

Pre-College Calendar and Checklist

August

- Review your high school coursework and activity plans. Keep in mind that colleges look for the following:
 - challenging coursework
 - a strong GPA
 - involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports, volunteer work, or church.
- Obtain a Social Security Number if you don't already have one. You will need it to apply for college and financial aid.
- Check with your high school counselor about requirements to be designated as a State Scholar.
- Request a catalog and admissions information from schools you are interested in visiting.

September

- Identify sources of college and career information at your school. Start reviewing college catalogs, guidebooks and web sites.
- Put together a list of 10 colleges that you would like to attend. Plan to apply to at least 3-5 schools.
- Talk to your parents and your high school counselor about where you want to go to school.
- Study and register for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT).
- Obtain dates and locations of college fairs and "parent nights" in your local area.
- Visit with your high school counselor about scholarship opportunities.

October

- Take the PSAT and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT). Remember to take your calculator.
- Inquire about Advanced Placement (AP) or summer college courses that may be available to you.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid/parent nights.

November

- Begin online scholarship searches at www.fastweb.com and www.scholarships.com

December

- Your PSAT/NMSQT score report should arrive.
- Start planning to take the SAT I and/or SAT II exams, if necessary. You may also need to take the ACT. Check with the colleges you are applying to and find out specific testing requirements. Ask your high school counselor about registration deadlines.

January

- Go through the catalogs of the 3-5 schools that interest you the most and schedule college visits.
- During your college visits, make sure you meet with an admissions representative and a financial aid counselor to find out what types of aid are available.
- Attend financial aid nights, if you have not already done so.

February

- Start seriously investigating private scholarships and other student aid programs. Ask your teachers and counselor if any local organizations offer free use of a scholarship search program.
- Go to www.fastweb.com and www.scholarships.com to review scholarships available to you.
- Register and study for the SAT (I and II) and/or ACT exams.

March

- Continue investigating funding sources.
- Register and study for the SAT and/or the ACT exams, if you have not already done so.
- Continue to check with your high school counselor about what you need to be doing to prepare for college.

April

- Begin scheduling visits to each of the 3-5 schools that are on your final list. If appropriate, schedule an interview and/or an overnight visit.
- Research taking the Advanced Placement (AP) exams while information is fresh in your mind.
- Take an SAT prep course to help prepare for the upcoming test.
- Begin preparing essays for college admissions and scholarship applications.

May

- Take the SAT (I and II) and/or the ACT exams.
- Take Advanced Placement (AP) exams which are given in high schools nationally in early to mid-May.
- Be aware of the test dates and registration deadlines for the remaining SAT I and SAT II exams. You may take them during your senior year in high school.
- Continue compiling information to find out which organizations award scholarships to graduating seniors. (You may have to begin applying the summer after your Junior year.)

June

- Take the SAT (I and II) and/or ACT exams if you did not take them last month.
- Read a variety of books and magazines and review your math skills over the summer. This will help you prepare for the SAT, if you plan to take it in the fall.
- Obtain a summer job that might be related to your career interests.
- If possible, save some money from your summer job to pay for college costs.
- If you travel this summer, consider scheduling a college visit.

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August

- Review your career plans and decide which type of school is right for you.
- Visit some college campuses.
- Narrow your college list to 3-5 schools.
- Request catalogs and admissions information.
- Contact your high school counselor for registration materials and test dates for the SAT and/or the ACT.
- Go to www.fastweb.com and www.scholarships.com to review scholarships available to you.
- Research taking the Advanced Placement (AP) or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams.

September

- Meet with admissions representatives who are visiting your school.
- Make a list of test names, dates, fees, registration deadlines, and college admissions deadlines.
- Remember that you must take tests like the SAT and ACT at least six weeks before the deadline for scores to be submitted to colleges.
- Begin asking teachers, guidance counselors, and employers for letters of recommendation to include with your admissions and/or scholarship applications.
- Contact your high school counselor about applying for national, state, and local scholarships.
- Find out which financial aid and scholarship applications your college choices require and when the forms are due.

October

- Take the SAT or ACT exam, if necessary.
- Work on admissions application essays.
- Visit your top school choices. Interview some students, faculty, and staff.
- Attend special programs such as college fairs and financial aid nights.
- Some private universities may require that you register for CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE™ at this time. (This determines your qualification for private school aid.)
- Review your application deadlines and take the appropriate steps to ensure deadlines are met.

November

- Take the SAT or ACT exam, if necessary.
- Obtain financial aid applications from your guidance office or college of choice. Read them carefully to determine what information is required and when the applications are due.
- Begin preparing your college applications. Check with the colleges to find out when materials must be postmarked or submitted online.

December

- Request a PIN for applying for federal aid online for you and your parent by going to www.pin.ed.gov.
- Print the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Worksheet available at www.fafsa.ed.gov and begin working on it. **DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR FAFSA BEFORE JANUARY 1.**
- Apply for outside funding or scholarships.
- PARENTS: Save your year-end payroll stub if it shows your earnings for the year. You may need it for financial aid eligibility reviews by schools.

January

- Complete and submit your FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Try to submit your FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible.
- KEEP COPIES OF ALL FORMS YOU SUBMIT.
- PARENTS: It's helpful to get your income tax returns prepared early—schools may request them to prove eligibility for financial aid.

February

- Attend a College Goal Sunday event. Visit www.collegegoal.org for a list of locations.
- Check to see if your mid-year transcripts have been sent to the schools to which you have applied.
- Submit your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), if you have not already done so.
- Research taking Advanced Placement (AP) or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams.
- Rank your finalized list of colleges.

March

- If you submitted a FAFSA, you should receive information about how to access your Student Aid Report (SAR) via email within 5-7 days or receive a paper version of your SAR within 3-4 weeks. You can also check the status of your FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov or by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-433-3243.
- Contact each college financial aid office to make certain that your application is complete. Find out what else you need to do to establish and maintain your eligibility for financial aid.
- Keep copies of all forms you submit to the financial aid office.

April

- Watch the mail or your college e-mail account for college acceptance and financial aid award notifications. Compare the financial aid awards you receive.
- Make your final decision and send in a deposit by the deadline.
- Check with the college you've chosen about the details of accepting or declining your financial aid.
- Notify the other schools that you will not be attending.
- Watch for important deadlines at your chosen college (housing, financial aid, etc.).

May

- Take Advanced Placement (AP) examinations that are given in high schools nationwide.
- Finalize summer school or summer job plans.

Priority Dates:

- Federal and Institutional aid: Some types of aid have limited funding. Contact schools for application priority dates.
- State Scholarships: Priority date information is available at www.kansasregents.org.

Important Websites:

- Early Financial Aid Estimator: www.act.org/fanel/index.html
- Personal Identification Number to be used as signature for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): www.pin.ed.gov
- FAFSA online: www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Scholarship Searches: www.fastweb.com or www.scholarships.com
- Scholarship Scam Alert: www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml
- Selective Service Registration: www.sss.gov
- Loan Repayment Calculator: www.finaid.org/calculators/loanpayments.phtml
- Kansas Board of Regents: www.kansasregents.org
- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators: www.nasfaa.org/Home.asp
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA): www.ncaa.org
- Department of Education Student Guide: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/FYE/index.html>
- The College Board: www.collegeboard.com

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