

SENIOR PLANNING POINTERS

Congratulations on the completion of your junior year! Whatever your summer plans involve, please be sure to invest time in your college and career searches over your summer break. Below, you will find some pointers that have been designed to help you work through the process. If you can complete all of the suggestions over the summer, you will be in excellent shape in September.

Things to do this summer:

Continue developing your list of colleges
Explore *The Common Application*
Identify recommendation writers
Complete college recommendation packet
Create/Update your resume
Begin developing your college essay
Register for fall SAT/ACT (if appropriate)

College List Developing an appropriate list of schools is at the heart of any successful college planning process. Follow these three steps:

1. Identify the criteria that you are looking for. For example: “I’m looking for a four-year college located in NY, VT, MA, or NH that offers majors in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. I want the college to be looking for SAT scores in the 1100-1150 range (CR + M). It needs to have a basketball program as well.”

2. Identify schools that match your criteria Using on-line resources, produce a list of colleges that offer what you’re looking for. Numerous web sites provide search tools that will generate a list of colleges based on the criteria you select, for example, the College Board’s **Big Future website** (www.bigfuture.org). Using this site, you can save searches (if you log into your collegeboard account) and research schools that match your criteria and much, much more.

3. Research these colleges At each of your colleges, build relationships with the admissions counselor who focus on high schools in our area. Get on their mailing list. Demonstrate interest. Schedule visits to as many campuses on your list as possible. If actual visits aren’t possible, or to decide if a campus is worth making a trip to see firsthand, take virtual visits online. Visit their web sites. Learn about their admissions policies and application procedures. The more you can learn about your schools, the better able you will be to compare their strengths and weaknesses. Create a chart or table that organizes the information so you can quickly compare colleges to each other. [Www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org) creates charts for you. Identify similar colleges and research them, too. Begin to be aware of preferences you have between colleges.

Try to narrow down your list of colleges to between five and ten schools by September. This will allow you to focus your time and energy early in senior year on applying so your applications can be ready to submit in October/November. (Remember that if you are considering applying under Early Decision, application deadlines can be as early as November 1st or 15th.)

The Common Application Depending on your list of colleges, filing your applications using Common Application may be a huge help. Visit www.commonapp.org to learn more. Getting familiar with the Common Application over the summer is a great idea that will save you time once your senior year begins. You can create an account and begin filling out your Common Application on August 1st.

Recommendations Many colleges and scholarship organizations require a teacher recommendation as a part of their application process. Identify the two teachers that could provide the most favorable recommendations on your behalf. Take into account what they've seen regarding the quality of your work, your work ethic, and your personality. Once you return to school, ask each person on your list if they would be willing to write a recommendation for you. **Plan ahead** by asking the writer at least 3-4 weeks before you need the letter. Don't make the process stressful by asking them close to an application deadline. Be sure to send them a thank you note once the recommendation is finished. In addition, many colleges also want a recommendation from your school counselor. To help us learn more about you, [complete and return the college recommendation packet](#).

Resumé Make sure you have updated your resumé to include any junior year information. Your resumé should list information about your academics (GPA, special courses taken), extracurricular activities (clubs, organizations, sports, arts. Include any leadership positions you've held), awards and honors received (academic, extra-curricular), and work experience (volunteer and paid). **Please give us a copy of your updated resumé**—having your resumé helps us match you up with potential scholarships and helps us write a better recommendation. Your resumé can also be included in college and scholarship applications and given to those who you've asked to write a recommendation (see above). For more help developing your student resumé, visit the [counseling department's college planning webpage](#).

Begin Developing your College Essay Read this application essay-related blog entry from [Bestcollegefit.org](#). Review the [essay prompts you'll find on the Common Application](#) and start generating ideas.

Register for the SAT or ACT, if appropriate If you want to retake either the SAT I or ACT, or if you didn't take either one junior year, plan to take the test(s) early in the school year—Sept. 12th (ACT), Oct. 3rd (SAT) or Oct. 24th (ACT). **Registration deadlines for these test dates are Aug. 7th (ACT), Sept. 3rd (SAT), and Sept. 18th (ACT), respectively.** WHY WAIT! You can register on-line anytime at [www.collegeboard.org](#) (SAT) or [www.ACTstudent.org](#) (ACT). Students who use **testing accommodations** (extended time, etc) should be sure to include their SAT SSD number or ACT accommodations request form. **Fee-waivers** are available to students who meet income guidelines. Please call the guidance office or email earlr@lkgeorge.org or preuss@lkgeorge.org with your questions.

Research and planning over the summer will make your senior year more **manageable!** We highly recommend using the planning and informational resources available through [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](#) to learn about additional steps and issues related to your college search.

Mark Your Calendar Now... On September 28th, We are hosting an evening informational program covering the details of the college application process. Also, we'll be scheduling a senior conference for you and a parent to be held in late September or early October. At that conference we'll review your specific graduation requirements. We'll also talk about your college/career plans and what your next planning steps should be. In the meantime, we hope your summer is enjoyable and provides both time to relax as well as time to plan for your future. See you in September!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Earl and Mr. Preuss

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