

## SENIOR YEAR: College Planning for Twelfth Grade

Senior year is often an extremely busy time with schoolwork, activities, and special events. Be sure to stay on track with the college admissions process. Get organized, be aware of deadlines, and don't procrastinate.

### **Fall**

**Continue to visit schools.** Fall is a great time to look at colleges because classes are in session and you are better able to meet and talk with students and professors. You may even be able to sit in on a class or two.

**Finalize your college list.** Use the information you've gathered from visits, interviews, and your own research to decide which schools you will apply to. It's okay to apply to colleges that you think will be a reach for you, but it's also important to put a few safety schools on your list. Talk to counselors, teachers, and parents about your final choices.

**Stay on track with your grades and extracurricular activities.** Colleges will look at what you have done in your senior year, so stay focused on doing well in your classes and maintaining a commitment to other activities.

**Take standardized tests.** Register for and take the ACT, SAT, or SAT Subject Tests as necessary. Be sure you have requested that your test scores be sent to the colleges of your choice.

**Keep track of deadlines.** You'll be filling out lots of forms this year, so it's important to know what form is due when. Make a calendar showing all deadlines.

**Ask for letters of recommendation.** Give recommendation forms and profile sheets to the teachers you have chosen well in advance of your application deadlines. Follow your school's procedures for requesting letters of recommendation.

**Meet with your guidance counselor/academic advisor.** Your counselor can help you stay on track with admission requirements. Make sure they know which colleges you want transcripts, score reports, and letters sent to. Give your counselors any necessary forms much earlier than the actual deadlines so they'll have time to complete and send the forms.

**Complete applications.** Finish the application forms for the schools in which you are interested. Proofread them and make extra copies before you send them. Make sure all necessary materials including test scores, recommendations, and transcripts have been sent. You should plan to get all done before winter break, so you won't be rushing to make deadlines.

**Continue your scholarship search.** Apply for scholarships whose deadlines are approaching and keep searching for more scholarship and grant opportunities.

### **Winter**

**Follow up on your applications.** Verify with your counselor that all forms are in order and have been sent out to colleges. Check with the schools to make sure they have received all your information, including test scores, transcripts, and recommendations.

**Submit financial aid forms.** Fill out the FAFSA, and if necessary, the PROFILE. These forms can be obtained from your guidance counselor or the college web page (sunglasses icon). No matter what your family's income level is, the FAFSA is your main priority for financial aid purposes because it will determine how much you're expected to pay. Don't send the forms until after January 1, because they can't be processed before then.

**Send mid-year grade reports.**

Ask your counselor to send your mid-year grade reports to the colleges that you applied to. Remember that the schools will continue to keep track of your grades until graduation hard

## Spring

***Watch your mail for notification from colleges.*** If you applied under the regular application process, you should receive an admissions decision by March or April. Notifications of financial aid awards should arrive by the end of April.

***Check out your options if you're put on a waitlist.***

Being put on a waitlist is not a rejection but you may want to make a decision on another school. Wait list opportunities often come after the May 1 deadline for letting schools know if you are coming. . Check with your counselor or academic advisor for more information.

***Compare financial aid packages.*** Make sure to consider each financial aid award carefully. If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact the financial aid office of the college to get more information. Financial aid is a key factor in deciding where you will attend.

***Prepare for any last standardized tests.*** You may be taking AP or other tests to earn some college credit as the school year winds down.

***Make your final college decision.*** Notify all schools of your intent by May 1. If you're not sure which offer to accept, make one more campus visit to the schools you're considering. Make sure to send your deposit to your chosen school and ask your counselor to send your final transcript to the college in June.

***Follow up on financial aid information.*** Make sure you have received a FAFSA acknowledgement. If you applied for a Pell Grant, you will receive a Student Aid Report statement. Review this notice, make a copy for your records, and send the original to the college you plan to attend. If necessary, apply for loans.

***Complete enrollment paperwork for the college you will attend.*** Once you accept an offer, you should receive information from the college about course scheduling, orientation sessions, housing arrangements, and other necessary forms. Be sure to complete all required paperwork by the appropriate deadlines.

***Congratulations!***

*You've graduated from high school! Good luck on all your future goals and ambitions.*