College Application Timeline Checklist

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER

- Register for the SAT and/or ACT if you didn't take a college entrance exam as a junior or want to take one again. Check to see if SAT/ACT scores are required for admission OR if they are allowed/encouraged for scholarships.
  - If applying to a highly competitive college, check to see if "SAT subject tests" are required for admission (or to your intended major at college).
  - PRCA will offer the SAT this year on Thursday, October 1. Sign-up with Guidance.
- Make a list of the colleges that you are considering applying to. Narrow down your list to 5-10.
  - Visit their websites.
  - Note scholarship levels.
  - Note tuition, fees, and housing costs.
  - Note the financial aid process (ex. FAFSA) and deadlines.
  - Take every opportunity to get to know colleges.
  - Meet with college representatives who visit your school, attend local college fairs, and visit campuses.
  - If you are interested in a college, make sure to plan a visit to their campus.
- Take a look at college *applications*. Make note of all the pieces of information you will need to compile.
  - Start to think of essay prompts, if your college(s) require an essay. Essays are VERY important and are often the final consideration for admission. Do not underestimate the importance of a strong essay and the potential need to re-write even up to a dozen times! Have others review your essay. Mrs. Picton in Guidance has resources.
- Create a checklist and calendar to keep track of deadlines.
  - Standardized test dates.
  - college application due dates.
  - Financial aid deadlines.
  - Make note of the other materials, such as recommendations or essays, you'll need to complete your applications.
- If, after your research, you determine that you will be using the COMMON APPLICATION, indicate that on Naviance, tell your college guidance counselor, and begin requesting teacher recommendations on Naviance.

OCTOBER

- File your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after Oct. 1 as possible. In addition to determining your eligibility for federal funds, many colleges and states use the form when distributing grants, so don't delay. Watch your email for your Student Aid Report (SAR)—it should populate four weeks (or so) after the FAFSA is filed.
- File your CSS Profile (check to see IF your colleges take this financial aid application).
- *Some* colleges will have deadlines (rolling, priority, early decision, and early action) as early as this month.
- Finalize your college essay. Many schools will require that you submit at least one essay with your application. This is usually a personal statement of some sort (this essay allows the college to get to know you as a person--this is NOT a resume in essay format). Additionally, *many scholarship applications* will require a personal statement, so it's best to have one prepared. Re-write as necessary.
- Request personal recommendations from teachers, school counselors, or employers.

- Research scholarships. Ask your counselor, your colleges, and local religious and civic groups about scholarship opportunities. You should *never* pay for scholarship information.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

- CONTINUE TO APPLY FOR PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS! Some are very easy to apply to (ex. Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion local chapters)
- Now that applications are submitted, consider applying for a part-time job to "save up for college". (With your parents' permission.) Ask around for job leads.
- Finalize and send any early decision or early action applications due this month. Have a parent, teacher, counselor, or other adult review the application before it is submitted. As a rule, always have a second set of eyes for any application.
- Every college will require a copy of your transcript from your high school. Follow your school's procedure for sending transcripts (Naviance)
- Make sure testing companies (ACT/SAT) have sent your scores directly to the colleges to which you are applying.
- Begin to organize regular decision applications and financial aid forms, which will be due in January and/or February.
- If needed, register for the January SAT. It is (most likely) the last one colleges will be able to consider for a senior.
- Many popular and selective colleges will have application deadlines as early as Jan. 1. Others have deadlines later in January and February.
- If necessary, register for the February ACT (some colleges will consider it).

FEBRUARY-MAY

- CONTINUE TO APPLY FOR PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS!
- Acceptance letters and financial aid offers will start to arrive. Review your acceptances, compare financial aid packages, and visit your final choices.
- Don't slack in the classroom. The college you decide to attend will want to see your second semester transcript. Ensure that you pass all classes!
- Ensure that you meet the attendance requirements for PRCA. At 15 absences, you may fail the course!
- College housing applications usually open between the months of February-May. Start your housing application early. There is usually a deposit to put down for this as well.
- May 1 is the date when the college you plan to attend requires a commitment and deposit. Pay online/send in your deposit by May 1. If you've been offered financial aid, accept the offer and follow the instructions given. Also notify schools you will not attend of your decision.
- Request that your final transcript be sent to the college you will be attending. This will be done in your Senior English class in April via Naviance.
- If you are wait-listed by a college you really want to attend, visit, call, and write to the admission office to make your interest clear. Ask how you can strengthen your application.