

College Admission Checklist and Timeline

Freshman Year: (Things begin to “count” now.)

- Meet your high school guidance counselor and discuss your next four years.
- Begin researching colleges and becoming familiar with using research resources.
- Your list of colleges should be wide open as you discover types of institutions and begin to think about important factors in your college choice.
- Begin to compile your academic and extracurricular portfolio – résumé!
- Think about a challenging curriculum and get involved with several extracurricular activities.

Sophomore Year: (Continue to investigate colleges and you will not get in a slump.)

- Plan on taking the PSAT in October. You will need to register several weeks earlier, so consult with your guidance counselor in September. The PLAN is a similar preliminary test that closely mirrors the ACT.
- Attend the Plano ISD college fair, usually in September.
- Your college research should begin to focus on some specific institutions and possible programs. You should continue to assess important factors in your college choice.
- Some colleges require SAT II subject tests. Plan on taking these as you complete the curriculum.
- Continue to build your academic and extracurricular portfolio/résumé.
- Plan to do something unique this summer.

Junior Year: (The college search really takes off.)

- Take the PSAT in October. Your junior year scores may qualify you for National Merit Scholarship consideration.
- Make sure your curriculum is challenging for you.
- Attend the Plano ISD college fair or others in the area.
- Compile your preliminary list of colleges you would like to investigate further. Share this with your family and guidance counselor. This list should reflect what factors are important to you in your college search but should be a diverse list of schools.
- In the early spring, register for the ACT and/or SAT I.
- When thinking of selecting your senior year classes, be sure to continue to challenge yourself.
- In the spring and summer, begin to visit colleges.
- Continue updating your academic and extracurricular portfolio/résumé.
- Look into summer experiences that may set you apart from the crowd.

Senior Year: (Be careful. It’s over before you know it!)

September

- Your list of colleges should be short, and you should know to which schools you plan on applying (typically 3 – 6 schools).
- Create a Senior Year Calendar to track all the application, financial aid, and scholarship deadlines for each school. Also make a checklist for each school.

College Admission Checklist and Timeline (continued)

(Senior year, September)

- Make sure you have all of the applications required from each school and that you understand your application options.
- Request sixth semester (through junior year) transcripts and recommendation letters from your high school counselor and teachers.
- Register for the October SAT or ACT if needed. Know policies for multiple tests.
- Attend the Plano ISD college fair or others in the area.

October

- Visit the schools on your short list. There are several different types of visits, so know your options. (Keep in mind that *December* is typically NOT a good time to visit colleges as they are on holiday break or students are in finals.)
- Schedule an admission interview, if desired or necessary.
- Register for the December/January SAT or ACT if needed.

November

- Obtain the FAFSA from your counselor or register online, if you plan on submitting.
- Be aware of application deadlines, as many Early Decision and Early Action decision plans are due now. **Keep a copy of all documents submitted for your records.**

December

- Pay attention to your calendar for scholarship application deadlines.
- Some Early Decision notifications are sent out now, so read the mail carefully and follow instructions for replying to the institutions.
- Complete your scholarship applications.

January

- Request that your seventh semester (through falls semester senior year) transcript be sent to the colleges/universities to which you applied.
- Remember to monitor your applications and be sure that all the necessary materials have been sent and received by each school. Just because you mailed the necessary items, doesn't mean that the institution(s) received them.

February – April

- You should be hearing from institutions. Begin reviewing your acceptances and financial aid awards.

May

- You have until May 1 (National Candidate Reply Date) to notify institutions of your final college decision, usually also paying a deposit to "save your spot."
- Notify those colleges to which you are not attending of your intent so that they may plan accordingly.
- Finish high school career strong and have your final transcript sent to YOUR college.
- Hug your guidance counselor and teachers!!