

Getting Ready for College: A Four-Year Checklist

FRESHMEN YEAR

Freshmen Preparing for College should Plan to:

- Work with their school counselors to create a yearly schedule to meet graduation and college admissions requirements.
- Determine what classes you should take to put themselves in a good position for college. Consider taking Advance Placement and Honors courses.
- Check class rank and GPA at the end of each semester with School Counselor or Academic Advisor.
- Start a running list of accomplishments, awards, and recognitions to use when completing college applications and writing résumés.
- Get involved with community-based and leadership-oriented activities that best reflect their interests.
- Look for sports, groups and clubs that their interested in, then join!
- Start building mentorship relationships.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Sophomores Preparing for College Should:

- Consider taking the PSAT. While PSAT scores aren't used for college admission, preparing for, and taking the test early can be a good trial run. REMEMBER TO CHECK FOR PSAT REGISTRATION FEE WAIVER.
- Meet with school counselor or academic advisors to check for additional fee waiver eligibility.
- Keep track of their academic and athletic awards, extracurricular accomplishments, and community service.
- Reach out to school counselors and/or mentors to discuss occupational interests and college requirements.

JUNIOR YEAR

In the Fall Semester, Juniors should:

- Take the PSAT (in October) if they have not already. Students should generally take the test no later than fall semester of the eleventh grade to qualify for National Merit scholarships and programs.
- Determine what classes they should take to put themselves in a good position for college.
- Begin creating a list of colleges that they're interested in. Look online, go to college fairs, or speak to college representatives that visit the school.
- Check college admission statistics and acceptance rates. It's important to note that SAT/ACT scores and GPA of admitted students often differ from the college's application requirements.
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- Talk to mentors about the college they attended and their experiences.

In the Winter Juniors Should:

- Organize their Spring or Summer testing schedule.
- Find out registration deadlines and the exact dates and times of important tests like the ACT, SAT, and SAT Subject Tests.
- Visit school and local libraries and ask them about Test prep materials. Some public libraries may offer: SAT and ACT prep classes or will allow students to check-out or scan test-prep books.

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SENIOR YEAR

During the Summer, rising Seniors should:

- Plan college visits and put dates on the fridge or calendar as a reminder for themselves and their parents.
- Narrow down colleges under consideration.
- Complete the Federal Student Aid Estimator.
- Make a list of scholarships they'll be applying for.
- Check scholarship requirements and deadlines.
- Consider asking Mentors and looking for community resources that will help them write scholarships, **resumes**, and cover letters.
- Select who they would like to ask for a Letter of Recommendation (LOR). Colleges typically require 3 (one from the school counselor and two from teachers). Note, LOR requirements sometimes vary depending on the college.

In the Fall Semester, Seniors will need to:

- Register for and take (or retake) the SAT and/or ACT, if not already done, and/or if they did reach ****
- Begin online applications and double-check requirements.
- Check to see if application fee waivers are available at college(s) they are applying to and if they're eligible.
- Complete and submit college applications prior to the deadlines.
- Request transcripts from School Counselors or Advisors.
- Request Letter of Recommendations at least 30 days before they are due.
- Work with parents to complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Before each year of college, you'll need to apply for federal grants, work-study, and loans with the FAFSA.
- Complete and submit scholarship applications prior to the deadlines.

In the Fall Semester, Seniors will need to:

- Register for and take (or retake) the SAT and/or ACT, if not already done
- Check to see if application fee waivers are available at college(s) they are applying to and if they're eligible.
- Complete and submit college applications prior to the deadlines.
- Request transcripts from School Counselors or Advisors.
- Request Letter of Recommendations at least 30 days before they are due.

In the Spring Semester, Seniors will need to:

- Consider college acceptances; compare financial aid packages offered.