

Countdown to College

August

- Conduct one last review of registered classes and activities. Realize in less than a year, you'll want to showcase strong course work, grades and extracurricular achievements to prospective schools.

September

- Create a list of the colleges you're interested in attending.
- Discuss your list with your parents and guidance counselors.
- Attend college fairs in your area.
- If you did not take the PSAT as a sophomore, register now.

October

- Prep for and take the PSAT if you've not already done so.
- Investigate Advanced Placement (AP) or college courses you may take this spring, or as a senior.
- Start researching groups and organizations that award scholarships to seniors. Some start the application process in the spring.

November

- Review family finances and discuss how much you can afford to spend for your college education.
- Investigate eligibility requirements for federal and private student loans.
- Keep your grades up!

January

- Schedule spring SAT & ACT testing.
- Research financial aid nights at area schools.

February

- Consider enrolling in SAT or ACT exam prep courses to elevate scores.
- Contact the admissions office of prospective schools and schedule visits for spring break.
- Investigate internships for the summer that will help you gain insight into possible fields of study.

March

- Visit as many schools on your final list as possible over spring break.
- Arrange for admissions interview and an overnight stay. Be sure to stop by the financial aid office to collect information.

April

- Take the SAT or ACT.
- Solidify summer plans that include internships and jobs, or travel and activities that lead to interesting talking points on your college applications.
- Start brainstorming topics for essays on college applications.
- Enroll in senior year classes that will meet your requirements and fulfill G.P.A. objectives.

May

- Polish your resume.
- Narrow your college list to a final three to five schools, and obtain applications, paying particular attention to deadlines.
- Consider summer courses that will boost your G.P.A. and class rank.

Junior Year

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Senior Year

August

- Stay focused! Grades your senior year impact your acceptance to most schools!
- Make a calendar of application deadlines and don't forget to include financial aid deadlines.

September

- Ask teachers, counselors and employers for letters of recommendation for college and scholarship applications.
- Begin to finalize your short list of colleges.

October

- Take the ACT or SAT if you still need to.
- Finalize application essays.
- Visit campuses and speak with current students. Complete applications and send them in no later than November 1.

November

- Obtain financial aid documents and gather information needed for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

December

- Parents should save year-end payroll information that is typically needed for FAFSA.

January

- Schedule spring SAT & ACT testing if you're re-taking for higher scores.
- Research financial aid nights at area schools.

February

- Confirm your school has sent first semester transcripts and that college admissions received them.
- Watch the mail for acceptance letters and secure campus housing.
- Parents should prepare taxes as soon as possible, as they will be referenced for FAFSA.

March

- Look for your Student Aid Report (SAR) to arrive in the mail. Discuss this with your family.
- Start making plans for a summer job to earn college spending money.

April

- Watch for acceptance letters and financial aid award letters. Compare all aid packages.
- Decide which college you will attend and file appropriate paperwork, paying attention to deadlines.
- Tell other schools you will not be attending.
- If you secure a student loan, sign the required promissory note and complete entrance counseling.

May

- Take AP exams.
- Ask school guidance counselors to send your final transcript to college you'll be attending.
- Congratulations! Celebrate your high school graduation!