COMPLETING THE COMMON APP ONLINE 2019-2020

1. Open http://www.commonapp.org/login and create your account. Your username is your email address and you will need to create your own password. In the future when you login, make sure the Applicant tab is highlighted when you do so.

2. Go first to the fourth tab that opens on the next screen ("college search") and select the schools to which you are applying. Be liberal here – if you think you are going to apply, add the school. You can always delete (and add new ones) at any time before you apply. Having the schools identified places them on your dashboard (the first tab) and provides a quick summary of deadlines, completions and requirements.

3. Begin the actual Common App (third tab):
   - Any and all questions with a red asterisk MUST be answered. When each section is complete, a green check mark will appear and move to the screen to the next section to be completed.
   - Any items that ask for telephone numbers will also have a space for country codes (Common app is, after all, international). Be sure to use the drop down menu and select "+1" for the United States or Common App will keep telling you that the section is not complete.
   - EDUCATION:
     - School subsection:
       - If you started here freshman year, your date of entry is 09/2016
       - Your graduation date will be 06/8/2020
     - Grades subsection:
       - FCPS does not rank students. Under "Class rank reporting" you will select "None".
       - The exact number of the senior class is 526.
       - Your cumulative GPA is the GPA listed on your transcript and is also available in SIS under Course History.
       - SCHS uses a 4-point grading scale and the GPA is weighted.
     - Courses subsection:
       - The course scheduling system at South County is Semester. List your courses in the following order:
         - English
         - Math (if still enrolled)
         - Science (if still enrolled)
         - Social Studies
         - World Language (if still enrolled)
         - Electives
     - Honors subsection: Honors includes merits, end-of-year awards, National Merit Commended/Semi-finalists, AP Scholar/ Scholar with Honors/Scholar with Distinction, National Latin/French Exam medals/certificates, and anything for which a student has been selected by the school even if unable to attend. Specify if it is a school, regional, state, or national award (e.g. Presidential Award for Community Service). Include non-academic awards too (i.e. recognition from work, sports, scouting, etc.) You have five slots given to you for this area, so choose the most prestigious if you have more than five.
   - ACTIVITIES: List these in priority order – most important to you goes first; next most important; etc. You have ten slots given to you in this section, and you only get 150 characters for description so abbreviate where appropriate.
   - WRITING: Note that the personal essay may or may not be required. Each school may ask for additional short answers. Be sure to complete the two subsections at the end (disciplinary history and additional information), if being utilized.

- COURSES AND GRADES: Confirm whether or not the schools you are applying to ask you to complete this section. Instructional videos guide you through the process of self-reporting your courses and grades. Your course history is available in SIS StudentVUE, and you can also request an unofficial transcript from your counselor or the College and Career Center to complete this section.

4. Once the Common App has been completed (minus the essay – you don't need to have done the essay to go to this next step), click on "My Colleges" tab (second tab). Within each college will be a list of steps including "Recommenders and FERPA" – click here.

   Before you can invite and assign recommenders, you must complete the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) questions. We recommend you authorize schools and colleges to release and share records. We highly recommend you waive your right to access your recommendations and other documents being sent from SCHS. Doing so gives the colleges confidence that you trust your recommenders to write honest assessments. Teachers and colleges pay close attention to how you respond to this question. Warning: once any invited school official submits a recommendation, you cannot change your FERPA response!

   After inviting your teacher as a **Recommender**, you must now **Assign** her/him as a recommender for the college. Once you've done this with your first school, do the same for every other school on your list. The "assign recommenders" part must be completed separately for each college.

   If your teacher prefers to mail in her/his Teacher Evaluation form and letter to each college, rather than uploading them to the Common App, you will see a warning. It is a good idea to confirm with the admissions office if they will accept a paper letter sent through the mail. If one will not be accepted, you will want to speak with your teacher recommender to explain the situation and determine whether the teacher will still be able to provide you with a recommendation or if perhaps you will need to identify a different teacher. Click the Offline Form link to print the Teacher Evaluation form. Print this form. Complete the Contact section (top portion) of the form. Address a business-sized envelope to the college and add a stamp. Give the form and addressed stamped envelope to your Teacher for mailing. Do so for each of your colleges.

5. Visit the Writing Supplement section under each entry in "My Colleges" to determine what your additional questions for that school may be.

6. Write your essay in a Word processing program and copy and paste it into the Common App. Occasionally students report that the essays seem to transfer over smoothly, but when they preview the essay, they see blank spaces, missing lines, or computer code that turns some (or all) of their essay into hieroglyphics. The easiest "fix" that has been discovered so far is for students to copy their Microsoft Word essays into Notepad, which clears the programming codes from Microsoft Word. Students then copy from Notepad and paste into Common App, and everything looks as it should.

7. After you complete the Common App and all college supplements, you are ready to begin submitting your applications. Watch the Common App Payment and Submission video carefully to ensure that you complete everything. It will walk you through three critical steps and allow you to review the application pdf, pay the application fee, and provide your signature and click submit. **You MUST submit the complete Common App and any writing supplements AND pay your application fees by the deadline in order for your submission to be complete!**

Still have questions? Visit the College and Career Center or see your counselor for help!