

What Can You Do To Prepare for College?!?

11th Grade – Junior Year

Begin college selection process. Attend college fairs, financial aid seminars and general information sessions to learn as much as you can about the college application process. Make sure you are meeting NCAA requirements if you want to play Division I or II sports in college.

September

- Register for the October PSAT. Meet with your school counselor to review your courses for this year and plan your schedule for senior year.
- Continue to save samples of your best work for your academic portfolio (all year).

October

- Junior year PSAT scores may qualify a student for the National Merit Scholarship Competition, the National Achievement Program, and the National Hispanic Scholars Programs, but also serves as good practice for the SAT/ACT. So, even though these scores will not be used for college admission, it is still a good idea to take the PSAT. The more times you take standardized tests, the more familiar you will become with the format and the types of questions asked. If you wish to receive free information from colleges, indicate on the PSAT test answer form that you want to participate in the Student Search.

November

- Junior year grades are extremely important in the college admission process, because they are a measure of how well you do in advanced, upper-level courses. Grades also are used to determine scholarships and grants for which you may be eligible. So put in the extra effort and keep those grades up!
- If you will require financial aid, start researching your options for grants, scholarships and work-study programs. Make an appointment with your school counselor or do research on your own on the Internet.

December

- During December you should receive the results of your PSAT. Read your score report and consult your school counselor to determine how you might improve on future standardized tests. The PSAT is excellent preparation for the SAT, which you will take in the spring.
- If you plan to take the ACT, register now for the February ACT. Many colleges accept the ACT or the SAT. When you begin to explore different colleges and universities, double-check to see if they prefer or require the ACT, the SAT and/or the SAT Subject Tests.

January

- Begin to make a preliminary list of colleges you would like to investigate further. Surf the Internet and use the college resources outside of the guidance office or library.
- Ask your parents for your Social Security number (required on many college applications). If you were never issued a Social Security number, contact the closest Social Security office as soon as possible to obtain a number.

February

- Meet with your school counselor to discuss your preliminary list of colleges. Discuss whether your initial list of colleges meets your needs and interests (academic program, size, location, cost, etc.) and whether you are considering colleges where you are likely to be admitted. You should be optimistic and realistic when applying to colleges.
- Register for the March SAT if you have completed the math courses covered on the SAT. If not, plan to take the SAT and/or Subject Tests in May or June. Prepare for the SAT or ACT by signing up for a prep course, using computer software, or completing the SAT/ACT practice tests available in the counseling office or at bookstores. But don't spend so much time trying to improve standardized test scores that grades and co-curricular involvement suffer.

Junior Year, continued on back

March

- Email, telephone, use the Internet, or write to request admission literature and financial aid information from the colleges on your list. There is no charge and no obligation to obtain general information about admission and financial aid.

April

- When selecting your senior courses, be sure to continue to challenge yourself academically.
- Register for the May/June SAT and/or the May/June SAT Subject Tests. Not all SAT Subject Tests are given on every test date. Check the calendar carefully to determine when the Subject Tests you want are offered. Register for the June ACT if you want that test.
- Continue to evaluate your list of colleges and universities. Eliminate colleges from the original list that no longer interest you and add others as appropriate.
- Look into summer jobs or apply for special summer academic or enrichment programs. Colleges love to see students using their knowledge and developing their skills and interests.

May

- Attend a college fair to get more information about colleges on your list.
- NACAC sponsors college fairs in cities across the country during the fall and the spring. Visit NACAC's Web site (www.nacacnet.org) to check out the schedule for the National College Fairs and the Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs.
- Get a jump start on summer activities—consider enrolling in an academic course at a local college, pursuing a summer school program, applying for an internship, working, or volunteering.
- If you work, save part of your earnings for college.
- Begin visiting colleges. Phone to set up appointments. Interviews are always a good idea. Many colleges will tell you they are optional, but an interview will show interest, enthusiasm and initiative on your part and provide an excellent opportunity to have your questions answered. Do a practice interview with your counselor, teacher, employer, or a senior who has had college interviews. Set up interviews as early as possible—interview times become booked quickly!
- Take the SAT and/or ACT.

June

- After school ends, get on the road to visit colleges.
- Take SAT, the SAT Subject Tests and/or the ACT.

July–August

- Visit colleges, take tours and have interviews.
- Continue to refine your list.