

JUNIOR YEAR COLLEGE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

The college application process begins in earnest during the junior year of high school. It is crucial that you begin preparing as early as possible. Below are steps to take during this important year.

- **Take a rigorous course load.** *This is your most important academic year.* If you are applying early to college, your junior year grades will be the last ones included in your application. Take AP courses if you can; if they are not offered at your school, consider supplementing your coursework with community college classes. Study!
- **Get to know your teachers and counselors.** They will likely be writing college recommendation letters for you. The better they know you, the better their recommendations will be.
- **Meet with your counselor** and other guides and advocates to discuss your progress and future plans. (What AP classes are available at this school? What colleges do you recommend for me based on my grades and interests? What colleges have past students attended from this school? How can I help make your job easier with my college applications? Are there any special scholarships I should know about now, so I can start preparing for them?)
- **Consider taking the PSAT,** a practice SAT in the fall that could qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship Program or other academic honors.
- **Take the SAT**
 - Depending on your level of preparedness, and if you want to apply early decision to college, you may wish to take the SAT/ACT in the winter. That way you will have time to consider re-taking it if you would like to improve your scores.
 - Register early, because early registration enables you to use fee waivers.
 - **IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you are interested in using fee waivers for college applications in the future, you may need to use fee waivers for your SAT exams. Some colleges grant application fee waivers based on whether you used fee waivers for your SAT/ACT.
- **Take the SAT Subject Tests**
 - Two or three SAT Subject tests are required or highly recommended by most selective colleges. Check to see if the colleges you are interested in have specific requirements or recommendations.
 - Register early, because early registration enables you to use fee waivers.
 - The SAT Subject Tests are not offered consistently every month – check dates and plan ahead.
 - Try to schedule tests just after you have completed a class in a particular subject.
 - For example, if you are taking AP U.S. History your junior year, you may wish to take the American History SAT Subject Test in spring after the advanced placement exam.
- Continue to participate in meaningful extracurricular activities. **Take on a leadership role if time allows.**
- **Research scholarship opportunities.** Scholarship listings and information can be found at: www.fastweb.com, www.collegebound.net, www.petersons.com (which has plenty of helpful articles), www.scholarships.com, and www.finaid.org/calculators (which has helpful estimates for your financial aid outlook).
- **Research colleges.** Start thinking about the things you want in a college such as academics (look for colleges with strong programs in your area of interest), location, and social atmosphere. List, compare, and visit colleges, if possible. Include a range of colleges: safety schools (almost certain of acceptance), likely schools (fairly certain of acceptance), and reach schools (cannot predict acceptance).
- **Attend local college fairs.**
- **Sign up for college mailing lists.**
- **Read as much as you can,** and read a variety of materials. Reading builds your vocabulary and strengthens your writing skills.
- **Look for summer opportunities** such as a jobs, internships, volunteering, summer school, community college courses, or summer enrichment programs.

Important: *This document is intended to familiarize students with common junior year tasks. It is not necessarily comprehensive, as the tasks that each student needs to complete may vary according to their individual educational goals. Because requirements and deadlines vary and can change over time, applicants should consult the most current information provided by organizations including colleges and universities, their high schools, scholarship providers, and testing services.*