

Preparing for College

JUNIOR CHECKLIST

August-September

- Talk with your counselor about the year ahead. Confirm that your courses will put you on the right track for college admission.
- Ask about test dates for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT. You'll need to register up to six weeks ahead of time.
- Start developing a résumé—a record of your accomplishments, activities, and work experience. This will be an important part of your college application.
- If you haven't participated in many activities outside of class, now is the time to sign up. Consider clubs at school, team sports, leadership roles, or involvement in a religious or civic community group.
- Take the PSAT. Taking the test as a junior will qualify you for some scholarship consideration and identify you to colleges as a potential applicant.
- Begin to prepare for the ACT or SAT. Plan to take at least one of these tests in the spring. Ask your counselor if you qualify for a fee waiver.

APPLYING FOR COLLEGE? FOLLOW THESE STEPS.

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. Remember: Your counselor can help with fee waivers.
- Take a look at some college applications. Make note of all the pieces of information you will need to compile.
- Check with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements.
- Take every opportunity to get to know colleges. Meet with college representatives who visit your school, attend local college fairs, and visit campuses.
- Narrow down your list of colleges. Collect information about the application and financial aid process at each school.
- Create a checklist and calendar to keep track of standardized test dates, college application due dates, and financial aid deadlines. Make note of the other materials, such as recommendations or essays, you'll need to complete your applications.

PUT TO THE TEST: PREPARING FOR THE SAT/ACT

Stressed about standardized tests?

Here's some good news: There's no need to cram. Taking rigorous classes in high school is by far the best preparation strategy.

That said, there are a few additional things you can do to make sure you do you perform well on test day.



Pick Up a Book: No, you don't have to plow through *Moby Dick* (though that wouldn't hurt)! But you should spend at least 15 minutes reading for fun each day. Choose books, magazines, and newspapers that you enjoy—everything from *Harry Potter* to *The New York Times* can strengthen your reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Hone Your Writing Skills: Both the ACT and SAT include an optional essay section. Whether you're writing a research paper for school or working on your own short stories, your writing skills will improve with practice.

Strategize: Test-taking skills can be learned through practice. Both the ACT and SAT provide sample questions, and practice tests are available online. Try them out and look carefully at the questions you get wrong. If you find that certain types of questions or certain topics stump you, get some help from a teacher in those areas. For example, a math teacher can recommend a good book to review the basics of geometry or algebra.

Come Prepared: Set out everything you'll need (including your No. 2 pencils) the night before the test and get plenty of rest. Arrive at the testing center early and don't skip breakfast. It's harder to concentrate when you are hungry.

Relax: Scores are important, but they're not nearly as important as many students think. Although each college uses test scores differently, admission decisions are rarely based solely on test scores. In fact, your academic record—the courses you've taken and the grades you've received—is looked at much more closely than your test scores.

Parts of a College Application

You, the student, are responsible for sending colleges your application and some additional documentation.

Your high school is responsible for sending your transcript and a secondary school report (if required). If a teacher agrees to write a letter of recommendation, that teacher is responsible for submitting it.

But following your school's policy for requesting transcripts and letters of recommendations is your job. Know what you are expected to do!

Listed below is everything that *could* be required. You might not be asked to submit everything on this list to every college. For example, there are many colleges that do not require students to write essays. There also are many colleges that do not require standardized test scores.

Official Transcript

Your transcript is a record of all your high school courses, grades, and credits. Other information that might be included on a transcript includes: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, and courses in progress. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.

Standardized Test Scores

Testing agencies will send your scores to the colleges that you request.

The Application Form

You are responsible for completing an application form and submitting it by the college deadline. Many schools accept The Common Application, the Coalition Application, or the Universal College Application. No matter what school or what application, these may be important components:

1. Personal and educational data: Name, address, phone number, email, citizenship and residency information, high schools you have attended, college credits you have earned, parental information, senior year schedule, and standardized test scores.
2. Honors and awards
3. Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities
4. Employment, internships, and summer activities. (Some colleges allow you to submit a résumé to supplement the activity section of their application.)
5. Essays: Both short answer and a longer personal essay are sometimes required.
6. Disciplinary information
7. Application fee: Many colleges will accept fee waivers which can be obtained from your counselor.
8. For certain majors, students might be required to audition or be asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work.

Secondary School Report Form or Counselor Recommendation Form

If required, the high school is responsible for submitting this form to the college. However, you will need to request that it be sent. It is important to know and follow your school's procedures.

Mid-Year Report Form

If required, it will be submitted by your high school. However, you must request that it be sent. The purpose of the form is for the college to see your grades from the first term of your senior year.

Teacher Recommendation Form

If required, the teacher is responsible for sending it. However, you are responsible for asking a teacher to complete it and giving that teacher all the necessary information. Look over the form and imagine what one of your teachers would say about you. Colleges want to hear from teachers who know you well and can share examples of your work ethic, inquisitive nature, and motivation to learn.

Factors in the Admission Decisions

A student's high school record continues to be the most important factor in college admission decisions for prospective first-time freshmen, according to NACAC survey results.



Data in the 13th annual edition of NACAC's *State of College Admission* report show students' grades and the academic rigor of their course loads weigh more heavily in decisions to admit than standardized test scores, high school class rank, or demonstrated interest in attending.

"Year to year, we find that getting good grades in challenging courses is what college admission offices value most when reviewing applications from first-time freshmen," said Joyce E. Smith, NACAC's chief executive officer. "Similarly, admission professionals pay close attention to academic achievements when reviewing applications from international and transfer students."

For high school seniors applying to college, performance in core classes is especially significant, with 79.2 percent of institutions attributing "considerable importance" to grades in college-prep courses. In comparison, 55.7 percent of colleges placed the same level of significance on admission test scores for first-time freshmen applicants.

Online Search Engines

- Family Connection/Naviance: *see your counseling office for login information.*
- www.collegeboard.org
- www.cappex.com
- <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-search>

NACAC COLLEGE FAIRS

Start your college search FOR FREE at a NACAC College Fair near you. National College Fairs, Performing and Visual Arts Fairs, and STEM Fairs are programs of the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

Free and open to the public, College Fairs allow students to interact with admission representatives from a wide range of post-secondary institutions.

ST. LOUIS PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS COLLEGE FAIR

Location:

Webster University – Grant Gymnasium
175 Edgar Road
St. Louis, MO 63119

Saturday, October 07, 2017

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

ST. LOUIS NATIONAL COLLEGE FAIR

Location:

St. Louis University - Simon Recreation Center
3639 Laclede Ave
St. Louis, MO 63108

Sunday, October 22, 2017

1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

For additional MOACAC-sponsored fairs, please visit <http://moacac.org/events/category/college-fairs/>

MOACAC REGIONAL COLLEGE FAIRS FOR FALL 2017

Registration Opening Soon! <http://moacac.org/college-fairs/regional-college-fairs/>

Date: 09/18/17

Fair: Franklin County Regional College Fair

Time: 9:00-11:00AM

Location: East Central College

Participating Schools: Steelville, St. James, Cuba, Bourbon, St. Clair, Washington, St. Francis Borgia, New Haven Pacific, Kingston, Potosi

Date: 09/18/17

Fair: St. Louis West County Public Schools Regional College Fair

Time: 6:30-8:00PM

Location: Queeny Park – Greensfelder Complex

Participating Schools: Eureka, Lafayette, Marquette, Rockwood Summit, Parkway North, Parkway South, Parkway Central, Parkway West, Valley Park

Date: 09/20/17

Fair: Jefferson County Regional College Fair

Time: 9:00-11:00AM

Location: Jefferson College

Participating Schools: Fox, Seckman, Desoto, Hillsboro, Grandview, Festus, Crystal City, Jefferson, Windsor, Herculaneum, St Pius

Date: 09/20/17

Time: 6:00-7:30PM

Fair: Collaborative College Fair at St. Louis Community College – Meramec

Location: St. Louis Community College – Meramec

Participating Schools: Oakville, Mehlville, Lindbergh, Kirkwood, Webster Groves

Date: 09/21/17

Fair: St. Louis North County Regional College Fair

Time: 1:00-2:30PM

Location: Pattonville High School

Participating Schools: Pattonville High School, Incarnate Word Academy, North County Christian High School, North County Technical High School, Trinity Catholic High School

Date: 10/16/17

Fair: Southeast Missouri Regional College Fair

Time: 12:30-2:30PM

Location: Southeast Missouri State University

Participating Schools: Advance, Bell City, Bernie, Bloomfield, Caruthersville, Cape Central, Clearwater, East Carter, Grandview, Lesterville, Meadow Heights, Meridian (IL), Notre Dame, Oran, Portageville, Saxony Lutheran, Scott City, Scott County, South Pemiscot, St. Vincent, Thomas Kelly, Woodland, Holcomb, Zalma

INFINITE SCHOLARS COLLEGE FAIRS

During the past decade, the Infinite Scholars Program has served more than 100,000 students and has facilitated more than 1 Billion Dollars in scholarships and financial aid.

Don't miss this opportunity to meet with colleges and universities about scholarship opportunities. Some colleges will be accepting students and awarding scholarships on the spot. Learn about our Micro-Scholarship program that awards you scholarship dollars for your high school accomplishments.

Students need to bring: multiple copies of transcripts, ACT/SAT test scores, letters of recommendation, an essay titled "Why I want to attend college.," and a resume.

Students can register for this event on-line at www.infinitescholar.org

Sunday, September 17th, 2017

2:00pm-5:30pm

Busch Student Center

20 North Grand Blvd.

St. Louis, MO 63103

Saturday, February 24th, 2017

9:00am-12:pm

University of Missouri-St. Louis

1 University Drive - J.C. Penny Building

St. Louis, MO 63121

COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAMS

The St. Louis region has several college access programs available to students through schools and in the community.

In the summer months, students who have graduated from high school and need assistance are invited to visit the **St. Louis Graduates High School to College Center** for free help with college admissions.

During the school year, high school students should meet with their in-school guidance counselor or college counselor and investigate community-based programs.

Some of the college access service programs are operated by service providers who focus solely on college access and success. Some are focused on one aspect of the college access pipeline like financial aid. Others include college planning or academic support as part of a broader youth program.

To find the right program for you, look into what is offered in your school and in your community. Your school guidance counselor should be able to help you connect to programs at your school.

The following links connect you to some of the college access programs in the region. Consult your counselor to identify programs in your school.

St. Louis Graduates High School to College Center: <http://www.stlouisgraduates.org/HStoCollegeCenter>

College Bound St. Louis: <http://collegeboundstl.org/>

Missouri College Advising Corps: <http://mcac.missouri.edu/>

The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis: <https://www.sfstl.org/>

Wyman Center: <http://wymancenter.org/>

UMSL Bridge Program: <http://www.umsl.edu/precollegiate/>

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