

Junior Year - College Planning Outline

Basic Checklist

- Keep your grades up.
- Talk with your parents and high school teachers about colleges that interest you.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask on campus visits.
- Continue to visit colleges and talk with college students.
- List, compare, and visit colleges.
- Investigate scholarship opportunities.
- Volunteer for activities and clubs related to career interests.
- Get a part-time job, apprenticeship, or internship, or job shadow in a profession that interests you.

Pre-College Checklist Outlined by Month

July

- Visit college and university campuses this summer. Visiting campuses builds a foundation from which you can compare colleges and universities next year when you apply for admission.
- Continue saving money for college. It's smart to save.
- Start thinking about the cost of college and how much you and your family can afford. Knowing how much you can afford may help with deciding which colleges and universities to apply to in fall of your senior year.
- To get a head start on the financial aid process, start researching scholarships. Some scholarships are available exclusively for high school juniors.
- Obtain a Social Security Card (if you don't already have one). A Social Security number is required for college applications, standardized tests, and financial aid.

August

- Earn excellent grades this year. Junior year grades are the most important grades for getting into college. Junior year grades show college admission officers how well you do in advanced, upper-level courses and indicate if you are capable of handling college-level coursework.
- Join clubs and organizations that interest you. College admission officers prefer students who demonstrate long-term commitment to their extracurricular activities.
- Prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT® given in October. All juniors at TLHS are already registered.
- Be a leader in extracurricular activities this school year; be an officer in a club, serve on student council, start your own organization, etc. Leadership is one of the most valuable student qualifications sought by college admission officers.

September

- Start to think about colleges and universities you may want to apply to next fall. Write down college characteristics you prefer and discuss them with teachers, parents, and friends.
- Plan to attend college fairs and financial aid seminars; learn as much as possible about colleges of interest (and the entire college admission process).
- Consider college majors you may wish to study. Research careers that may spark interest in a specific major; talk with your parents and counselor.
- Focus your extracurricular interests on activities you are passionate about.
- Prepare for the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test® (PSAT/NMSQT) given at TLHS in October. The PSAT/NMSQT is good practice for the SAT Reasoning Test.
- **TLHS CEEB Code Number is 380099.** You will need this number when registering for the SAT® and ACT® tests and for next year's college applications.

October

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT® this month. To be extra confident, familiarize yourself with the test ahead of time by taking practice tests. On the test sheet, check the box that releases your name to colleges so you can start receiving information from them.
- Note future SAT® and ACT® dates if you plan to take the tests multiple times during your junior year. www.collegeboard.org www.actstudent.org
- Continue to research scholarships for juniors. During your research, if you find scholarships for senior year students you're interested in applying for next year, make notes for your future reference.
- Develop teacher relationships. Plan to use teachers and older high school students as mentors. Learn what you can from college-bound students going through the college admission process so you will be better prepared when you begin the process in spring of your junior year.
- Begin thinking about who you will ask for recommendations next year. Think about teachers, coaches, employers, and community members you might ask for letters of recommendation. Work to build hard working, respectful relationships with these people.
- Continue researching your top college choices.

November

- Begin the process of selecting a college major. Consider your interests, skills, talents, and personality. It's alright to begin college with an undeclared major, but deciding on a major while in high school will help with researching and finding the colleges and universities that suit you best.
- If you're interested in attending one of the military academies, learn about the application process so you will be prepared to apply in the spring.
- Learn about financial aid. Merit-based scholarships are awarded based on your GPA, so do well in your coursework.
- Complete applications for junior-year scholarships with fall deadlines. Apply for national scholarships in which your qualifications match scholarship criteria.
- Research college summer enrichment programs for high school students. If you find a summer program of interest, start the application process next month.

December

- Review the results of the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test® (PSAT/NMSQT) to identify areas of academic weakness. Work to improve your weak areas so you earn the highest scores possible on the ACT® and SAT® tests you will take this coming spring and next fall.
- Work to ensure excellent teacher recommendations. Become well-acquainted with your favorite teachers; have them become familiar with your high quality of school work and involvement with extracurricular activities. Assistance from these teachers is VITAL TO YOUR SUCCESS as a college-bound student.
- Investigate college summer enrichment programs for high school students. Start filling out application materials for programs you wish to attend.
- Start planning to take the ACT® and the SAT Test™.
 - www.collegeboard.org www.actstudent.org
- Visit with high school graduates who are home from college on winter break. Try to get an overall picture of what to expect from college life. Ask these college students for advice on completing the college admission process.

January

- Do well on your final exams this month. Junior year grades are evaluated very closely by college admission officers; earn the impressive grades needed to be accepted to your college of choice.
- Review your PSAT/NMSQT® scores. Work on improving your weak subject areas before taking the ACT® in April or June and the SAT™ in May or June.

- Update your student résumé. Include all accomplishments and activities from fall semester.
- Continue to think about college majors. Make a list of your top interests, values, and skills. Do research on possible careers that may generate interest in a specific major.
- Apply for college summer enrichment programs of interest. Many programs get booked early so submit your application as soon as possible.
- Continue participating in extracurricular activities (inside and outside of school). Dedicate yourself to a few extracurricular activities and work toward leadership positions. Sign up for leadership roles in clubs, organizations, committees, and other activities you are involved with this spring semester.

February

- Earn top grades this semester - this is the last semester to earn excellent grades before applying to college next fall.
- Apply to college summer enrichment programs (if interested).
- Continue to prepare for the ACT® and the SAT Test™. Learn strategies for taking the tests, the types of questions to expect, and how to best use your time during the tests.
- Register for or take the ACT® and/or for the SAT Test™.
 - www.collegeboard.org www.actstudent.org
- Begin searching for colleges and universities that best suit your needs. Identify schools of interest so you can complete both detailed research and college campus visits prior to the coming fall.
- Continue searching for national scholarships.
- Start seriously investigating private scholarships and other student aid programs.
- Continue to develop respectful, hard-working relationships with your teachers. Good relationships result in superior letters of recommendation.
- If there are any college fairs this spring, plan on attending them. Remember to be professional in all interactions with college and university representatives.

March

- Register for a college summer enrichment program if you're interested. Many programs get booked by early spring so don't delay in finding the program you want to attend and submitting your application as soon as possible.
- Register for or take the ACT® and/or the SAT Test™.
 - www.collegeboard.org www.actstudent.org
- Continue your research for colleges and universities. Plan to apply to at least 3 to 6 schools.
- Continue your efforts to select a college major (if you haven't already done so). Examine careers you may be interested in pursuing; consider your interests, values and skills.
- Students' first visit to college campuses usually occur during spring break of their junior year. Plan ahead and research colleges to visit and schedule guided tours and interviews.
- Plan your summer activities. Your activities should reflect meaningful and continued involvement in the things you are passionate about.

April

- Begin scheduling visits to each school that is on your list.
- Continue to be involved with school and community activities to build your student résumé.
- Take the ACT®
- Strengthen your relationships with teachers, coaches, employers and community members. These are the people you will ask for recommendations in the coming fall. Continue to get to know these people and expand your hard-working, respectful relationships with them.
- If you're interested in attending a military academy, request information to learn about that academy and their admission requirements.
- Research opportunities for summer employment, internships, volunteering, or coursework. Use summer months wisely to develop and improve your student résumé.
- Begin preparing essays for college admission and scholarship applications.

May

- Take the SAT Test™ this month if you registered.
- Attend a college fair (if there is one). College fairs offer an excellent opportunity to visit with admission officers and to compare and contrast schools for free.
- Take steps to obtain great recommendations from educators. Mention to teachers and principal with whom you have established respectful, hard-working relationships that you plan to ask them for letters of recommendation this coming fall. They will appreciate being informed early and may place you on top of the stack of requests next fall.
- Secure jobs and internships for the summer. Ask your high school teachers, local business owners and service clubs about summer jobs and internships that involve your college major. Ask early – the closer time gets to summer, the more likely the preferred jobs and internships will be taken by other students.
- Plan to work hard this summer to impress your employers, supervisors or course instructors; these are people you may ask for letters of recommendation in the fall of your senior year . . . but only if you do an excellent job for them this summer.
- If you will have a job this summer, save as much money as possible for college.
- If you plan to major in Visual Arts, the colleges you apply to will require a portfolio of your best art work (or photographs). Save your best works of art from your junior year; you may have the opportunity to include them in your portfolio.
- Update your student résumé to include junior year activities and accomplishments.
- If interested in attending a military academy, contact an academy representative and start the application process as soon as possible.
- Consider taking a summer road trip to visit college campuses this summer.
- Discuss college options and costs with your parents over the summer. Keep in mind a small, private university may offer you substantial scholarships and cost you less than large, public schools that offer very little financial aid.
- Do well on your final exams. This semester is the last chance to boost your grade point average before applying to college in the fall.
- Mark a calendar with test dates and registration deadlines for the remaining ACT® and/or the SAT™. You may also take them during your senior year.
- Continue compiling information to find out which organizations award scholarships to graduating seniors so you'll be prepared for next year.

June

- Take the SAT™ this month (if you registered).
- Update your student résumé to include all accomplishments and activities from your freshman, sophomore, and junior years.
- Complete activities during the summer months that will make this fall's college and scholarship applications look great. Volunteer, work an internship or job, or take classes in the community.
- Search and select colleges and universities to apply to this fall. Search and analyze college websites, evaluate information collected from college fairs, and consider the opinions of high school graduates, teachers and counselors.
- Visit your selected colleges and conduct interviews. In-person visits will allow you to get a feel for each campus's culture and atmosphere. Set up interviews with admission officers and a professor in your major; talk with current students.
- Research scholarships and submit winning applications. Get an early start on the process by filling out applications and writing scholarship essays this summer.