

FALL

SENIORS

With big decisions on the horizon, seniors have a lot on their to-do lists. Help them stay on top of their future planning this fall.

Map out their senior year:

Using a paper or online calendar, pencil in ACT test dates, FAFSA and scholarship application deadlines, college application deadlines, and other important dates.

Achieve their best score:

Increasing their score by even one point can help qualify for scholarships and boost admission prospects. Retaking the ACT in the fall will result in an **ACT Superscore**, combining the best score in each subject to put their best score forward and reflect their best abilities.

Apply for financial aid and scholarships:

Now is the time students should be talking to you and to their top colleges' financial aid offices, as well as getting all their financial aid application forms ready. Seniors should complete the **FAFSA*** as soon as possible after October 1, and continue to reasearch and apply for scholarships and grants.

- Review the free **eBook** and **Financial Aid Checklist** resources for more information.

*Due to changes to the FAFSA for this upcoming aid year, students will have access to the FAFSA on December 1, 2023.

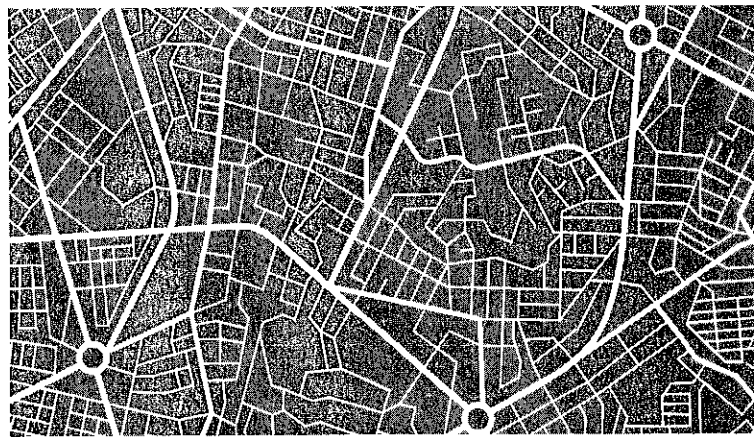
Narrowing down their college lists:

We recommend that students **pare down their final lists** and apply to 5-10 colleges, making their final list based on college fit, application due dates, cost to apply, and likelihood of admission.

Apply for financial aid and scholarships:

Seniors can review the **Ultimate Guide to Applying for College eBook** and submit applications to their top-choice colleges in the fall, keeping in mind **early decision and early action deadlines**, as well as rolling admissions.

- **Collect application materials** like application forms, transcripts, test scores, and **letters of recommendation**. Remind students to keep their calendars up to date with deadlines for applications, scholarships, test dates, etc.
- **Complete application essays and finalize resumes.** **Application essays** are an effective way for students to communicate unique strengths to admissions officials. Encourage students to keep an ongoing list of their accomplishments to help them **craft an application resume that stands out**.



WINTER

JUNIORS

Winter months provide a time to reflect and reorganize for the coming year.

Assembling a college list:

Students can begin honing in on the factors that are important to them in choosing a college, and putting together their **college list** to help compare their options.

- Also consider **alternative paths** like technical school or the military.

College Fairs:

Help students be prepared to make the most of **college fairs** as they begin their college exploration.

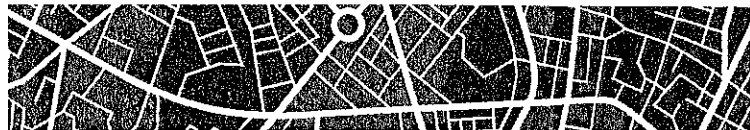


Keep coursework on track:

Students should be **reviewing their coursework with counselors** and planning for the rest of high school, making sure to include core courses as well as any college prerequisites (particularly around foreign language and science) in their schedule.

Create a college email address:

Students are going to start receiving lots of emails from colleges already and they want to be best prepared through the application process in the fall. Remind them to set up a college application email address that is separate from the one they use for school.



SENIORS

Things are starting to fall into place for seniors, as they await admissions decisions

Finalize financial aid plans:

As **financial aid packages** are received, students should determine the net cost of attendance to **estimate the cost** of college and compare their offers. They should also review the SAR from their FAFSA.

Avoiding the senior slide:

Letting grades drop can affect scholarship opportunities and college admission decisions for seniors. Encourage students to **stay on track and finish strong**.

Get serious about scholarships:

Many scholarship deadlines are between February 1 and March 1—help your seniors identify opportunities they may not even know about with our list of scholarships that require an **ACT score** or help them complete a general search online.



SPRING

SENIORS

Acceptance letters and graduation preparations mark the home stretch.

Admissions decisions are on the way in March and April

Students should compare financial aid packages and make final campus visit to decide, if needed. Parents and counselors can help students solidify their decision before contacting their chosen college to confirm enrollment.

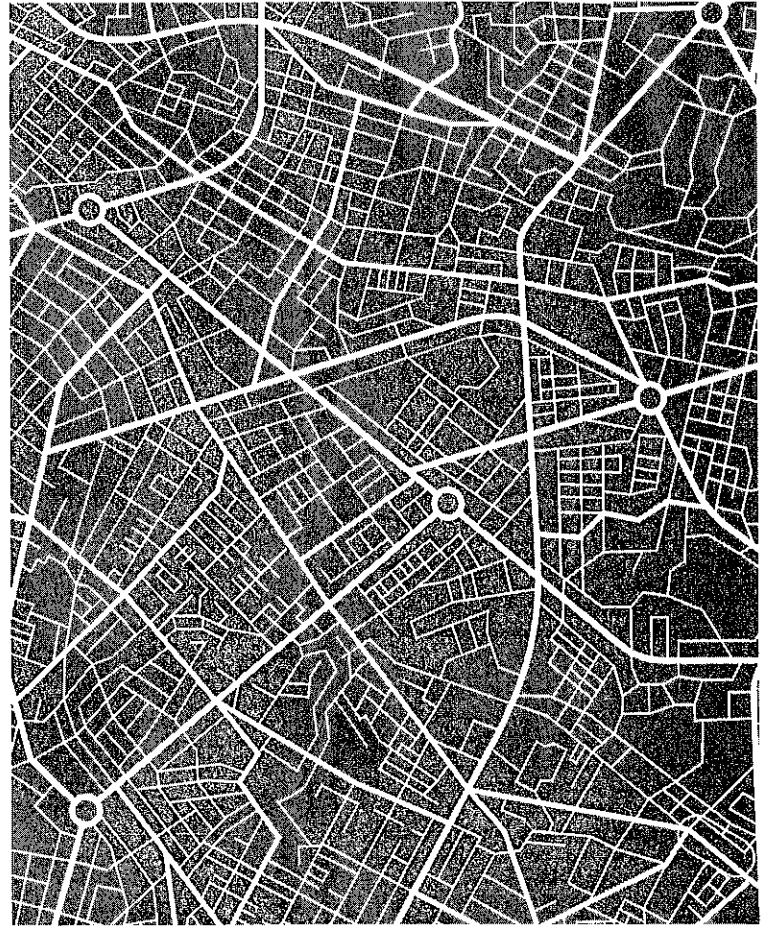
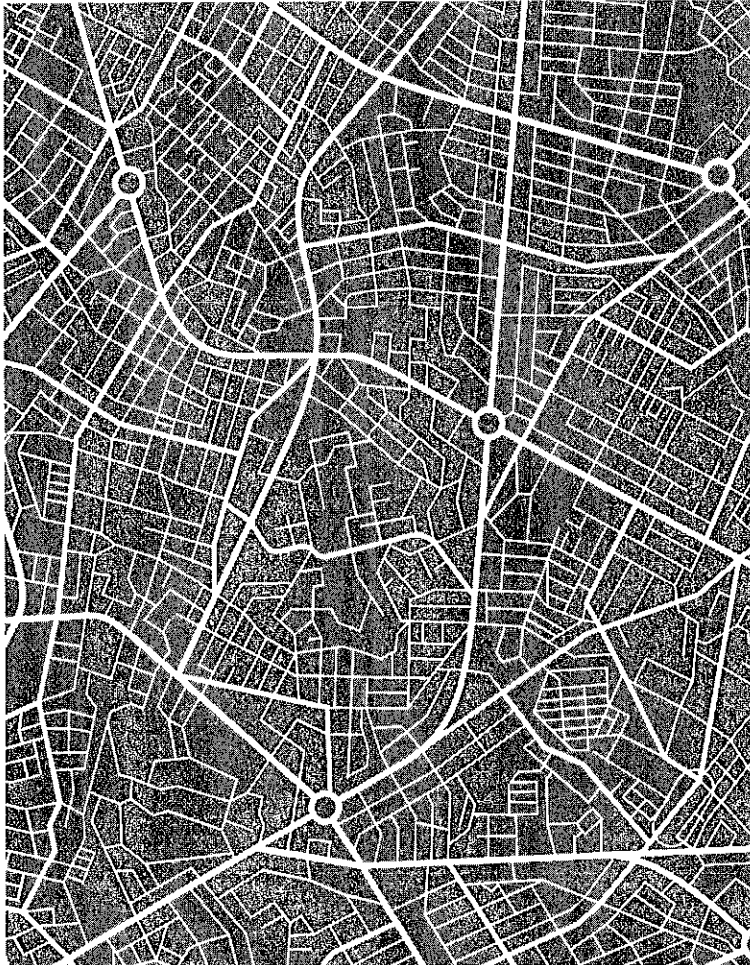
- **Finish enrollment papers** and send final HS transcript if required.

Remember that calendar they started in the fall?

New graduates should be sure to add orientation, registration, and other important dates for their first semester at college.

Remind them to check their email:

Colleges are beginning to reach out to your seniors about important payment deadlines and orientation information. Remind them to set up and check their personal student email account for that institution.



SUMMER

JUNIORS

It's their last summer as a high school student. There's time to relax ... but they can also **avoid a summer slump** while they think about life after high school.

Take the ACT in June or July

It's not too late for students to get a baseline score if they didn't test in the spring (plus they can purchase their **Test Information Release** with the June test). Students who have already taken the ACT can consider more **reasons to retest**.

Continue learning about colleges

- Students and their families can use summer break to visit their top school choices and research to learn everything they can before application season.
- Current college students who are home for summer break are great resource for networking and getting first-hand information about college life.

Research admissions deadlines

Their senior year is going to go fast. It's important for them to understand **how college admissions deadlines work** so they don't miss an opportunity.

Start the application process

Over summer, students can begin brainstorming essay ideas, contacting potential references, and identifying people to ask for a written recommendation. Use the **Ultimate Guide to Applying for College eBook** as a guide.



SENIORS

Congratulations! Seniors are on their way to college and career success. Take a bow, counselor!

