



## College Planning Guide - Dates, Deadlines & Details

A timeline plan of events for the high school student preparing for college.

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Preparing to go to college is one of the most anxiety producing times in the lives of students and their parents. For students, it is one of the most significant steps toward independence and adulthood. For both the parents and the student it can be a period of great uncertainty, stress and sometimes, frustration.

College-bound students need to develop and follow a plan of action if they are going to fulfill their dreams of getting into and getting ready for the college of their choice. Once you have begun the college search process, it's important to identify your college search goals, then a timeline plan, a sequence of events that will allow you to reach your destination. The following outlines a calendar of basic monthly activities that every college-bound student should incorporate into their individual plan.

### Dates, Deadlines & Details

#### Freshman & Sophomore Year

There's only one opportunity to go through high school, so let's start out right to achieve your goals. Here are some common sense, yet very important success factors for Freshman & Sophomores:

- Understand, this is your reputation you are building
- Plan to build a solid foundation
- Plan to have a strong concentration on academics.
- Never cut a class
- Don't be late to school or any class
- Pay attention in class
- Make homework an important part of your daily routine
- Plan to take advantage of extra help sessions
- Form or participate in study groups
- Use your planner to stay organized
- Don't procrastinate, plan your time well, complete your assignments early
- Don't ignore deadlines
- Hand in all required work on time
- Participate, help make the classroom a positive learning environment

Get involved in at least one service activity each year – either in school, church or in the community, be a student volunteer! Besides this being a positive addition to your high school profile - resume, it may provide material for your application essay and it will open other doors of opportunities such as employment opportunities. In addition, although you may not realize it at the time, you will receive much more than you give. Start now, serve others.

Remember that prospective employers contact schools and ask about school and class attendance and behavior as part of their job reference checking.

Establish and maintain a good reputation, especially with your teachers and coaches. In the following years you will need your teachers and coaches to write letters of recommendation for you for college admissions officers to evaluate who you are!

Start to explore career interests. Look around, how do others around you make a living? Consider your interests. What types of employment or general areas of industry interest you? You may not realize it now, but four years will fly by and your college career will be before you. Begin to plan now for graduation!

**Understand this:** Regardless of your athletic abilities, your grades will make the biggest difference in admissions and financial aid outcomes! Every college has academic Scholarships or Grant money that is awarded students and student athletes who demonstrate academic achievement. High academic achievement means you will be accepted into more colleges, have greater college choices, your tuition costs will be much less each year and allows you to get noticed and stand out from the pack.

Sharpen your decision making skills! Actions have consequences! Your future is in Your control!

## Junior Year

### September

- Concentrate on classes – get off to a good start!
- Get involved in extracurricular activities, clubs, sports, volunteer
- Register for the October PSAT. The PSAT is a great prep for the SAT, which may be taken in the Spring
- Student Athletes: if applicable, begin to understand the NCAA eligibility rules, plan you course selections accordingly [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)
- Student Athletes: plan your recruiting strategy and game plan. See the “Student Athlete College Recruiting Guide”
- Start exploring college choices, use the “College Resource Links” to get started, begin to compare
- Start exploring career choices, use the “College Resource Links” to get started

### October

- Put in the extra effort to keep up your grades. Your academic performance is still the most important factor in the admissions process!
- Attend available college fairs, talk to those you know or meet about their college experience
- Explore colleges online – begin to compare. Keep notes or a file on schools that interest you
- Write notes about your interests and courses that you find interesting, begin to determine general areas of study in college
- Schedule and take the PSAT
- Begin to identify & write down what’s important to you in a college

### November

- Concentrate on classes and improve your grades!
- Start to find colleges that match your interests
- Student Athlete: if applicable, register for NCAA Clearinghouse (for Division I & II athletes)
- Student Athlete: prepare athletic profile, cover letter, game Video / DVD’s use the templates that come with the “Student Athlete College Recruiting Guide”

## December

- Review your academic record and PSAT scores with your guidance counselor. Decide on how you might improve your test scores.
- Consider on line SAT study guides and/or local SAT Study courses
- Continue to research colleges that match your interests
- Register for the Spring (March or April) SAT and ACT tests

## January

- Continue to concentrate on your classes & grades
- Continue to research colleges that match your interests. Maintain your college list
- Register for the Spring (March or April) SAT and ACT tests if not already completed
- Complete SAT and/or ACT prep classes, online courses and study materials
- Organize the college information of the colleges that interest you
- Student Athlete: complete online recruiting questionnaires for the related colleges of interest
- Student Athlete: send out athletic profile, cover letters to applicable college athletic departments
- Review your senior year course selections with you guidance counselor. Be sure all of the graduation requirements are in the process of being met

## February

- If possible, schedule campus visits now for the spring when colleges are still in session
- Discus college choices with your school counselor and evaluate how realistic your choices are
- Plan - schedule campus visits now for the spring when college is still in session
- Memorize your Social Security Number! You will need it to take tests, apply for college, financial aid and employment forms

## March

- Take SAT and/or ACT in spring
- Student Athlete: Send updates to the prospective college coaches and/or recruiting coordinator
- Attend college information events typically hosted by your high school
- Attend college and career fairs to help crystallize your goals
- Request admission & financial aid info from colleges that are of interest

## April

- Continue to concentrate on classes
- If possible, narrow college choices to 5 to 8 schools
- Plan to volunteer or do an internship this summer, consider where you will spend your time learning

## May

- Coordinate and apply for applicable volunteer work or internship opportunities for the summer
- Plan to take AP exams this month if applicable
- Student Athlete: if applicable, register for NCAA Clearinghouse (for Division I & II athletes)
- Student Athlete: Stay committed to the weight room, speed training & a Bigger Faster Stronger Program

## June

- Student Athlete: plan to attend a college sports camp over the summer See the “Student Athlete College Recruiting Guide” for advice on camps
- Identify advisors, teachers, coaches or other adults in the community who could write a letter of recommendation on your behalf. Ask your self weather or not they know your work, personality and other characteristics well enough to make valid judgments.
- Develop your student resume that will be sent to each of your colleges, profiling your activities throughout high school that have taken place outside the classroom such as clubs, athletics, volunteerism, awards received, employment etc.
- Student Athlete: Stay committed to the weight room, speed training & a “Bigger Faster Stronger” Program

## July

- Student Athlete: attend one or more college sports camps of your choice
- Student Athlete: Stay committed to the weight room, speed training & a “Bigger Faster Stronger” Program
- If possible plan to attend a football camp!

## August

- Attend a college sports camp
- Student Athlete: Stay committed to the weight room, speed training & a “Bigger Faster Stronger” Program
- Pending your sport Practice usually starts!

## Senior Year

### September

- Make you plans now
- Begin to finalize your college choices by rating your interest for each (high, medium, low)
- Get organized – create a calendar of important dates, deadlines, trips etc.
- Collect application material, understand requirements & deadlines
- Make a list of the colleges and universities you would like to visit
- Plan your college visit trips – local or out of state, start making arrangements
- Register / plan to take or re-take the SAT or ACT

### October

- Narrow your college list to 5 or 6 schools
- Attend as many college night presentations at your high school as possible
- Ask your teachers for whom you have done your best work for letters of recommendations
- Obtain and review all admissions materials and applications from your top colleges list
- Complete 1<sup>st</sup> draft admissions essay
- Complete college application basics: complete essay, don't miss deadlines!
- Visit colleges of your choice or those you have not yet visited
- Thinking about early decision - don't miss your deadlines!
- Work hard, keep your grades up – college admissions will review your 1<sup>st</sup> semester grades

## November

- If applying early, don't miss November deadlines, get all documents completed
- Begin your hunt for scholarship dollars, apply for scholarships (apply everything that might apply!)
- Last chance to register for and take the SAT / ACT
- Complete the second draft of your admissions essay and your resume
- Investigate applicable scholarships – start the process to acquire
- Start the financial aid process – research, register, complete forms etc.

## December

- Use the holiday break to complete the finishing touches on your applications
- Continue your hunt for scholarship dollars, apply for scholarships
- Complete your essay and resume before you go back to school
- Complete all applications neatly and mail them on time. Don't forget to enclose the application fee
- Make sure you have a copy of the Free Application for the Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)

## January

- Meet all applicable early admissions deadlines
- Continue your hunt for scholarship dollars, apply for scholarships
- Submit FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible
- Send 1<sup>st</sup> semester transcripts and grades to colleges

## February

- If you applied for student aid, you should receive a Student Aid Report (SAR), noting eligibility for aid
- Continue your hunt for scholarship dollars, apply for scholarships
- Last application deadlines for some colleges
- Visit applicable colleges over mid-winter break (if not already completed)

## March

- Continue the hunt for scholarship dollars, apply for scholarships
- Be aware of financial aid deadlines
- Visit applicable colleges over spring break (if not already completed)

## April

- Register for advance placement exams if offered through High school
- Look for admission notices in the mail or e-mail
- Carefully review & analyze financial aid packages. Use the SACRG.com Decision Matrix template
- Make sure your high school sends final transcripts (grades, class rank, proof of graduation) to your selected college
- Decide which college you will attend, notify all other colleges of your decision. Send the required deposit to the school of your choice
- Respond to financial aid and scholarship offers
- Notify all colleges that accept you of your final decision

## May

- May 1st is the Nat'l. College Reply Date. Make your final decision prior to this date
- Respond to financial aid & scholarships
- Take AP exams this month if applicable
- Sign up for student orientation
- Request final high school transcripts and grades be mailed to your attending college

## June

- Attend applicable sports training camps
- Begin to plan to move – furniture, clothes, computer, details
- Work part time to save for misc. expenses

## July

- Attend applicable sports training camps
- Work part time to save for misc. expenses
- Plan to move – furniture, clothes, computer, details

## August

- Plan to move – furniture, clothes, computer, details
- Plan your moving dates

## September

- College starts! Congratulations!!

Now go work hard and do something with your life...

Be careful; make good decisions for your future and

Remember to give to others as you have received!

**What's next?** OK so you've got your plan built and you're beginning to work it. Great! Now what to do if you are a Student Athlete and you want to play college sports? What are the next steps to being recruited? How do you get noticed by college coaches? Let's map out additional parts of the plan that will assist you in getting recruited.

See "Student Athlete Recruiting Guide"