

Senior Year College Planning Calendar

The outline below is from “Mapping Your Future” a very helpful resource available online.

During your senior year, you will finalize your college choice. This year is filled with admission applications, scholarship essays, financial aid information and the need to meet deadlines. Throughout your senior year, continue to build your resume by achieving academic success, as well as participating in extracurricular activities. Colleges are very interested in well-rounded students.

The college preparation that takes place during your senior year is filled with a lot of details and paperwork. It is very important that you involve your parents with this process.

August

- Review your career plans and is best for you.
- Save money from your summer job for college.
- List your top college choices.
- Request admissions information and school catalogs.
- Go on college visits.
- Collect letters of recommendation from your teachers to include with your college applications.
- Start brainstorming about ideas for your college essays.
- Continue to take challenging courses during your senior year.
- Stay focused on maintaining or increasing your GPA.
- Obtain registration materials and test dates for the SAT and/or ACT.
- Compare costs of each school that interests you by contacting the colleges by phone, mail, or via their websites.
- Visit [Going2College](#) for information about career, college, and financial aid resources in your state.

September

- Mark your calendar with registration, admissions, and financial aid deadlines and fees.
- Determine if the schools that interest you have online admission applications. If not, request them by mail now.
- Create separate folders for each of the schools that interest you and keep the materials organized.
- Begin writing drafts of your college essays.
- Start completing early admission college applications.
- Meet with school representatives who visit your high school.
- Look at virtual tours of college campuses online.
- If you haven't already taken the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#), register for the test(s).
- Attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- Ask employers, teachers, and guidance counselors for letters of recommendation to accompany your admissions applications.

October

- Take the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#).
- Continue working on your application essay.
- If you haven't already done so, attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- Visit your top school choices. If possible, make appointments with faculty, staff, and students.
- Complete applications for every scholarship for which you may be eligible.
- Meet with your guidance counselor to develop a college admission and financial aid application plan.
- Contact the schools' financial aid offices to determine which forms they require. Some schools may require special forms.
- Finalize portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent if required for admission.

November

- Complete admissions applications by their deadlines.
- If you haven't already done so, attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- If necessary, register to retake the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#).
- Follow up to ensure your employers, teachers, and guidance counselors send letters of recommendation.
- Stay focused on maintaining and increasing your GPA.

December

- Finalize admission applications.
- Urge your parents to file their taxes as soon as possible after January 1. This will ease the financial aid process.
- Research and apply for other types of financial aid, including grants and scholarships.
- Watch for early admissions notices (they tend to arrive in December or January).
- Check our school website under Guidance>Scholarships to see what scholarships we advertise and pay attention as their due dates are posted. The majority are spring due dates.

January

- As soon as possible after January 1 and when tax forms are complete (they don't have to be filed until April 15; you can use estimates), complete your FAFSA online at www.FAFSA.gov. Keep copies of all documents.
- If you can't attend financial aid nights, ask if you and your parents can borrow a video of an event from your counselor.
- Contact the U.S. Department of Education at 800-4-FEDAID for assistance completing the FAFSA

- **February**

- Be mindful of deadlines. Always submit information on time.
- Research Advanced Placement (AP) or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams.
- Watch for the e-mail notice indicating your Student Aid Report (SAR) is ready.
- Review your SAR for errors and make any corrections as indicated.
- Rank your top school choices.

March

- Check with the financial aid offices to ensure your paperwork is complete. Submit tax forms if they request them.
- Narrow your school choices and make campus visits.
- Be on the lookout for acceptance letters.
- Start looking for summer jobs.

April

- Compare financial aid award letters.
- Make your final school decision and mail deposits, as required.
- Check with the school you've chosen about returning financial aid award letters.
- Notify the schools you have chosen NOT to attend.
- Plan for registration, orientation, and housing, and mark your calendar with important dates.

May

- Be aware of any summer orientation sessions that you must attend at the school in which you will enroll, and make plans accordingly.
- Finalize your summer job plans, and make a plan for saving a portion of your summer earnings.
- Prepare a realistic student budget.
- Follow up with your high school to ensure the counselor forwards your final school transcripts to the college.

June

- Plan for college transportation.
- Notify your high school guidance office of your college selection and any scholarships received.
- Follow up with the financial aid office to ensure all paperwork is complete.

July

- Save money from your summer job.

- Send “thank you notes” to everyone who helped you plan and prepare for college.
- Make copies of your financial aid forms, health forms, etc. for your files to aid in resolving future issues.
- Register for the Fall semester.
- Prepare for the new adventures that await you on campus!

Congratulations! It's time to get ready to start college.

Advice for parents

Yes, there are things you can do to help your senior prepare for continuing their education after high school.

- It is important to attend financial aid presentations and career day functions WITH your student. Many of these events will be held in the evenings and on weekends. If you don't know when they're scheduled, contact your son or daughter's high school counselor. (Attend these events even if you did so last year or with a different student - there is new information all the time!)
- Ask them monthly, "Have you been to the Mapping Your Future websites? What are you working on and what scholarships have you applied for?"
- Sit down with your student and prepare a list of what he/she is looking for in a college and then help him/her sort through the information they receive from the different institutions to decide which ones offer what's on the list.
- Complete applications with the student.
- In January or February, you will need to help your student complete the FAFSA. In March, the award notices will start coming in. Look at the financing carefully and contact the schools with any questions. Make comparisons!
- Go on trips with your student to as many of his or her top school choices as possible. A visit to the campus is invaluable to making a decision.
- Hug them, send them on their way, BUT don't change the locks - they'll be back!