **2. Counselor Common App Supplements**

The counselor will upload and submit the required Counselor Common App Supplements

- a. Transcript
- b. School profile
- c. Counselor School Report
- d. Written Evaluation (additional supporting documents, if needed)

### **3. Teacher Common App Supplements**

One or two teachers will upload and submit the required Teacher Common App Supplements to be submitted.

- a. Teacher Evaluation (consists of simple rating & short-answer questions)
- b. Teacher Letter of recommendation (a Word Doc or a PDF)

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## **Financial Aid**

**Q. What does the term Financial Aid really mean?**

A. The term “financial aid” includes: local, state, and federal grants, loans, and/or private and university scholarships.

**Q. Is there a Financial Aid presentation this year?**

A. Yes, there are 2 available this year. The first is Open House night in September. This is a required meeting for seniors and their parents. A second presentation will be on the evening of Student Led Conferences in the fall. These 2 nights are highly recommended since there will be a lot of information given out with important dates attached to these. For those interested in Tennessee Promise (“2 free years of college”), that information will be discussed as well.

**Q: What is the FAFSA and what is it used for?**

A: FAFSA stands for **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** and is used by college financial offices to determine the level and types of financial aid available to students (and/or parents). For those applying for the Tennessee Lottery (HOPE) scholarship, the FAFSA also serves as the application for that scholarship. *(This is a free application, some sites will try to charge you money to fill this out).*

An FSA ID (Federal Student Aid ID) is required for BOTH the parent and student. The website is [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).

**Q: Does everyone need to complete the FAFSA even if there are no plans to apply for federal financial aid?**

A: It is recommended that **all** parents/students complete the FAFSA. For those applying for the Tennessee Lottery (HOPE) scholarship, the FAFSA is required because it serves as the application for that scholarship.

**Q: Is there a deadline by which the FAFSA must be completed?**

A: The FAFSA cannot be started until **OCTOBER 1** of senior year. Each college will specify their financial aid deadlines; however, to be eligible for the most financial aid, apply in early in October.

## **Scholarships**

**Q: What is the deadline and the requirements for the TN Promise?**

A: The deadline is typically November 1 of your senior year. You must complete the application online through [www.tnpromise.gov](http://www.tnpromise.gov) and then you will receive notification about the other requirements. Students must attend 2 mandatory meetings and fulfill service requirements before enrollment.

**Q: Are there reliable online resources available to search for scholarships?**

A: Yes, here is a list of recommended websites:

[www.StudentScholarshipSearch.com](http://www.StudentScholarshipSearch.com)

[www.collegescholarships.org](http://www.collegescholarships.org)

[www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com)

[www.chegg.com/scholarships](http://www.chegg.com/scholarships)

[www.ScholarshipPoints.com](http://www.ScholarshipPoints.com)

[www.FastWeb.com](http://www.FastWeb.com)

[www.CollegeBoard.com](http://www.CollegeBoard.com)

[www.sfa.ufl.edu:16080/scholarshipcafe/](http://www.sfa.ufl.edu:16080/scholarshipcafe/)

[www.uncf.org/scholarships](http://www.uncf.org/scholarships)

[www.internationalscholarships.com](http://www.internationalscholarships.com)