

Preparing for College: Senior Checklist

August/September

- Register for the SAT and/or ACT if you didn't take it as a junior, or if you aren't satisfied with your score and want to take it again. (remember your counselor can help you with fee waivers if you qualify)
- Look at college applications and consider all of the different pieces of information you will need to compile.
- The SAT test date most popular with high school seniors is October.
- Visit with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements.
- Take every opportunity to get to know colleges: meeting with college representatives who visit your high schools during the fall, attending local college fairs, visiting campuses (if possible).
- Narrow down your list of colleges and begin to consider "safe," "reach," and "realistic" schools. Make sure you have the application and financial aid information for each school. Find out if you qualify for any scholarships at these schools.

Create a checklist and calendar to chart:

- Standardized test dates, registration deadlines, and fees
- College application due dates
- Financial aid application forms and deadlines
- Other materials you'll need for college applications (recommendations, transcripts, essays, etc.)
- Your high school's application processing deadlines

October

- It is time to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). File the form as soon after Oct. 1 as possible. In addition to determining your eligibility for federal funds, many colleges and states use the form when distributing grants, so don't delay. Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR)—it should arrive four weeks after the FAFSA is filed.
- Some colleges will have deadlines as early as this month. These would include rolling admission, priority, early decision, and early action deadlines.
- If you cannot afford the application fees that many colleges charge, ask your counselor to help you request a fee waiver.
- Finalize your college essay. Many schools will require that you submit at least one essay with your application.
- Request personal recommendations from teachers, school counselors, or employers. Follow the process required by your high school or provide a stamped, addressed envelope, the appropriate college forms, and an outline of your academic record and extracurricular activities to each person writing you a recommendation.
- Research possibilities of scholarships. You should *never* pay for scholarship information.

November

- Finalize and send any early decision or early action applications due this month.
- Every college will require a copy of your transcript from your high school. Follow your school's procedure for sending transcripts.
- Make sure testing companies have sent your scores directly to the colleges to which you are applying.

January

- Send first semester transcripts to schools where you applied.

Feb/March/April

- While most of your applications will be complete and you are waiting to receive admission decisions, don't slack in the classroom. The college that you do attend will want to see your second semester transcript. No Senioritis!
- Acceptance letters and financial aid offers will start to arrive. Review your acceptances, compare financial aid packages, and visit your final choices, especially if you haven't already.

May

- May 1 is the date when the college you plan to attend requires a commitment and deposit. When you've made your college decision, notify your counselor and the colleges. Send in your deposit by the postmark date of May 1. If you've been offered financial aid, accept the offer and follow the instructions given. Also notify schools you will not attend of your decision.
- Make sure that you have requested that your final transcript be sent to the school you will be attending.
- If you are "wait-listed" by a college you really want to attend, visit, call and write the admission office to make your interest clear. Ask how you can strengthen your application.