Developing a school profile

What is a school profile?

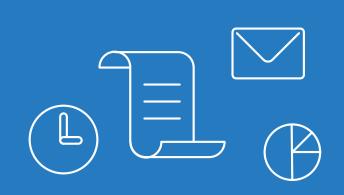A school profile is a document that provides contextual data about a high school community. The school profile may include information such as:

- Student demographics
- Curricular offerings
- Grading systems
- Special programs
- School policies

Counselors can upload a copy of their school profile in the profile section of the Recommender System. If your high school uses a college and career readiness platform that integrates with Common App, you will manage the school profile upload directly in the software you use. When you submit a school report for each student, Common App will include your school profile.

Why are school profiles important?

Every high school in the U.S. and around the world is different. School profiles highlight details about a school community to help provide context to colleges as they review a student's application, academic record, and supporting materials.

Did you know?

70%+ of applications submitted through Common App have a school profile attached from a counselor or school official. Applications that don't include a school profile are more likely to come from students attending small, charter, new, or rural schools.

What information should I include in a school profile?

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) has a great guide on Best Practices for Developing a School Profile (**bit.ly/school-profile-nacac**). This guide highlights these fundamental elements a school profile should include:

- School and community facts
- School staff and contact information
- Grading system and related procedures
- Standardized test score information (if applicable)
- Overview of student educational outcomes
- Curriculum description, including special features
- Other unique information about the school, program, or curriculum

Research has found that school profiles are an important equity tool in the college admissions process. One study[1] identified 14 elements, broken into four categories, that are particularly important.

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Academic curriculum	Grading systems	Postsecondary opportunities	Postsecondary opportunities
• Course listing	• Grading policies	• College-going rate	• Community overview
• Graduation requirements	• Class rank	• College destinations	• Neighborhood
• Curriculum overview	• GPA distribution	• Standardized testing	• Student demographics
• Institutional policies			• Enrollment

School profile tips

Keep it brief
Aim for a profile that's 1–2 pages long to make it easy for readers to digest.

Advocate for your students
Consider which of the 14 elements best capture your school community and ensure those elements are included in your school profile.

Highlight unique attributes
Even if something seems standard for your school, it's important for colleges to have the context.

Add visual appeal
Opt for bullet points, graphics, and charts over paragraphs of text.

Take care when embedding links
It's okay to provide links to helpful pages (such as the student handbook or a special program), but keep in mind that application readers may not be able to click on links. You can use shortened URLs or QR codes to ensure the links are accessible.

Be consistent
Ensure all counselors and school officials have access to your latest school profile and are reporting the same data.

Update yearly This ensures the information you share is current.

Make it easy to find Publish your school profile on your school's website and use an intuitive file name that's easy to search for.

Making Caring Common has created additional resources on creating school profiles. You can find guides, templates, and samples on their website (**bit.ly/school-profile-making-caring-common**).