CLASS OF 2026

College Application Process

College & Career READINESS

Agenda

- **Planning for College**
  - Finding the Right Fit
  - Admissions
  - Application Process
- **MaiaLearning**
  - What is MaiaLearning
  - Career and College search
  - Generating a College List
- **Senior Year Events**

College Search

Where do I begin the process?

Finding the Right Fit

What to think about when selecting your school?

- Size
- Rigor/Selectivity
- Distance
- Setting/Town
- Private vs Public
- Major
- Social Life/Friends
- School Environment/Religion
- Special Services
- Cost (Do not let it prevent you from applying)
- Visit colleges to identify your preference in a campus
- Meet with college representatives that visit your school

What do colleges want to see?

- **Grades/GPA**
  - Can submit weighted or unweighted GPA
  - If you are unsure which to submit, talk to your School Counselor!
- **Course Rigor**
  - Did you challenge yourself?
- **Test Scores**
  - Order official scores from College Board / ACT
- **Essay**
- **Letter of Rec**
- **Extra Curriculars** (1-2 & leadership roles if applicable)
- **Student Interests**

Application Process

- ❑ Online Application Deadlines
- ❑ Transcripts
- ❑ Test Scores
- ❑ Letter(s) of Recommendation
- ❑ Personal Statement/Essay
- ❑ Fees
- ❑ Look for an application checklist

Note: *Only send what is required or optional*

25-26 Common App Essay Prompts

Testing

ACT and SAT

National Standardized Testing

TEST	REGISTER BY	NATIONAL TEST DATE
SAT - College Board	May 22nd	June 7th
SAT - College Board	-	August 23rd
SAT - College Board	-	September 13th
ACT	May 9th	June 14th
ACT	June 6th	July 12th
ACT	August 1st	September 6th

SAT Website:

Registration Websites:

SAT
https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration/dates-deadlines

ACT
https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html

ACT Website:

MaiaLearning

For students

College & Career READINESS

MaiaLearning and Your Student

College

Apprenticeship Programs

Preparing for life after high school

Workforce

Military

Vocational Programs

UNIVERSITY AND CAREER PLANNING

maialearning

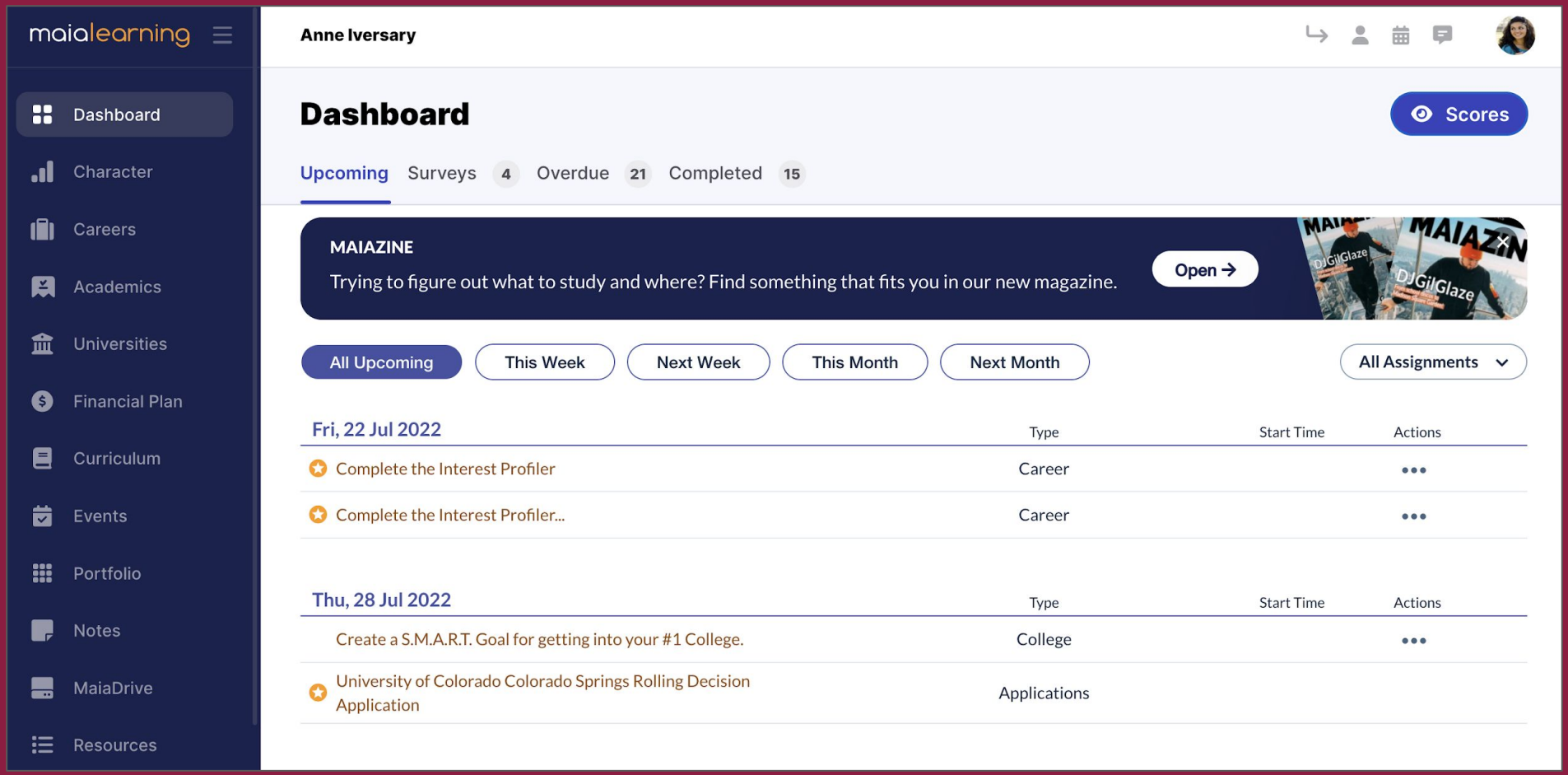
What is MaiaLearning?

- College & Career planning platform
- Career exploration
- Post high school exploration
  - Common App
  - Transcripts
  - Scholarships
  - and more!

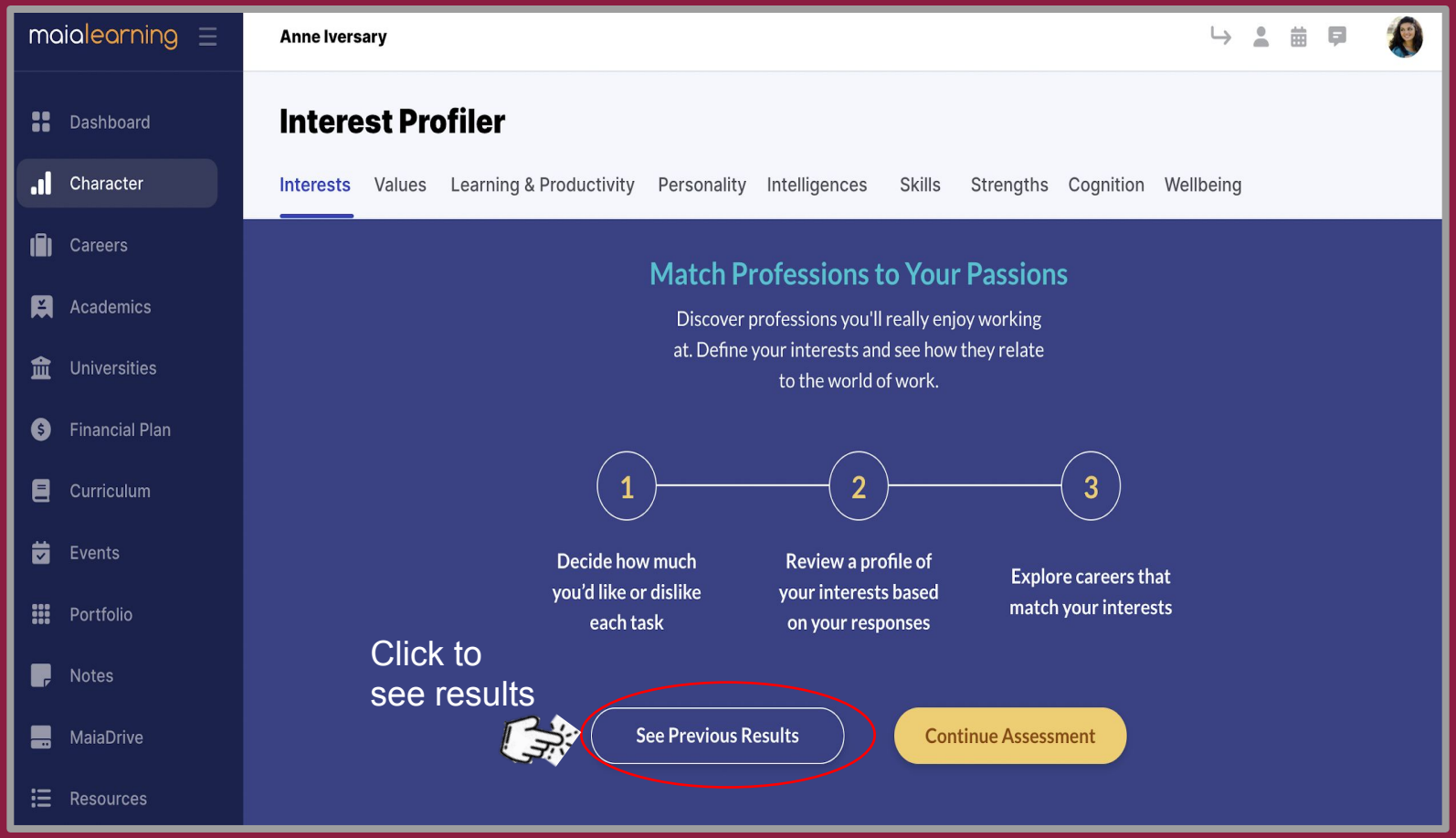
For Students

- Task Management
- Interests & Personality Assessments
- Research & Plan
  - Careers
  - Universities & Military
  - Scholarships
- Events
  - College rep visits; virtual fairs
- Portfolio Development
- Communication & Meetings

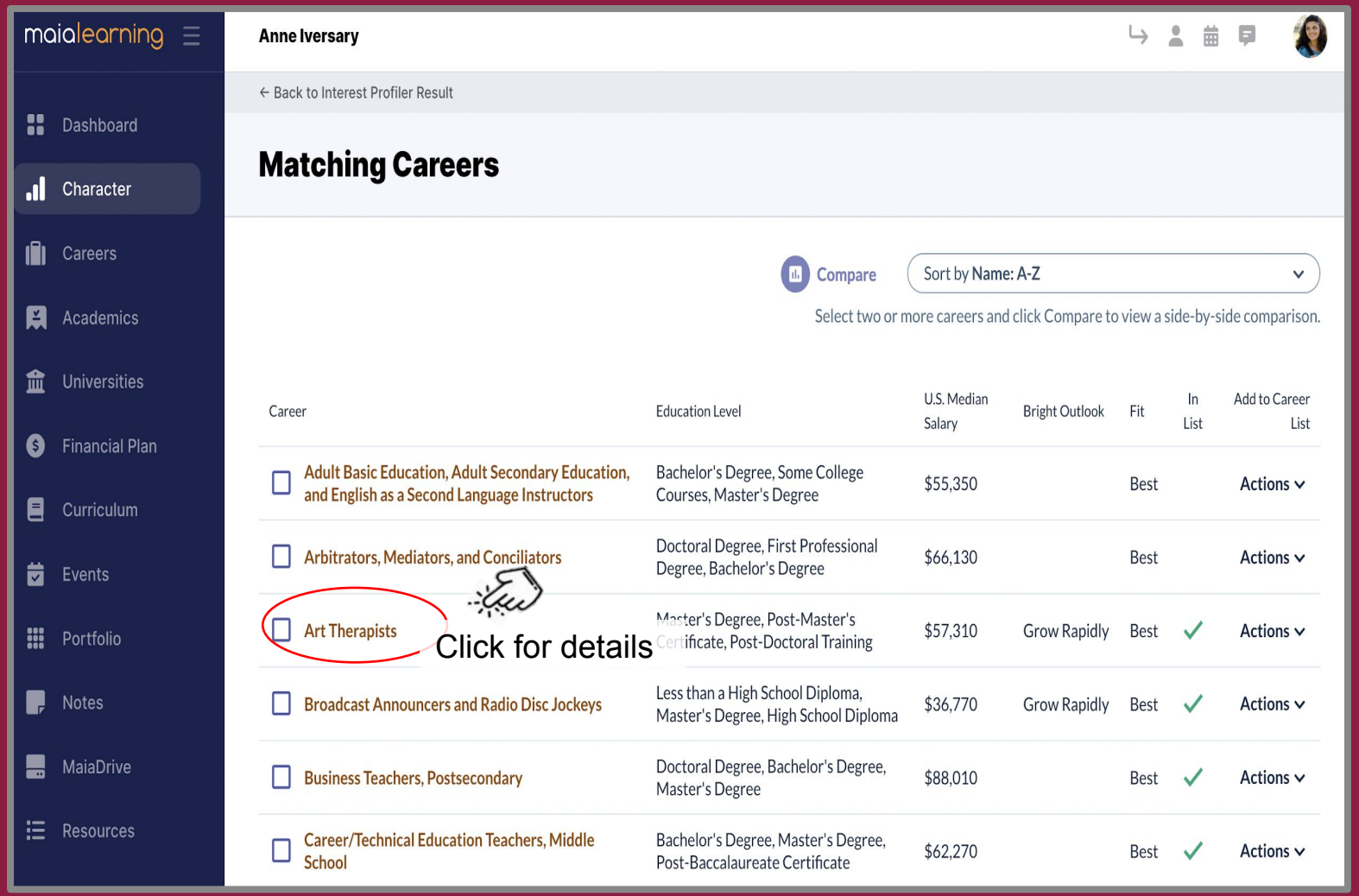
Student Dashboard



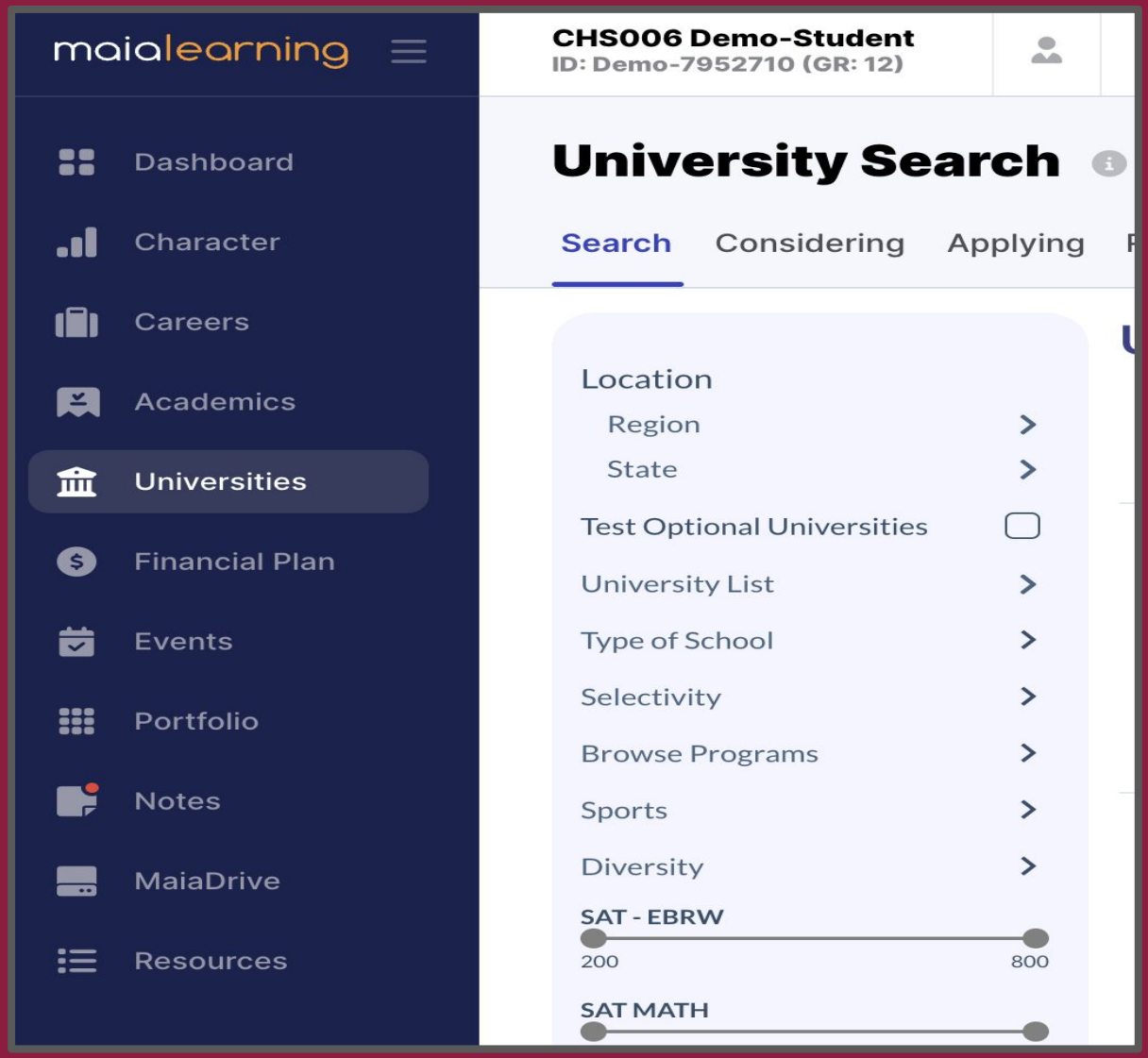
Assessments



Career Recommendations



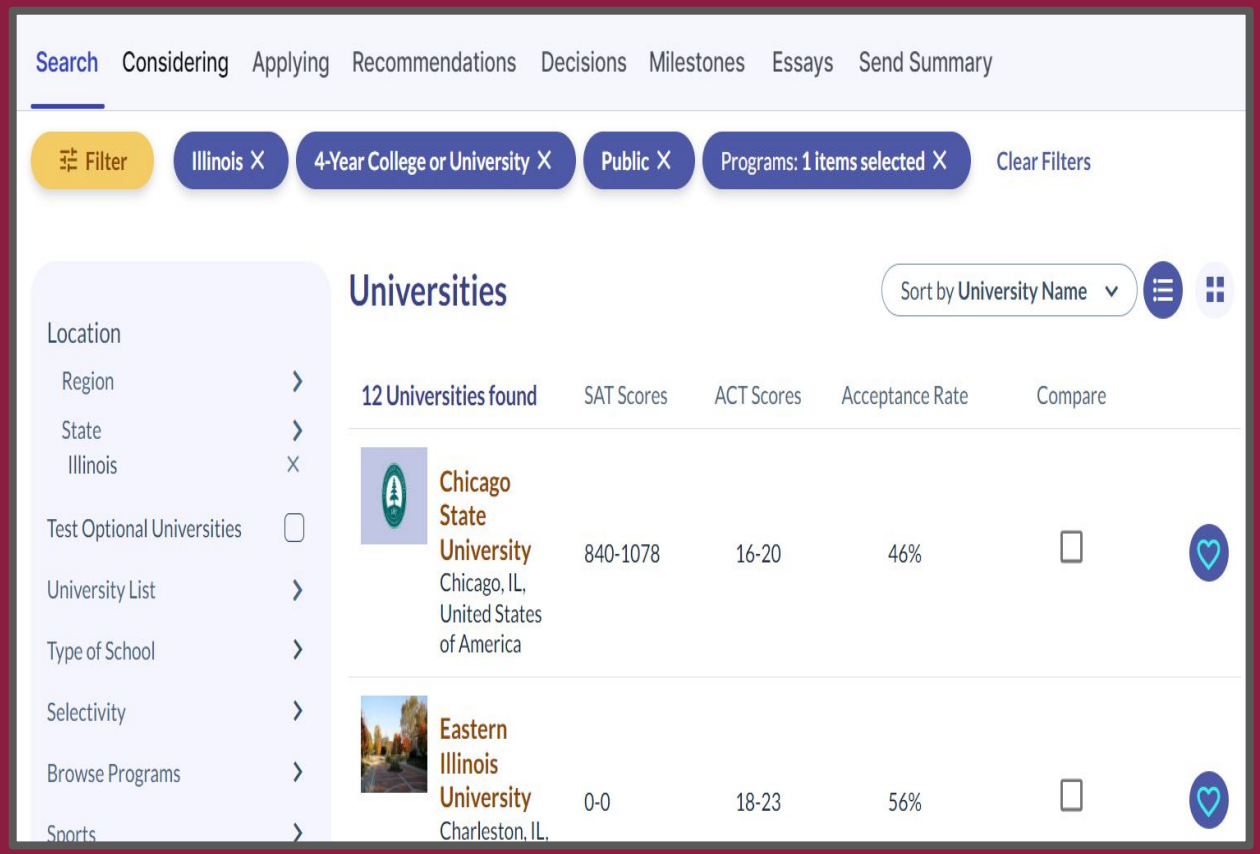
Let's Explore Universities



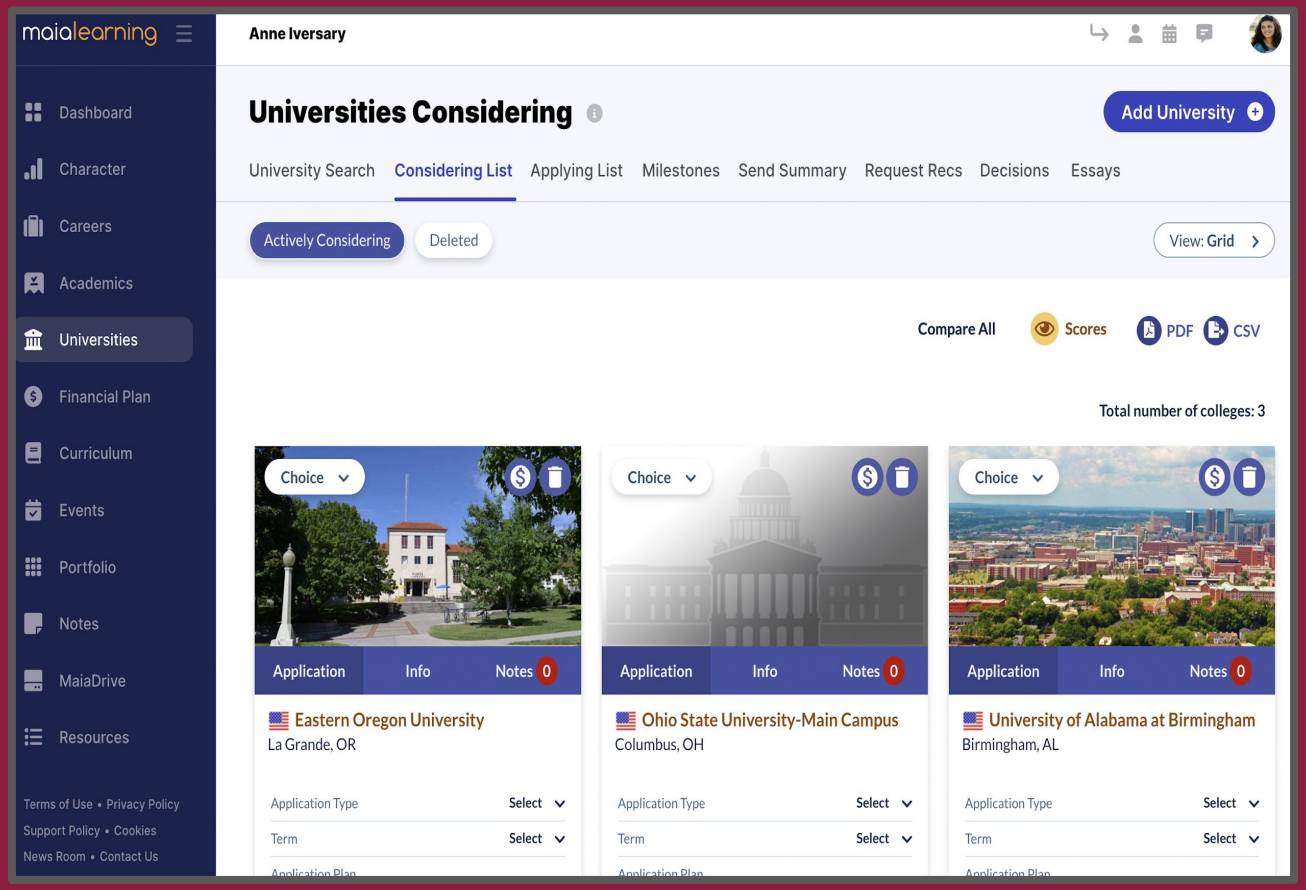
Postsecondary Exploration

Select 5- 7 College/Universities that interest you!

Click this heart button for schools you would consider



Select “Considering” to see all the schools selected!



Letter of Recommendations

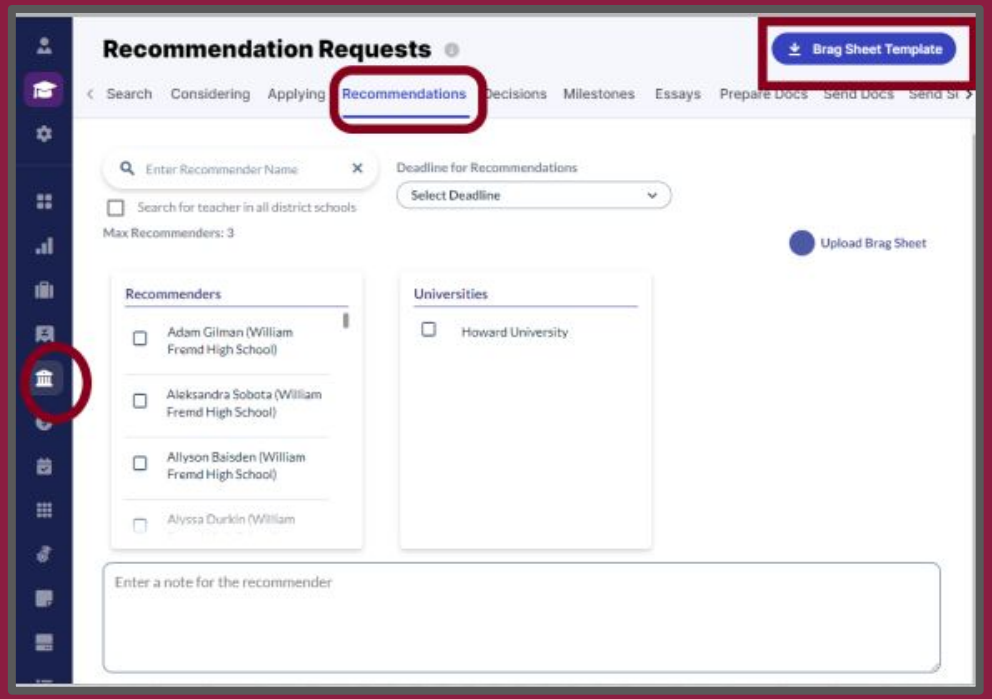
- **Do not request any letters of recommendation until the first day of school!**
- You are allowed to request a letter of recommendation from a maximum of 3 recommenders
- Meet with your recommender AT LEAST 4 weeks before the first application due date
- Your **Brag Sheet** should be completed and uploaded into MaiaLearning under “Universities - Recommendations” to provide an accurate reflection of “your story”
- It is helpful if you provide your letter writers a copy of your personal statement so that they can have a holistic view of your application

Letter of Recommendation Process

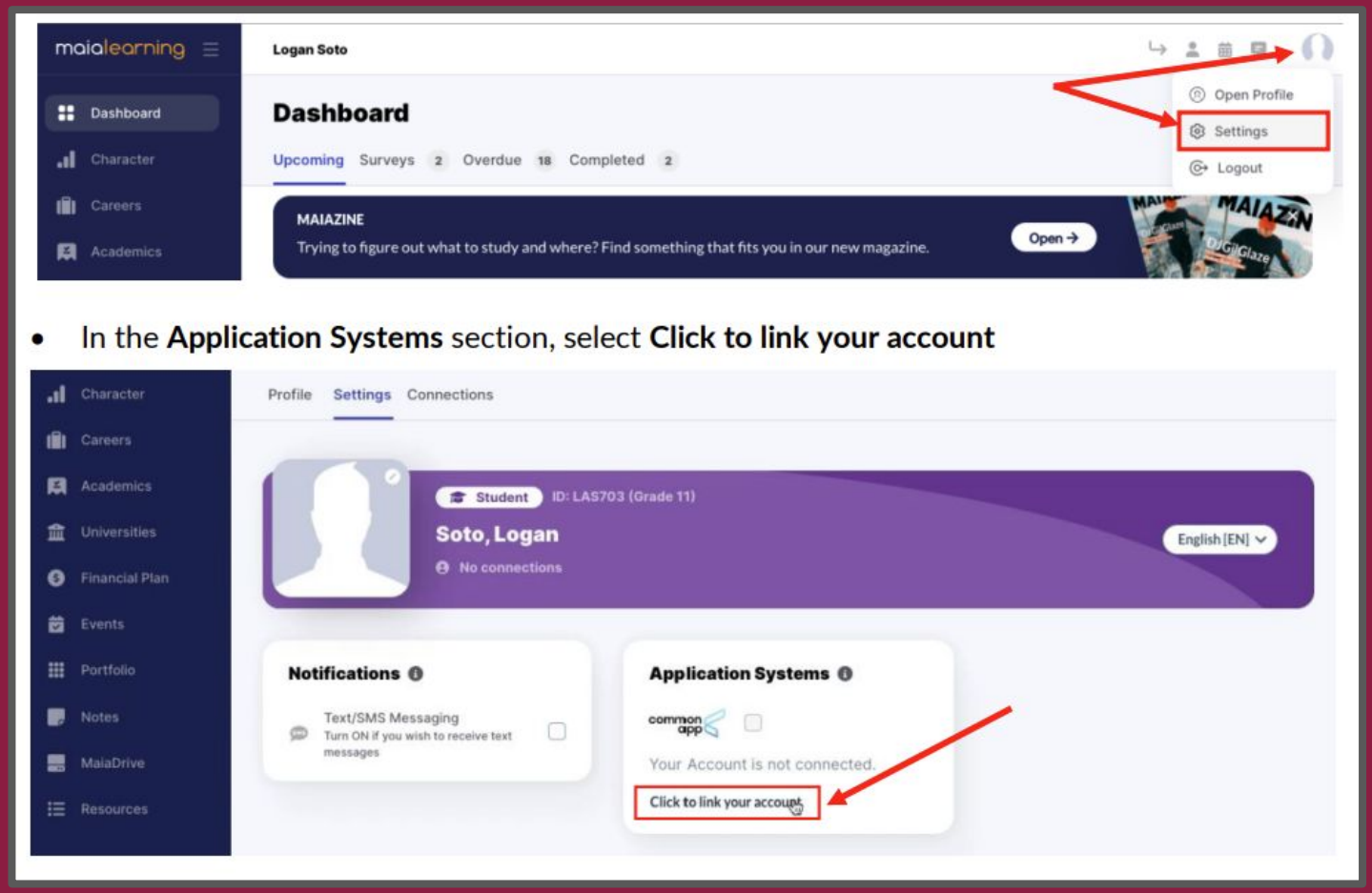
"Brag Sheet" template

1. Download
2. Complete & Save to your device
3. Upload Completed "Brag Sheet" in Maia Learning

All recommenders have access in Maia Learning



Letter of Recommendations MaiaLearning - School Staff Only



- In the **Application Systems** section, select **Click to link your account**

MaiaLearning

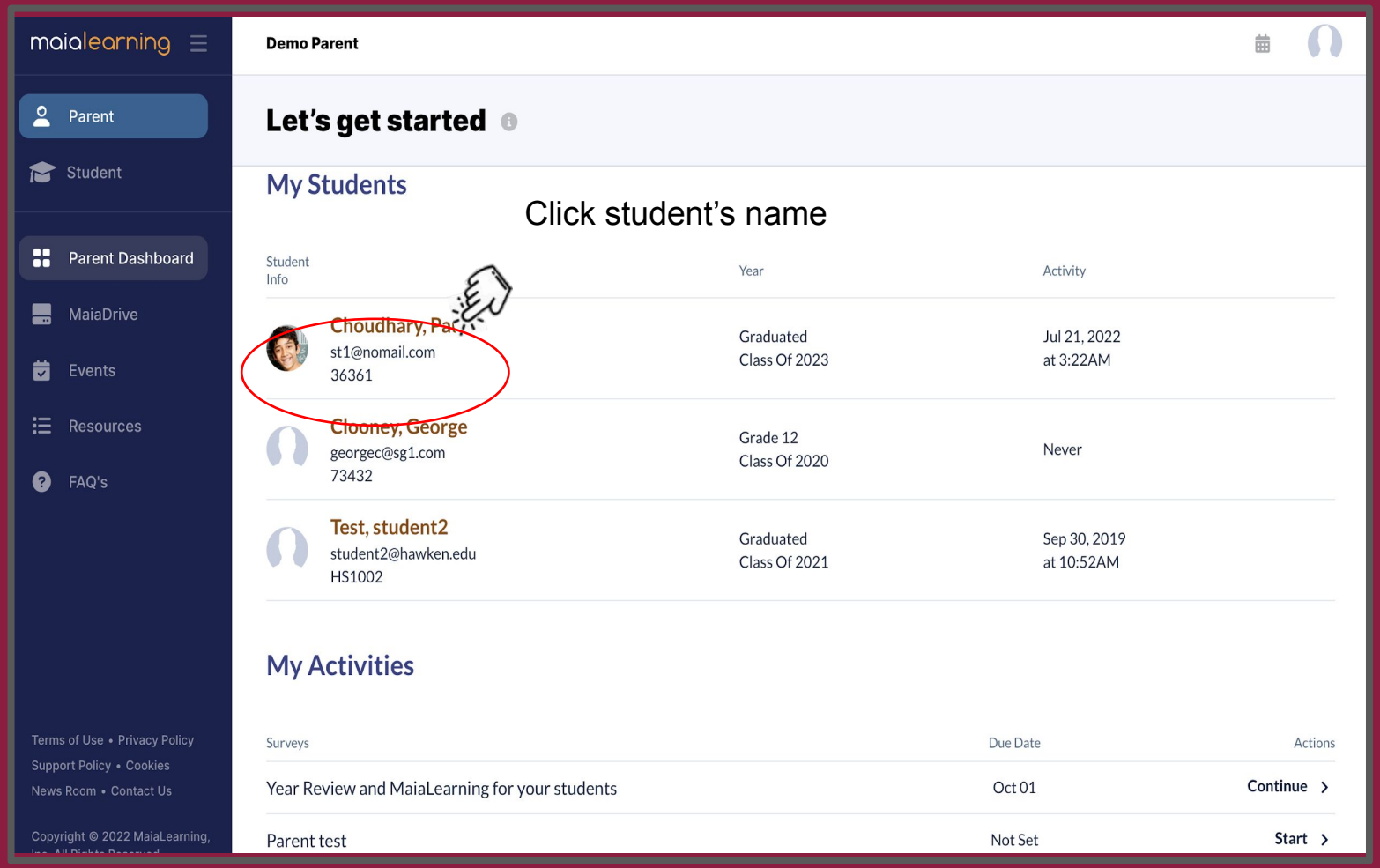
For parents/guardians

College & Career READINESS

For Families

- **Parent/Guardian Accounts**
  - *If login expired, select "Forgot Password"*
  - *Infinite Campus email*
- Support your student through exploration and application
- Communication
- Post High School Planning

Parent/Guardian Dashboard



Financial Aid

How will we pay for school?

Financial Aid

Merit Aid

Scholarships awarded to students based off applications including grades, test scores, extracurriculars, essays, fit, etc.

Usually automatically given to students

Need based Aid

Based off family's financial situation in 2025 and is determined by family's result of the FAFSA

Can be given, borrowed, or earned

What is the FAFSA?

Free Application for Federal Student Aid

- Graduation requirement for all seniors in the state of Illinois
- Needs to be completed by graduation in order for students to get their diploma
- Should be open by October 1st for families to fill out and we recommend filling it out ASAP!

What is needed for the FAFSA?

- *Student and parent's FSA ID that you can create here:*
- *Student and parent's social security numbers*
- *2024 taxes*
- *Current balance of cash, savings, and checking accounts*
- *Net worth of investments, businesses, or farms*
- *Records of child support received (if applicable)*

What other options are available for my student or family?

Alternative Application

- For students who do not have a social security number
- Allows them to still be eligible for state aid
- Satisfies graduation requirement

Nonparticipation Form

- Form student fills out if over 18 or student and parent fill out if under 18 stating that they do not want to fill out the FAFSA at this time
- Can always fill out the FAFSA if family changes their minds
- Satisfies graduation requirement
- Will be available in the fall on the ISAC Website
- Need help with the FAFSA? Your home school will have Financial Aid Nights, FAFSA Workshops, open FAFSA Advising Hours and more this fall!

Senior Year Events

How can I start preparing?

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Summer Rising Senior Checklist

Here are some helpful things you can do this summer to prepare for college applications in the fall!

☐ TESTING

Utilize time this summer to take another SAT or ACT exam if you hope to get a higher score! You can apply with either a SAT or ACT score this fall.

SAT: Summer Dates - June 7th and August 23rd (register here)
ACT: Summer Dates - June 14th and July 12th (register here)

☐ COLLEGE LIST

Work on your college list!

- 6-12 schools
- Mix of safety, match, and reach schools
- Need help finding colleges? Use the University search on Maia Learning or College Board's Big Future search tool!

☐ VISIT COLLEGES

Visit colleges you might be interested in this summer! To plan formal visits, visit the school's website or reach out to their office of admissions. This can help narrow down your list!

☐ WATCH THE COLLEGE APPLICATION VIDEO

Learn about the college application process and how to use MaiaLearning to prepare for the Fall application season.

☐ ATTEND A STUDENT COLLEGE WORKSHOP

- Tuesday, July 29 - 9 AM to 12 PM at Hoffman Estates HS
- Monday, August 4 - 9 AM to 12 PM at Palatine HS

- **STUDENT REGISTRATION REQUIRED** - https://tinyurl.com/D211SrWorkshop

☐ START WORKING ON COMMON APP AND ESSAY

- Common App opens August 1, 2025!
- www.commonapp.org
- Over 1,000 colleges and universities nationwide use Common App
- Start working on drafts of your Common App Essay
- Essay prompts can already be found on the Common App website

Student In-Person Workshop
College Application Process

Tuesday, July 29th
Hoffman Estates High School
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

OR

Monday, August 4th
Palatine High School
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

STUDENT REGISTRATION REQUIRED

School Events

- ❑ College Rep Visits
- ❑ Senior Group Guidance
- ❑ Individual Student Meetings with Counselors
- ❑ FAFSA/Financial Aid Office Hours
- ❑ Career Treks

Details will be posted in Maia Learning

Fall Evening Events

- **College Application Process In Depth**
  Thursday, August 28, 2025, before Parent Open House at each school

- **Financial Aid Sessions**
  Available at each school.
  Dates and times will be communicated in the fall

- **First Generation College Night**
  Thursday, September 25th, 2025

Details will be posted in MaiaLearning

Postsecondary Counselors

Jordan Schroeder	Palatine High School
John Baima	Fremd High School
JC Brown	Conant High School
Reiko Akiyoshi	Schaumburg High School
Patrick Evans	Hoffman Estates High School

Thank you for joining us!

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