

Service High School

Junior Timeline

Fall

- Meet with your counselor to review the courses you've taken, and see what you still need to take.
- Check your class rank. Even if your grades haven't been that good so far, it's never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend.
- If you didn't do so in tenth grade, sign up for and take the PSAT/NMSQT. In addition to National Merit Scholarships, this is the qualifying test for the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students and National Hispanic Scholar Recognition Program.
- Take a long, hard look at why you want to continue your education after high school so you will be able to choose the best college or university for your needs.
- Make a list of colleges that meet your most important criteria (size, location, distance from home, majors, academic rigor, housing, and cost). Weigh each of the factors according to their importance to you.
- Continue visiting college fairs. You may be able to narrow your choices or add a college to your list.
- Speak to college representatives who visit your high school.
- If you want to participate in Division I or Division II sports in college, start the certification process. Check with your counselor to make sure you are taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements.
- If you are interested in one of the military academies, talk to your guidance counselor about starting the application process now.

Winter

- Collect information about college application procedures, entrance requirements, tuition and fees, room and board costs, student activities, course offerings, faculty composition, accreditation, and financial aid. The Internet is a good way to visit colleges and obtain this information. Begin comparing the schools by the factors that you consider to be most important.
- Discuss your PSAT score with your counselor.
- Begin narrowing down your college choices. Find out if the colleges you are interested in require the SAT I, ACT Assessment, or SAT II Subject Tests for admission.
- Register for the ACT Assessment, which is usually taken in April or June. You can take it again late in your junior year or in the fall of your senior year, if necessary.
- Begin preparing for the tests you've decided to take.
- Have a discussion with your parents about the colleges in which you are interested. Examine financial resources, and gather information about financial aid.
- Set up a filing system with individual folders for each college's correspondence and printed materials.

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Spring

- Meet with your counselor to review senior-year course selection and graduation requirements.
- Discuss ACT Assessment/SAT I scores with your counselor. Register to take the ACT Assessment and/or SAT I again if you'd like to try to improve your score.
- Discuss the college essay with your guidance counselor or English teacher.
- Stay involved with your extracurricular activities. Colleges look for consistency and depth in activities.
- Consider whom you will ask to write your recommendations. Think about asking teachers who know you well and who will write positive letters about you. Letters from a coach, activity leader, or an adult who knows you well outside of school (e.g., volunteer work contact) are also valuable.
- Inquire about personal interviews at your favorite colleges. Call or write for early summer appointments. Make necessary travel arrangements.
- See your counselor to apply for on-campus summer programs for high school students. Apply for a summer job or internship. Be prepared to pay for college application, financial aid, and testing fees in fall.
- Request applications from schools you're interested in by mail or via the Internet.

Summer

- Visit the campuses of your top-five college choices.
- After each college interview, send a thank-you letter to the interviewer.
- Talk to people you know who have attended the colleges in which you are interested.
- Continue to read books, magazines, and newspapers.
- Practice filling out college applications, and then complete the final application forms or apply online through the Web sites of the colleges in which you're interested.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Compose rough drafts of your college essays. Have a teacher read and discuss them with you. Proofread them, and prepare final drafts. Proofread your final essays at least three times.
- Develop a financial aid application plan, including a list of the aid sources, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines.