

## Fear the Common App No More

By  
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Any student applying to college this year can probably tell you how the Common Application made them want to pull their hair out.

“People had trouble uploading their essay this year,” Bruce W. Hamilton, a guidance counselor at Cardinal Spellman High School in Brockton, said. “Most of the bugs are now worked out, but they took a lot of heat for that.”

As a guidance counselor at Cardinal Spellman High School in Brockton, Hamilton is responsible for helping students deal with issues like these that arise while applying for college via the Common App. It is in his experience that those who start working on the application as soon as it is available have an easier time.

“The earlier you start, the better,” he said.

The Common App is available for students every year after August 1. Hamilton recommends that students start reviewing the application carefully and filling it out soon after this date. Part of this process involves writing the dreaded essay, which is extremely important.

“It’s one of the only opportunities for the college to hear a student’s voice,” Hamilton said.

Although guidance counselors everywhere recognize that many students will not follow this recommendation to get the ball rolling early, Hamilton said parents should not fret. Guidance counselors will usually work around the clock to make sure students meet deadlines.

“We get on their case if we see they aren’t doing what they need to,” Hamilton said. “It’s never too late.”

Hamilton also said families shouldn’t throw in the towel over the fees associated with the Common App.

“There are fee waivers available. If students are on a reduced lunch at school, there are fee waivers.”

If students applying to college are in need of these various forms of assistance, Hamilton stresses that they should not hesitate to ask for help from their guidance counselors.

“We like to work with families,” he said.