



Ready. Set. College.

Class of 2026: College Application Summer Checklist

Welcome to Senior year! The following checklist will help you get a head start on the college application process. This list isn't meant to overwhelm you but to provide helpful resources. You will have a senior check-in with your counselor when school starts.

1. Research Colleges and make a list

- Develop a list of colleges that interest you and explore each school's website for admission requirements, deadlines, and virtual tours
- Use the College Board BigFuture College Search tool to research colleges and compare admissions requirements, deadlines, majors, financial and academic information.
- Explore College, Careers, and Military Post Secondary Path Research
 - Go to: bigfuture.org
 - Under the Plan for College tab, select College Search - indicate your preferences using one or more of the filters
 - Click [HERE](#) for the BigFuture College Search Worksheet.
 - Review your list of colleges compiled by BigFuture.
 - Save colleges to your MyCollegesList.

2. Create or update your resume

- You will be asked to include information about extracurriculars activities, awards, honors, work/volunteer experience on college applications and/or include a resume.
- Your counselor and teachers will also need a resume to write recommendation letters.
- **Resume resources:**

- [Resume](#)
- [College Board Big Future: What's a High School Resume?](#)
- [College Essay Guy: How to Write a College Resume + Example Templates](#)

3. Start writing your college admissions essays

- Click [HERE](#) for the Apply Texas and Common Application essay prompts.
- **Writing resources:**

Review [Writing the College Essay](#) document.

Resources to help you with your college essays:

- [College Board - Big Future: Write Your Essay](#)
 - [Khan Academy: Applying to College - Admissions Essays](#)
 - [College Essay Guy: College Application Hub](#)
- Have someone read your essay before submitting your application.

4. Begin your college applications

If a college offers multiple application options, they don't prefer one over the other. Use your **personal email** to set up your account.

- [College Applications](#)
- [College Cost Calculators](#)
- [Common App application guide](#)
- [Applications Guides](#)
- **Common Application** - opens on August 1st
 - Set up your account at: www.commonapp.org
 - [CommonApp: How to Apply](#)

- **Apply Texas** – opens July 1st
 - Set up your account at www.applytexas.org
 - [Apply Texas Application Guide](#)
 - Note: Univ. of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M Univ. - College Station applications won't open in Apply Texas until August 1st.
- **Direct** with College's own application (some open earlier than the Common App)
 - Set up your account through the college's website.

5. Send your ACT and/or SAT scores to colleges you're applying to

Check each [college's website](#) to see if test scores (ACT or SAT) are **required** or **test-optional**

- ACT - request scores at www.act.org

If you have an ACT account and your scores from the ACT you took at Pearce on 3/25/25 aren't listed, you will need to contact ACT at 319-337-1270 and have your accounts merged.

If you need to send your scores from the ACT you took at Pearce and haven't set up an ACT account yet, follow these steps:

- Click on *Register/Sign In* on the top right
- Select *Create MyACT account*
- Select *I registered or tested before, then I have never accessed my scores online*
- Enter the ACT ID number listed on your ACT Score Report you received in the mail.

- SAT - request scores at www.collegeboard.org

6. Need to take the ACT and/or SAT?

- Click [HERE](#) for upcoming ACT and SAT test dates and registration deadlines.

- Register for the ACT at: www.act.org
- Register for the SAT at: www.collegeboard.org
- **Fee waivers** that cover the cost of these exams are available for students enrolled in the Free/Reduced School Lunch Program from your counselor or the College & Career Center during the school year.
- Prepare for the ACT and SAT and take practice tests to familiarize yourself with the test formats.
 - Click [HERE](#) for free SAT prep & practice tests offered through the College Board website. Click [HERE](#) for free SAT prep through Khan Academy.
 - Click [HERE](#) for free ACT prep and practice tests offered through the ACT website.
 - Free SAT and ACT test prep is also available through your ClassLink account - select the *Library Resources* link:
 - Click on *TexQuest Learning Express*
 - Set up an account - Institution is *Richardson HS*
 - Click on *Prepare for College*

7. Complete the Senior Snapshot (required for a counselor recommendation)

Seniors who need a letter of recommendation from their counselor for a college application or scholarship **MUST** complete the [Senior Snapshot](#) before requesting a recommendation letter from their counselor.

- Click [HERE](#) to complete the Senior Snapshot
- Some Common App colleges require a counselor recommendation so check the college's website.

Add your **Counselor**:

- **Log in** to your Common App and **add at least one college** to your **My Colleges** list. ([Common Application](#))
- In **My Colleges**, open any college and go to **Recommenders and FERPA**. Complete the

Release Authorization (FERPA) if prompted.

[FERPA Waiver](#)

- Make sure you **Enable View-** to check the status of the application
- In the **Counselor** area, click **Invite/Add Counselor**. Enter your counselor's **name, title, and email**, then send the invite. [Who is my Counselor?](#)

Add your **Advisor:**

- In **My Colleges** → **Recommenders and FERPA** (any college), find **Advisors**.
- Make sure you **Enable View-** to check the status of the application
- Click **Invite/Add Advisor**, enter name (**Daffne Bennett**) and email (**Daffne.Bennett@risd.org**) and send the invite.

Add your **Teacher/other:**

- In **My Colleges** → **Recommenders and FERPA** (any college), find **Advisors**.
- Make sure you **Enable View-** to check the status of the application
- Click **Invite/Add Teacher**, enter name (**first name, last name**) and email (**[@risd.org](#)**) and send the invite.

Important Notes:

- Once you add your counselor/teacher, the counselors/teachers will get the invite and submit your recommendation (Counselors will upload your transcripts)
- You must ask your counselor for a letter of recommendation in person or by email.
- Give counselors a minimum 3 weeks notice to complete.

8. Teacher Letter of Recommendation requests

- [Letter of Recommendation Resources](#)
- [Recommendation essay guide](#)

Before requesting a letter of recommendation, check each college's website to see if a letter of recommendation is required.

- You must ask your teacher for a letter of recommendation in person or by email before requesting through the Common App or college portal..
- **Note:** Teachers don't return from Summer Break until August 5th.
- Teachers must be given a **minimum of 3 weeks** notice to complete.
- If you're applying through the Common App, you will request your recommendation through the Common App after you ask your teacher. You will need to complete the FERPA waiver first - colleges like to see that you waive your right to read your recommendation.

Important Note: If applying to Texas A&M, request recommendation through your A&M AIS Portal that you'll receive after submitting your application.

9. How to request transcripts through GreenLight to send to colleges

- [GreenLight Locker & Transcripts Guide](#)
- **Go to:** <https://greenlightlocker.com>

Request official transcripts for college applications or download an unofficial transcript to help complete your college applications.

- To set up your GreenLight account, go to: www.greenlightlocker.com. Click [HERE](#) for detailed instructions. Go to "Option 2-Registering without an enrollment code".
- When setting up your GreenLight account, make sure you use your personal email address.
- Click [HERE](#) for video for sending your transcript (includes instructions if the college isn't listed as an Academic Institution).
- If you are in the top 10%, you **must** send your "Top 10% Letter" in addition to your transcript. Your "Top 10% Letter" is located under the "Certifications" tab.
- If you need to update your GreenLight Profile and Preferences, click [HERE](#) for instructions.

Post-Secondary Resource HUB for parents and students: [HUB Resource Post-Secondary for Parents & Students](#)

Contact Us:

If you have any questions please contact College & Career Advisor, Daffne Bennett at Daffne.Bennett@risd.org and if you need to contact your counselor please check the link: [Who is my Counselor?](#)

Summer Camp 2025:

College & Career Advisors will be presenting information on the college application process, types of college applications, sending transcripts, testing, essays, recommendation letters, the financial aid graduation requirement, and applying for scholarships. Greenlight, Dallas College, and Dallas County Promise will also have tables with representatives available to answer questions.

Ready, Set, GO!

Get a head start before school begins by attending the

RISD College Application Camp! Click [HERE](#) to register.

Register for one of the following sessions. In-person sessions will be held at the Richardson ISD Arzell Ball Center at 402 S. Greenville Ave., Richardson.

Friday, July 24th from 11-1 or 2-4, **Monday**, July 27th from 10-12 or 1-3,
Virtual option: Tuesday, July 28th from 2-4