

High School Planning & Postsecondary Readiness

Grades 9–12: graduation • Bright Futures • college & career planning • applications

2026–2027 • Students & Families

School Counseling Department • 2026–2027

THE ROADMAP



One plan, many pathways

- 1 GRADUATE**
Credits, GPA & assessment requirements
- 2 EXPLORE**
Careers, colleges, CTE, military & work
- 3 PREPARE**
Grades, rigor, testing & involvement
- 4 APPLY**
Applications, Xello, Bright Futures & FAFSA

Start early. Ask questions. Stay organized.





Meet your Nease School Counseling team

We are your first stop when something about graduation, course planning, Xello, or applications is unclear.



MaryRose Kaplan

Last names A–E

School Counselor



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IB Students • College & Career Planning

HOW TO FIND US

Counseling Office • 904-547-8321

Counselor assignments, email links, and appointment links are on the Nease Counseling page.

[Nease Guidance](#)



Know your counselor. Know how to get help.

Counselor appointment

- Students should make an appointment through the counseling page/QR code. The confirmation email can be used as the pass to the counseling office.

Best questions to bring

- Graduation progress, course planning, Xello tasks, application documents, Bright Futures, testing decisions, and “I’m not sure what to do next.”

Use the official channels

- Check the Nease School Counseling page, Schoology updates, Outlook/email, newsletters, and senior-class messages before relying on peer information.



Guidance

[Nease Counseling Page](#)



Resources families should bookmark

School + Communication

- Nease School Counseling page
- Schoology counseling updates
- Student Outlook/email
- Monthly counseling newsletter
- Counselor appointment link

Testing

Testing + Accommodations

- SAT: College Board
- ACT: ACT.org
- CLT: CLTexam.com
- Nease testing page
- Accommodation request steps

Common App

College + Career Search

- Xello through Clever
- Common App
- College Navigator
- Florida Shines
- BigFuture / MyFloridaFuture
- Get There / ASVAB / Apprenticeships

NEASE SCHOOL COUNSELING SCHOOLGY

Join code: 3NJ5-V58F-8NJN2

Counseling updates • deadlines • resources

What Xello is for — by grade

The tool changes as students move through high school. The goal is to use it before senior deadlines arrive.

9TH • FRESHMEN

Build the foundation

- Complete assigned Xello tasks and self-assessments.
- Explore careers and save options that sound interesting.
- Start a strong transcript: grades, attendance, and good habits.
- Join activities that you actually want to be part of.

10TH • SOPHOMORES

Explore with purpose

- Revisit interests, careers, majors, and pathways.
- Begin exploring colleges/programs without building a final list yet.
- Keep academic rigor appropriate and protect your GPA.
- Build depth in activities, service, work, or leadership.

11TH • JUNIORS

Research + organize

- Compare colleges, technical programs, majors, and careers.
- Save schools and start a balanced college/program list.
- Use Plans to connect possible majors/careers to pathways.
- Prepare for senior testing, recommendations, and applications.

12TH • SENIORS

Applications + documents

- Create an application tracker for every college.
- Link Xello + Common App and complete FERPA.
- Request the assigned counselor, Nease teachers, and transcripts correctly.
- Track status in Xello — verify receipt in each college portal.

The best use of Xello is a little at a time — not opening it for the first time when an application is due.

How to get into Xello

At Nease, students access Xello through Clever using their district sign-in.

Resources

Search

Filter Resources by

Favorites

District Resources

Added By Me

Resource type

Favorites



Xello

District



Edmentum -
Courseware,...

District



ParentSquare

District



Minga

District



Three clicks

1. Open the Nease homepage
2. Click Clever – Links for Students
3. Open Xello

Direct links

[Nease
homepage](#)

[Clever login](#)

[SJCS D Xello help](#)



[Scan: Xello help](#)

Graduation requirements: know the finish line

4	ELA	ELA 1–4
4	MATH	Includes Algebra 1 + Geometry
3	SCIENCE	Includes Biology
3	SOCIAL STUDIES	World • U.S. • Gov • Econ
0.5	FINANCIAL LITERACY	Personal Financial Literacy
1	FINE / PRACTICAL / CTE	Approved qualifying course
1	HOPE	Physical Education + health
7.5	ELECTIVES	24 total credits

YOU ALSO NEED

2.0+ unweighted cumulative GPA

Pass Grade 10 ELA (or concordant)
and Algebra 1 EOC (or Geometry EOC)

IMPORTANT

World language is not required for the standard diploma.

But 2 sequential credits are part of Florida public-university admission and Bright Futures academic coursework.

Use your counselor + official graduation checklist to confirm your own progress.

[FLDOE Requirements](#)



Graduation is the minimum — your goals may require more

Course choices should be based on the destination you are trying to keep open.

GRADUATE

Standard diploma

- 24 required credits
- 2.0 unweighted GPA
- Required ELA + Algebra 1 assessments
- World language not required

BE COLLEGE-READY

Florida public universities

- Standard diploma
- Minimum college-prep coursework
- 2 sequential world-language credits
- Strong rigor + grades matter in admission

QUALIFY FOR AID

Bright Futures

- 16 approved academic credits
- Bright Futures weighted GPA
- ACT / CLT / SAT benchmark
- Volunteer / paid work hours + FFAA

Course planning question to ask every year:

“Does my schedule keep the options I care about open?”

[Nease course resources](#)

Postsecondary options: more than one “right” path

Use Xello to compare options by career goal, cost, time, location, selectivity, and support.

4-year university

Bachelor’s degree; selective admission; GPA, rigor, test scores, activities/essay may matter.

State college

Associate or bachelor’s options close to home; open admission for many programs; lower-cost starting point.

Technical / certification

Career certificate or applied program; may lead quickly to work, licensing, apprenticeships, or industry credentials.

Military / academy

Active duty, ROTC, reserves, or service academy; requires early planning and physical/academic preparation.

Community message: “Plan A” is not the only good plan. Families should compare the pathway that best fits the student’s career goal and finances.

[SJR State](#)

[FSCJ](#)

[Get There FL](#)



FCTC and career-focused programs

Technical programs can be a strong fit for students who want a credential, skill, job placement, or a lower-cost pathway after graduation.

Examples

- HVAC/R, welding, diesel, automotive
- Dental or medical assisting
- Culinary, cosmetology, nails/facials
- Early childhood education
- Landscape, turf, horticulture

Students should verify the current program list, transportation expectations, GPA/attendance/discipline requirements, and application windows before planning around a program.

How Xello fits

- Search careers first: wages, daily tasks, training, demand.
- Save technical programs and related careers.
- Compare certification vs. associate vs. bachelor's pathways.
- Use the plan to guide senior courses, shadowing, volunteering, and summer work.

[FCTC Programs](#)[Get There FL](#)

Bright Futures: the numbers students should know

Eligibility is evaluated on approved coursework, a Bright Futures weighted GPA, testing, hours, and the senior-year state application.

Florida Academic Scholars

FAS • current 100% public tuition/fees

3.50 Bright Futures GPA

100 service • 100 work • 100 combined

Florida Medallion Scholars

FMS • current 75% public tuition/fees

3.00 Bright Futures GPA

75 service • 100 work • 100 combined

16 APPROVED ACADEMIC CREDITS • 4 English • 4 Math • 3 Natural Science • 3 Social Science • 2 sequential World Language

TEST SCORE BENCHMARKS

Graduating class

FAS — ACT / CLT / SAT

FMS — ACT / CLT / SAT

Class of 2027

29 / 95 / 1330

24 / 82 / 1190

Class of 2028

29 / 96 / 1350

25 / 83 / 1200

UNDERCLASSMEN

Future score requirements can change.

Check the newest handbook each year instead of saving an old screenshot.

[Bright Futures handbook](#)



Handbook

Official FAS vs. FMS breakdown

2026–27 Florida Bright Futures initial eligibility requirements

BOTH AWARDS REQUIRE: Florida standard diploma • FFAA by Aug. 31 after graduation • 16 approved college-prep credits • qualifying test score • qualifying service/work hours

FLORIDA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS (FAS)

100% of tuition + applicable fees at Florida public institutions*

GPA: 3.50 Bright Futures weighted GPA

TESTS: Class of 2027: ACT 29 • CLT 95 • SAT 1330

Class of 2028: ACT 29 • CLT 96 • SAT 1350

HOURS: 100 service OR 100 paid work OR 100 combined hours

RENEWAL: 3.00 renewal GPA

FLORIDA MEDALLION SCHOLARS (FMS)

75% of tuition + applicable fees at Florida public institutions*

GPA: 3.00 Bright Futures weighted GPA

TESTS: Class of 2027: ACT 24 • CLT 82 • SAT 1190

Class of 2028: ACT 25 • CLT 83 • SAT 1200

HOURS: 75 service OR 100 paid work OR 100 combined hours

RENEWAL: 2.75 renewal GPA

16 APPROVED COLLEGE-PREP CREDITS

4 English • 4 Math (Algebra I or above) • 3 Natural Science (2 labs) • 3 Social Science • 2 sequential World Language



Official FAS/FMS
state guide

*Eligibility requirements and award amounts can change. Verify the current Bright Futures handbook and OSFA account.

Do not wait until senior year to think about Bright Futures

The easiest path is to build the requirements gradually and keep documentation as you go.

9TH**Start the GPA strong**

Earn service/work hours if you want to. Keep letters/pay stubs and complete required reflection/documentation.

10TH**Check your academic path**

Make sure your schedule is building the 16 approved academic credits, including world language.

11TH**Know your target**

Check your Bright Futures GPA, testing benchmark, and hours. Try to resolve gaps before senior year.

12th**Apply + finish**

Class of 2027: FFAA window is Oct. 1, 2026–Aug. 31, 2027. Submit hours through the Nease process and keep testing through the allowable deadline if needed.

Service hours are not a graduation requirement. They matter for Bright Futures and can strengthen a résumé/application.

[Nease service info](#)[State aid portal](#)

Freshman year: build the foundation

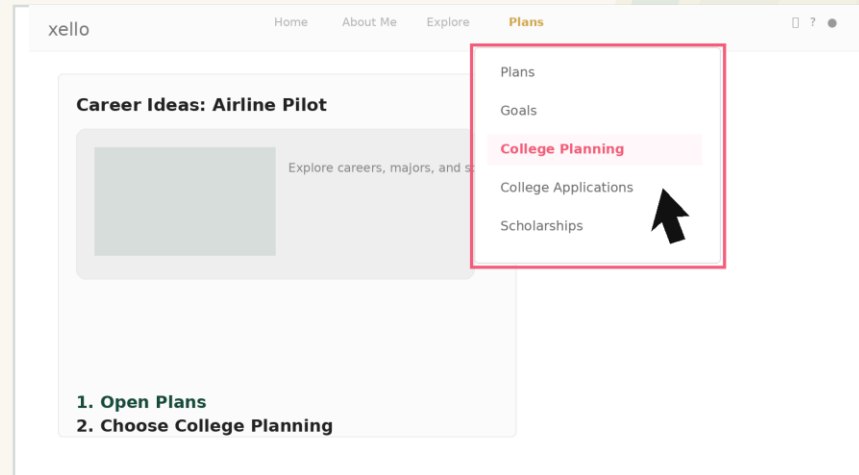
Freshman grades count. The goal is not to have everything figured out — it is to build habits and start exploring.

WHAT MATTERS MOST

Start strong — then stay curious.

- Protect your GPA from the first quarter. Ask for help before a small problem becomes a semester problem.
- Attend school consistently and learn how to communicate with teachers.
- Join a club, sport, academy activity, service project, job, or outside activity that genuinely interests you.
- Do not chase a “perfect résumé.” One or two real commitments are better than random memberships.
- Use Xello to learn about yourself, careers, and pathways — not to choose a lifelong job at age 14.

IN XELLO



- Complete your grade-level To-do list / assigned tasks.
- Update About Me: interests, strengths, and skills.
- Explore and save at least a few careers.
- Create or revisit a future Plan — college is only one possible pathway.

FAMILY PROMPTS

Ask:

“What class feels easiest or hardest right now?”

“What did Xello show you that surprised you?”

“What is one activity you want to try this year?”

[Xello tasks](#)



Sophomore year: add direction without adding pressure

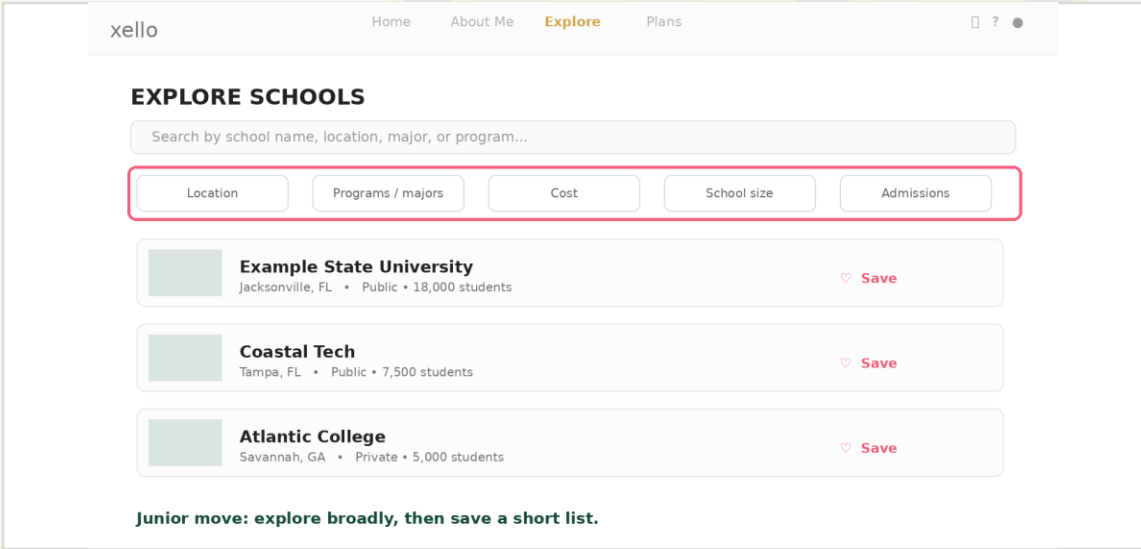
This is the year to notice patterns — what you are good at, what you enjoy, and what pathways deserve a closer look.

SCHOOL + INVOLVEMENT

- Keep grades strong and choose an appropriate level of academic challenge.
- Look at your transcript and graduation progress — know which requirements are already complete and what is coming next.
- Build depth: continue activities you value, take on responsibility, or try something new that fits your interests.
- Begin documenting awards, certifications, jobs, service, leadership, athletics, and meaningful projects.
- Start paying attention to careers/majors connected to the classes and activities you enjoy.

The question is not “What looks impressive?” — it is “What am I learning about myself?”

USE XELLO TO EXPLORE



xello Home About Me **Explore** Plans

EXPLORE SCHOOLS

Search by school name, location, major, or program...

Location Programs / majors Cost School size Admissions

Example State University
Jacksonville, FL • Public • 18,000 students Save

Coastal Tech
Tampa, FL • Public • 7,500 students Save

Atlantic College
Savannah, GA • Private • 5,000 students Save

Junior move: explore broadly, then save a short list.

- Explore majors and careers, then open the schools/programs connected to them.
- Save colleges/programs you are curious about — this is a research list, not an application list.
- Revisit your saved options every few months. Interests are supposed to change.

[Explore options guide](#)

A simple underclassman routine: 20 minutes each quarter

Families do not need to “do college admissions” in ninth grade. They do need a repeatable way to check growth and keep options open.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE BY THE END OF 10TH GRADE

- Student knows how to log into Xello without help.
- Student understands graduation progress and current GPA.
- Student has explored several careers/majors/pathways.
- Student has a few meaningful experiences outside regular classwork.
- Student can explain at least 2–3 possible directions after high school — and knows those can change.

[Xello task list](#)

[Xello Plans](#)

1

GRADES

Open HAC / transcript progress — What is going well? Where is help needed?

2

XELLO

Open the To-do list — Complete assigned tasks and update About Me.

3

EXPLORE

Save one new option — Career, major, college, technical program, or pathway.

4

INVOLVEMENT

Review real experiences — Clubs, sports, work, service, projects, leadership.

5

NEXT STEP

Choose one action — Ask a teacher, visit a club, research a pathway, improve a class.

The underclassman message: build the picture early

The best senior applications are built slowly through choices students make in ninth and tenth grade.

Grades

Colleges usually see final letter grades on the transcript. Build strong habits now; remediate or retest when appropriate.

Rigor

Choose appropriate challenge. Honors/AP/IB/Dual Enrollment can help, but balance rigor with performance and well-being.

Activities

Join clubs, athletics, service, work, arts, church/community groups, or leadership opportunities that actually fit the student.

Skills

Organization, time management, advocacy, communication, resilience, and attention to detail matter for school, work, internships, and applications.

Service + work hours

Collect documentation as you go. Meaningful, consistent service/work is easier to verify than a rushed senior-year scramble.

Free prep

Use free test-prep and academic support early, especially before junior-year SAT/ACT/CLT decisions.



GRADE 11

Turn exploration into a plan

Research now so senior-year application decisions are based on fit, not panic.



EXPLORE



PLAN



PREPARE



ACT

Explore schools — then save the ones worth revisiting

Xello can help you compare options before you are under senior-year deadline pressure.

JUNIOR TASK

Use filters to make the search about fit — not just name recognition.

- Start broad: location, major/program, cost, size, campus type.
- Open school profiles and look at programs, deadlines, and admission info.
- Save schools you want to compare again later.
- Your saved list can become the starting point for senior application planning.

[SJCS D Xello resources](#)

xello Home About Me **Explore** Plans

EXPLORE SCHOOLS

Search by school name, location, major, or program...

Location Programs / majors Cost School size Admissions

Example State University
Jacksonville, FL • Public • 18,000 students

♡ Save

Coastal Tech
Tampa, FL • Public • 7,500 students

♡ Save

Atlantic College
Savannah, GA • Private • 5,000 students

♡ Save

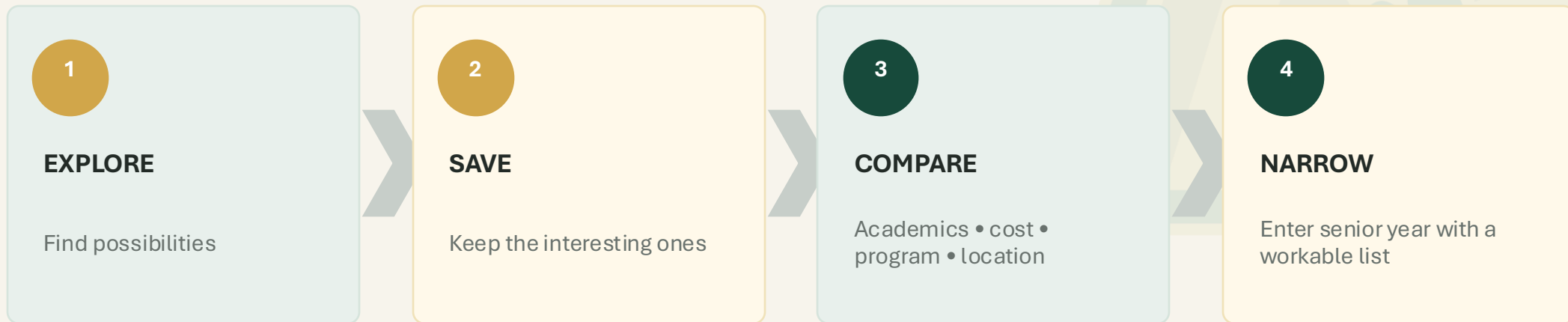
Junior move: explore broadly, then save a short list.

Explore Schools screen example.

Screen examples are recreated from current Xello/SJCS D student help screens; your account may look slightly different.

Build a smarter list before senior year

Use Xello as a research tool — not as a guarantee of admission.



A good junior-year goal

By summer, you should know what kinds of schools/programs fit you and have an initial list worth researching deeper.

Use judgment

Historical data and “chances” tools can be useful context, but they are not an admission promise. Always check current college requirements.

Junior-year timeline: what to do when

Junior year is about turning “I might...” into a researched plan before applications open.

FALL

Build the base

- Check graduation progress and GPA.
- Use Xello to explore careers/majors/schools.
- Stay involved; look for depth and responsibility.
- Take PSAT/NMSQT when appropriate.

WINTER

Research + test

- Build a starting college/program list.
- Compare admission requirements and testing policies.
- Plan SAT/ACT/CLT dates that fit your goals.
- Begin visiting campuses/programs if possible.

SPRING

Narrow + prepare

- Create a balanced list — reach/target/likely where appropriate.
- Ask which teachers could write meaningful recommendations.
- Build an activities/honors/work/service résumé.
- Choose senior courses intentionally.

SUMMER

Get ahead

- Visit colleges/programs and compare costs.
- Draft Common App activities information and brainstorm essay ideas.
- Create a professional email and organize passwords/documents.
- Enter senior year knowing your first deadlines.

By August before senior year: you do not need every answer — you should know the next few steps.

Build the information senior applications will ask for

The easiest senior application is the one you have already organized.

CREATE A RUNNING LIST

ACTIVITIES

Clubs • athletics • arts • academy • faith/community • family responsibilities

WORK

Paid jobs • internships • entrepreneurship • substantial family work

SERVICE

Organizations • dates • hours • role • impact

HONORS

Academic awards • recognitions • competitions • school honors

SKILLS / CERTS

Industry certifications • languages • software • technical skills

Use numbers only when they are real. Specific impact beats vague descriptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Think “who knows me well?” — not “who teaches the hardest class?”

A strong teacher recommendation usually comes from someone who can describe your work habits, growth, character, curiosity, or contribution in class.

JUNIOR XELLO CHECK

- Saved schools/programs reflect real research.
- Plans connect possible education pathways to careers/majors.
- Application tracker is not yet the priority — research is.
- Student knows what still needs to happen before senior year.

College Planning in Xello

The junior family conversation: fit, cost, and readiness

The college list should work academically, financially, socially, and practically — not just look impressive.

ACADEMICS

Does the program/major fit? What courses and scores are typical? Do they have all of the majors I am interested in?

ADMISSION

Is this a reach, target, or likely option based on current profile?

COST

What is the estimated cost? What scholarships/aid might matter? Workstudy opportunities?

LOCATION

Distance, travel, campus setting, climate, size.

OUTCOMES

Internships, career pathways, licensure, graduate school, placement.

PERSONAL FIT

What would make the student actually want to attend?

Family job: help investigate and discuss. Student job: own the list and make the decisions.

SAT, ACT, and CLT: what families should understand

Testing should be planned around college requirements, Bright Futures goals, and realistic preparation time.

SAT

Math + reading/writing; digital test at a test center; widely accepted; register through College Board.

ACT

English, math, reading, science; accepted broadly; digital/paper options vary; register through ACT.

CLT

Verbal reasoning, grammar/writing, quantitative reasoning; accepted by Florida public universities and some others; verify out-of-state/private use.

Planning tip: test dates matter. Students applying Early Action should choose test dates early enough for scores to arrive before material deadlines.

[SAT](#)

[ACT](#)

[CLT](#)

[Nease Testing](#)

Research tools beyond Xello

Xello is the hub. These sources help families check fit, cost, admission patterns, and outcomes.

SUS Matrix

Compare Florida public universities: size, deadlines, GPA/test ranges, STARS/SPARK, 2+2 pathways.

PCUF

Explore Florida private colleges and universities, including merit/financial-aid context.

BigFuture + College Navigator

Search by major, location, size, selectivity, cost, and outcomes.

MyFloridaFuture

Compare earnings, employment, cost, and debt information for Florida public programs.

Common Data Set

Look up application statistics, admitted-student profile, cost, financial aid, and enrollment details.

[College Navigator](#)[BigFuture](#)[MyFloridaFuture](#)[PCUF](#)[Common Data Set](#)

Narrow the list before senior year

Families should help students make a balanced list rather than a panic list.

Reach / Match / Likely

- Reach: admission profile is above the student's current record or the school is highly selective.
- Match: student's profile is comparable and the acceptance rate is more reasonable.
- Likely: strong chance based on admission profile, affordability, and program fit.

Xello move: heart/save schools, add notes, compare costs and requirements, then review as a family.

Application types to know

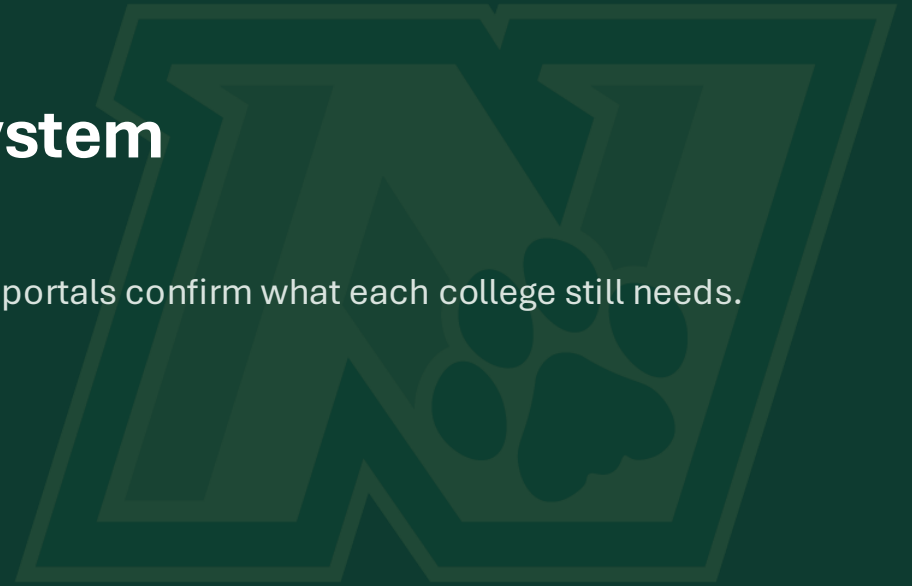
- Early Decision: binding if admitted; families must understand the commitment.
- Early Action: earlier deadline and earlier decision, usually non-binding.
- Regular Decision: later deadline with a set decision window.
- Rolling Admission: decisions are released continually as applications are reviewed.



GRADE 12

Application season: use a system

Xello manages the school side of the process. College portals confirm what each college still needs.



EXPLORE



PLAN



PREPARE



ACT

Start a tracker for every college you are applying to

At Nease, the application tracker is where school-document requests are managed.

SENIOR TASK

Do not wait until you need a transcript or recommendation.

- Open Plans → College Planning.
- Create an application tracker for each college.
- Choose the application method and deadline carefully.
- For Common App colleges, Xello will sync once your accounts are linked.

[Nease transcript / Xello info](#)

xello

FOR THE
FUTURE OF WORK
FLORIDA

 Home ▾

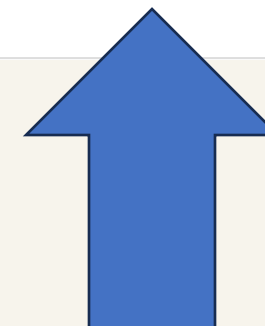
 About Me ▾

Transcript

Your transcript will appear here once it's been uploaded by an educator.

Application tracker  [New application](#)

[Xello application tracker help](#)



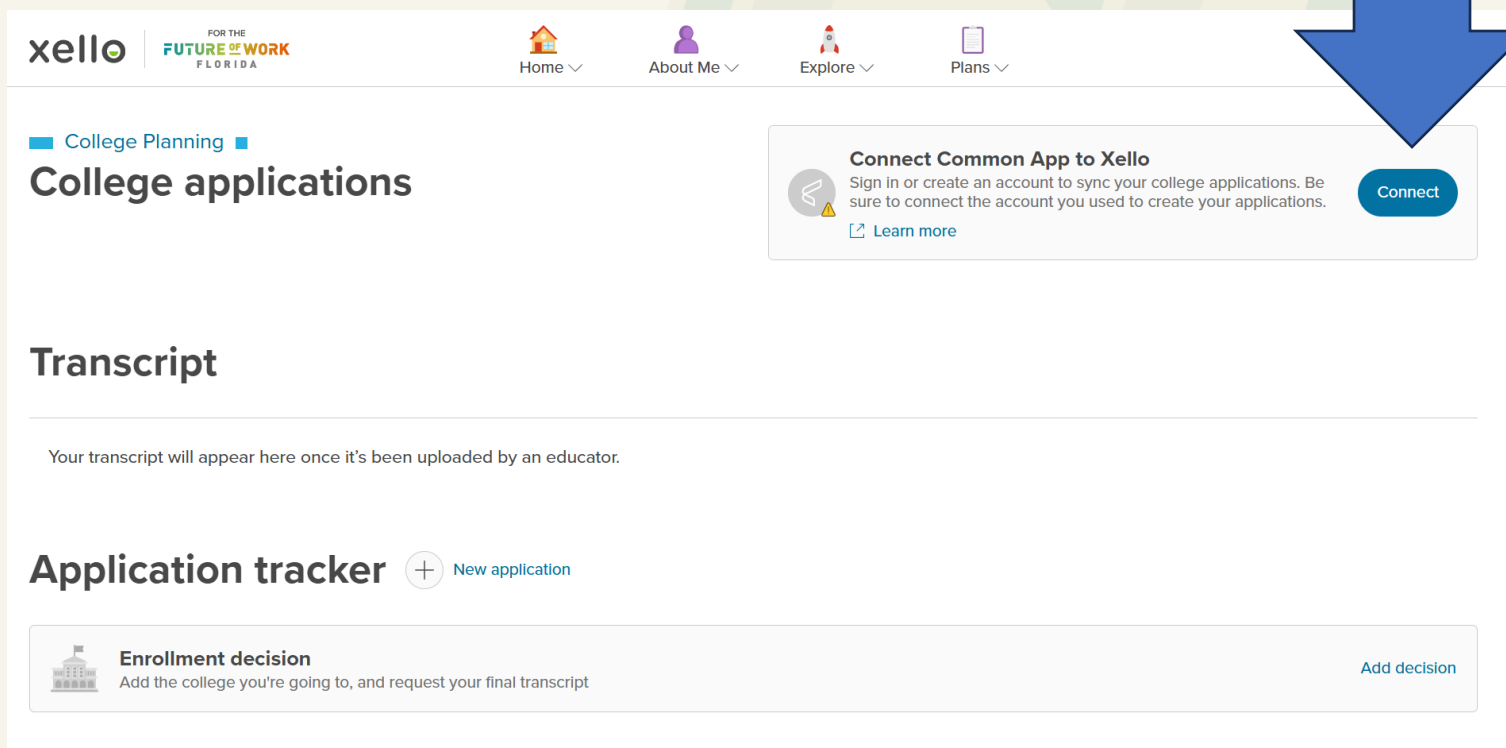
Link Common App + Xello

This connection lets your school-based Common App document requests flow through Xello.

- 1 Create / sign in to Common App
- 2 Complete the FERPA Release Authorization
- 3 In Xello, open College Planning and click Connect
- 4 Confirm the accounts show as connected

Do this early

If FERPA is not completed, Xello will not let you fully use the Common App document-request workflow.



The screenshot shows the Xello web application interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Xello logo, 'FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK FLORIDA', and links for Home, About Me, Explore, and Plans. Below this, the 'College Planning' section is active, displaying 'College applications'. A prominent callout box on the right says 'Connect Common App to Xello' with a 'Connect' button. Below this, the 'Transcript' section is visible, followed by the 'Application tracker' which includes a '+ New application' link and an 'Enrollment decision' section with an 'Add decision' link. A large blue arrow is overlaid on the right side of the screenshot, pointing towards the 'Connect' button.

[Common App](#)

[Official Xello linking guide](#)



[Scan: linking guide](#)

Request the right people in the right place

Avoid duplicate requests and make sure you choose your assigned Nease counselor.

NEASE COUNSELOR

Request / assign in Xello

NEASE TEACHER

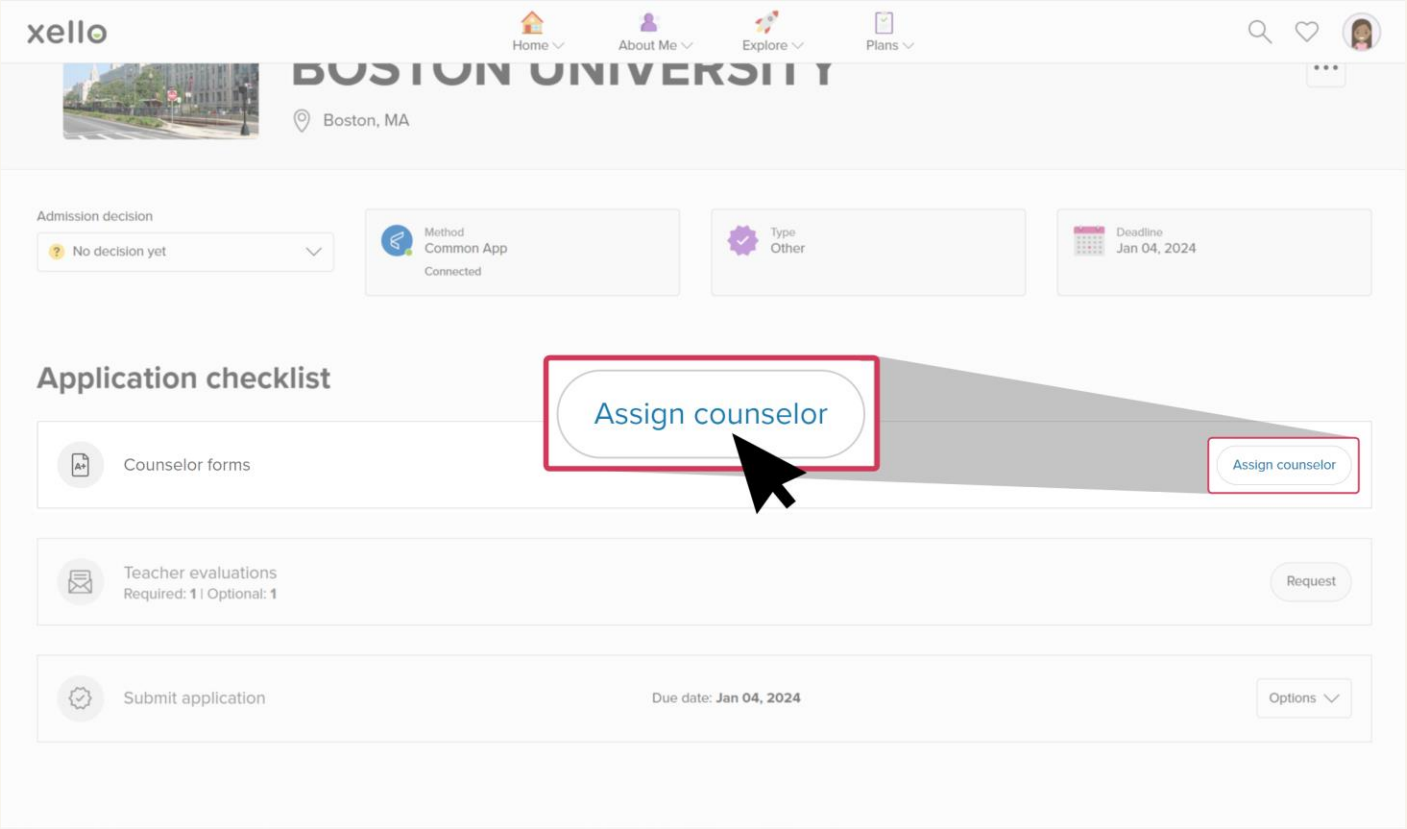
Request in Xello

OUTSIDE RECOMMENDER

Use Common App when appropriate

Important

Do not request the same Nease counselor or teacher in both Xello and Common App. If you are unsure, ask your counselor before sending the request.



[Official document-request guide](#)

Request transcripts only when the college needs one

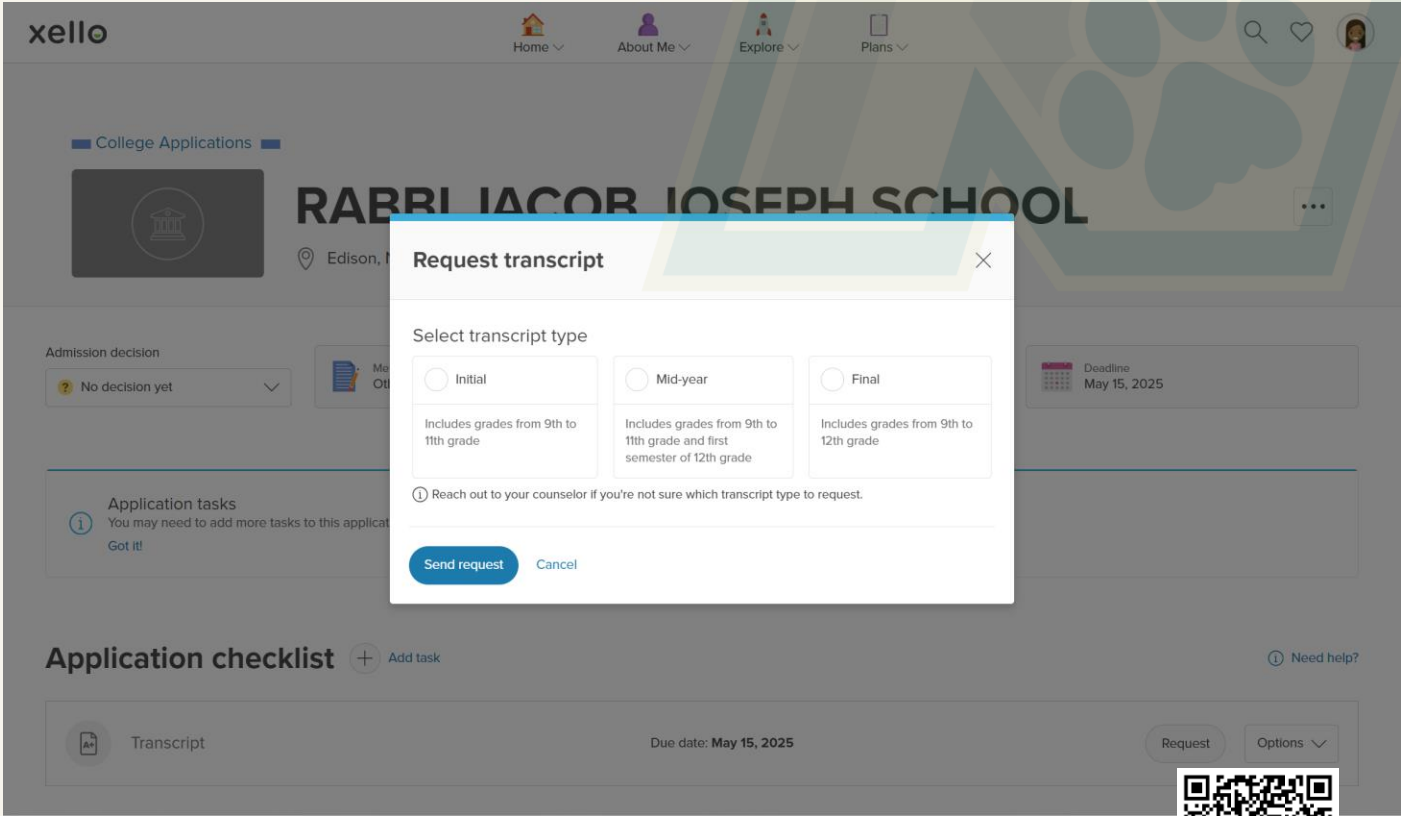
Once a tracker exists, transcript requests live inside that college’s application checklist.

Transcript types

Initial	Application-stage transcript, if required
Mid-year	Updated transcript after first-semester grades
Final	Graduation transcript sent to the school you will attend



Florida note
Some colleges use self-reported academic records instead of an initial transcript. Check the college portal before requesting.



[Official transcript guide](#)



Scan: transcript guide

Update your status in Xello — verify it in the college portal

Xello helps you watch requests and tasks; the college portal confirms what the college has actually received.

REQUEST

Use Xello for school documents

CHECK

Watch Xello status / sent items

VERIFY

Open the college applicant portal

Remember

Application submitted ≠ application complete. Missing self-reported grades, test scores, fees, supplements, residency items, or other portal tasks can still hold up review.

xello Home About Me Explore **Plans**

Application tracker

- University of North Florida
Submitted
- University of Florida
In progress
- Florida State University
Submitted

Admission decision

- ✓ No decision yet
- ◆ Accepted
- △ Waitlisted – accepted
- △ Waitlisted
- △ Not accepted

Use Xello to track requests — then verify the college portal.
Submitted does not always mean complete.

[Xello tracker help](#)

August–October: build the application system

The fastest way to lose time is to work college-by-college without a tracker, calendar, or document process.

AUGUST**Finalize list + create trackers**

Create one Xello application tracker per college. Confirm application method and deadline.

AUGUST**Common App + FERPA**

Create/sign in to Common App, complete FERPA, then connect Xello once.

SEPTEMBER**Recommenders**

Request your assigned Nease counselor and school-based teachers through Xello when required.

SEPTEMBER**Transcript strategy**

Check whether each college requires an initial transcript or self-report. Do not send documents just because you can.

OCTOBER**Submit + verify**

Review the application preview, submit on time, then open the applicant portal and clear remaining items.

Do not wait until the deadline to discover that FERPA is incomplete, the accounts are not connected, or a recommender was requested in the wrong place.

November–January: finish applications + financial aid

Submitting Common App is only one part of the senior checklist.

COLLEGE PORTALS

Check each portal for missing documents, self-reported records, residency, supplements, or other requirements.

BRIGHT FUTURES

Class of 2027 can submit the FFAA beginning Oct. 1, 2026. Do it even if every requirement is not yet complete.

FAFSA

Complete the FAFSA when available for your cycle and follow each college's financial-aid instructions. (October 1)

SCHOLARSHIPS

Use Xello/college pages/local resources. Track deadlines just like applications. Scholarships are also posted in CPOD.

MID-YEAR CHECK

Some colleges request a Mid-Year Report or updated transcript.

- Do not request it early if first-semester grades are not final.
- Use Xello for the school document request when applicable.
- If you take Dual Enrollment, the college transcript is a separate record. Follow SJR / UNFs process for requesting records.
- Keep checking the applicant portal after every new document is sent.

[FAFSA](#)[Bright Futures](#)[Xello College Planning](#)

February–May: compare, decide, and close the loop

The process is not over when decisions arrive. Finish financial aid, enrollment steps, and final school documents.

COMPARE

Admission + cost

- Read the full financial-aid offer.
- Compare net cost — not sticker price alone.
- Consider program fit, housing, travel, and outcomes.

DECIDE

Choose + enroll

- Follow the college's enrollment/deposit instructions.
- Record the enrollment decision in Xello if your school asks.
- Decline other offers when appropriate.

FINISH

Graduate cleanly

- Keep grades up — admission is conditional on finishing high school.
- Complete all graduation and Bright Futures items.
- Request/send final transcript through the correct process after graduation.

Final reminder: finish the semester like the student the college admitted.



Xello is not the only step

Many Florida public-university applications also require a self-reported academic record.

UF STARS

Current freshman applicants complete STARS after applying through the Gator Portal.



[Official instructions](#)

FSU STARS

First-year applicants generally complete STARS and link it through the FSU Admissions Portal.



[Official instructions](#)

UCF SPARK

Current high-school / home-education first-time-in-college applicants use UCF's SPARK form.



[Official instructions](#)

Use your transcript when self-reporting

Enter courses and grades exactly as they appear on your school record. Requirements can change by university and applicant type, so always follow the checklist in that university's portal.

SUS Matrix: compare the Florida public universities

Use the matrix as a planning guide, not a guarantee. Ranges show admitted FTIC students from the 20 26-2027 SUS Admissions Tour matrix.

Name of Institution	Total Enrollment	Total Undergraduate Enrollment (2024)	Summer Semester					Fall Semester					STARS/ SPARK	Self-Reported Test Scores	2+2 Program
			Anticipated class size	Average or middle 50% FTIC GPA	Middle 50% Admit SAT	Middle 50% Admit FTIC ACT	Middle 50% FTIC CLT	Anticipated class size	Average or middle 50% FTIC GPA	Middle 50% Admit SAT	Middle 50% Admit FTIC ACT	Middle 50% FTIC CLT			
FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY	9,296	7,863	300	3.16 – 3.88	1030 – 1150	19 – 24	54 – 73	1,500	3.69 – 4.25	1080 – 1230	22 – 27	61 – 73	YES	NO	IGNITE
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	30,854	23,755	1,000	3.36 – 4.02	1010 – 1180	20 – 25	81 – 97	4,400	3.78 – 4.35	1100 – 1280	22 – 28	87 – 98	YES	YES	Link2FAU
FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY	15,962	13,864	400	3.12 – 4.21	1020 – 1160	19 – 24	51 – 72	2,400	3.79 – 4.54	1070 – 1240	21 – 26	56 – 73	NO	NO	Destination FGCU
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY	54,037	39,470	3,900	3.9 – 4.5	1060 – 1180	22 – 25	72 – 82	2,000	4.1 – 4.6	1250 – 1390	27 – 31	86 – 93	NO	NO	Connect4Success
FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY	1,618	1,769	200	3.96	1130	23	N/A too few	330	3.48 – 3.86	1206	27	76	YES	YES	N/A
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY	43,871	32,711	2,200	4.1 – 4.5	1280 – 1370	28 – 30	N/A too few	4,000	4.3 – 4.6	1370 – 1460	30 – 33	N/A too few	YES	YES	Aspire Transfer Program through TSC (Traditional, Elite, Honors, Online Options)
NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA	881	852	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	300	3.7 – 4.3	1060 – 1240	22 – 27	63-83	YES	YES	Guaranteed Admission Program
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA	69,316	59,644	3,400	3.98 – 4.38	1190 – 1240	24 – 27	81 – 88	4,900	4.11 – 4.57	1310 – 1430	28 – 32	92 – 100	YES	NO	Direct Connect to UCF
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA	61,936	38,246	1,600	4.5 – 4.7	1260 – 1410	28 – 32	N/A too few	5,900	4.5 – 4.7	1390 – 1510	31 – 34	N/A too few	YES	YES	Gator Engineering @ Santa Fe, Gator Design, and Construction @ Santa Fe
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA	16,575	13,869	1,500	3.23 – 3.71	960 – 1140	18 – 24	49 – 63	1,500	4.00 – 4.53	1100 – 1300	22 – 28	51 – 75	YES	YES	Transfer2UNF
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA	48,732	37,000	2,980	3.61 – 4.18	1110 – 1220	23 – 26	71 – 85	3,800	4.03 – 4.55	1260 – 1410	27 – 31	86 – 97	YES	NO	FUSE
UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA	14,797	9,959	60	3.47 – 4.08	990 – 1200	19 – 25	57 – 68	1,494	3.58 – 4.22	1020 – 1230	20 – 27	48 – 69	YES	NO	2UWF

Abbreviations: FTIC = First Time in College | SAT = Scholastic Assessment Test | ACT = American College Testing | CLT = Classical Learning Test

Note: Data adapted from Florida SUS Admissions Matrix (source image). Values are shown exactly as in the source.

SUS Matrix: what students still need to verify

Every Florida public university may handle self-reported records, scores, portals, and pathway programs differently.

Institution	STARS/SPARK	Self-reported tests	2+2 / pathway noted
FAMU	YES	NO	IGNITE
FAU	YES	YES	Link2FAU
FGCU	NO	NO	Destination FGCU
FIU	NO	NO	Connect4Success
Florida Poly	YES	YES	N/A
FSU	YES	YES	Aspire Transfer Program through TSC
New College	YES	YES	Guaranteed Admission Program
UCF	YES	NO	Direct Connect to UCF
UF	YES	YES	Gator Engineering / Design & Construction @ Santa Fe
UNF	YES	YES	Transfer2UNF
USF	YES	NO	FUSE
UWF	YES	NO	2UWF

STARS / SPARK

Check each university portal after applying. A submitted Common App does not always mean the file is complete.

Test scores

“Self-reported tests” does not mean every score process is finished. Follow each university’s exact instructions.

How Xello helps

Save schools, track deadlines, document requirements, and make notes from the SUS Matrix before senior year.

Financial aid belongs on the same tracker as applications

Use Xello to stay organized, but always complete the official federal, state, and college-specific forms on their own sites.

FEDERAL

FAFSA

Federal aid + many college aid processes begin with the FAFSA.

NEXT STEP

Complete the official FAFSA for your cycle.

[Official link](#)



FLORIDA

FFAA / Bright Futures

The state application evaluates students for Bright Futures and other Florida programs.

NEXT STEP

Class of 2027: apply Oct. 1, 2026–Aug. 31, 2027.

[Official link](#)



COLLEGES + SCHOLARSHIPS

Institutional aid

Some colleges require additional forms, portals, or scholarship applications.

NEXT STEP

Track the deadline and verify completion.

[Official link](#)



After you apply, the college portal runs the show

Submitting an application is not the same thing as completing the application file.

1

Check email

Use an email you check daily. Watch for portal setup instructions after every application.

2

Open portal

Create/login to each college portal and read the checklist. Every school can be different.

3

Finish requirements

Self-report grades, send test scores, pay fees, upload residency items, complete forms, and verify documents.

4

Track everything

Keep a log of usernames, deadlines, materials submitted, and what still says “missing.”

Student responsibility: call or email the university admissions office for college-specific questions instead of relying on a peer answer.

Deadline reminders: submit early, then verify

Build in processing time. The deadline is not the day to discover missing portal items.

1

Check deadline

Record the college deadline in Xello/your tracker. Submit the student portion at least 2 weeks early.

2

Submit + watch email

After applying, watch for the college portal email. Create/login to the portal right away.

3

Finish portal tasks

Upload or complete required items before the college deadline: STARS/SPARK, residency, self-reporting, scores, fees, or supplements.

4

Know school timelines

Counselor documents follow separate school processing timelines. Xello Direct Admit dates are when Nease processes paperwork.

Rolling admission note: Embry-Riddle may list a deadline into April 2027; scholarships and admission decisions can still be awarded earlier, so apply earlier when possible.

Start the scholarship search in more than one place

Scholarship work is easier when students save options, deadlines, essays, and requirements in one organized system.

Xello scholarships

- Complete the profile
- Search by major, interest, background, need, and affiliation
- Heart/save scholarships to revisit

School + university sources

- Schoology and counseling page
- College financial-aid office
- Departmental/major scholarships
- Local community scholarships

Free search tools

- Going Merry
- Fastweb
- BigFuture Scholarship Search
- **Never pay for a scholarship search**

Bright Futures

FAFSA

Going Merry

Fastweb

BigFuture

Volunteer/work hours: document before you need it

Hours are not just “remembered.” Students need acceptable documentation and should keep copies.

Volunteer service

- Documentation on organization letterhead
- Student name, dates, hours, and description
- Reflection form attached
- Make a copy/photo before submitting

Paid work hours

- Pay stubs showing hours worked
- Reflection form still required
- Submit physical copies as directed
- Keep records in case of discrepancy

Family reminder

- Do not wait until May of senior year.
- Check the Nease procedures and deadline.
- Hours may be processed after each semester.
- Bright Futures requirements can change; use the official handbook.

[Nease Service Hours](#)

[Bright Futures Handbook](#)

Application quality: accuracy first, story second

The strongest application is accurate, complete, organized, and written in the student's own voice.

Common App essay reminders

- Be authentic — write like a real student, not a brochure.
- Show, do not just tell. Use specific moments and reflection.
- Read aloud to catch errors and awkward wording.
- AI can help brainstorm or organize, but the story must be true and in the student's voice.

Before submitting

- Preview the PDF/application before sending.
- Verify school name, senior schedule, GPA/rank, course levels, deadlines, and recommendations.
- Do not guess about transcript details. Ask first.
- After submitting, check the portal for missing materials.

[Common App](#)

Common senior mistakes — and the fix

Most application problems are process problems: wrong place, wrong document, wrong deadline, or assuming “submitted” means “complete.”

MISTAKE Waiting to link Common App + Xello

FIX Connect early, after FERPA is complete.

MISTAKE Requesting a Nease teacher in Common App

FIX School-based teacher = Xello. Outside recommender = Common App when appropriate.

MISTAKE Picking a counselor you know instead of your assigned counselor

FIX Use the counselor assigned to your last-name range / program.

MISTAKE Sending a transcript when the college wants self-reporting

FIX Read the college’s instructions first.

MISTAKE Assuming Common App submission = complete application

FIX Check the college portal for STARS/SPARK, residency, scores, supplements, and missing items.

MISTAKE Entering courses/grades from memory

FIX Use an accurate transcript from HAC/Parchment when self-reporting.

MISTAKE Ignoring Dual Enrollment records

FIX If an official college transcript is required, request it from the college that awarded the credit.

MISTAKE Stopping after acceptance

FIX Finish financial aid, enrollment, graduation requirements, and the final transcript process.

Your family's Xello + high school checklist

Open Xello and make sure the next step matches the student's grade — not someone else's timeline.

9TH

Foundation

- ☐ Log in through Clever
- ☐ Complete assigned Xello tasks
- ☐ Explore careers + save options
- ☐ Build strong grades/attendance
- ☐ Try meaningful activities

10TH

Direction

- ☐ Check graduation progress
- ☐ Revisit careers + majors
- ☐ Explore schools/programs
- ☐ Build depth in involvement
- ☐ Start tracking achievements

11TH

Planning

- ☐ Build a researched college/program list
- ☐ Plan testing
- ☐ Create activities/honors résumé
- ☐ Think about recommenders
- ☐ Know senior deadlines before summer

12TH

Execution

- ☐ Every college has a tracker
- ☐ Common App + Xello are linked
- ☐ Correct counselor/teachers requested
- ☐ Transcript strategy is correct
- ☐ Applicant portals checked
- ☐ Financial aid + final steps tracked

Questions? Ask before the deadline — especially if something in Xello, Common App, or a college portal does not match what you expected.

[Nease Guidance](#)



Support Throughout the Year

Key supports families should watch for throughout the school year

Senior individual meetings

- Begin September 14 during the school day
- Students are called down; no appointment needed
- Review graduation, Bright Futures, Xello/Common App, and postsecondary plans

EXCEL help sessions

- Common App + Xello support starts September 16
- Three consecutive Wednesdays during EXCEL
- Hands-on help for students working through applications

Financial aid support

- UNF Financial Aid Night — October 29
- Bright Futures and FAFSA reminders through counseling updates
- Track deadlines and documents early

Classroom lessons

- 9th grade lessons — November 2nd week
- 10th grade lessons — December 7th week
- Focus: grades, goals, Xello, clubs, service, and planning habits

Evening programs

- Acceleration Night — December in the PAC at 6 PM. Date TBD
- Junior Parent Night — January 12

Stay connected

- Nease School Counseling Newsletter launched this year
- Watch Schoology, school email, the counseling webpage, and newsletters
- **Students should check school email & Schoology regularly**

