
College Advising Essentials

VOLUME 3



Handouts



Resources



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High School Profiles

WHAT IS A HIGH SCHOOL PROFILE?

- A document created by a high school, updated annually, that contains general information about the school and the community where it is located. The profile provides a general context for someone unfamiliar with your campus.
- It provides a comprehensive overview of your school for your administration, district officials, colleges, scholarship organizations, community leaders, etc.
- It offers academic context regarding the student body (courses, test profile, admission, GPA, and rank explanation).

HOW IS IT USED?

- Sent with all requested transcripts for college admission and scholarships
- Sent to all receiving schools along with transfer student records
- Given to college admission representatives
- Given to recruiters
- Provided to potential families who are considering your school

WHAT INFORMATION MAY BE ON YOUR SCHOOL PROFILE?

COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL INFORMATION

- Include a description of the school and the community that depicts the socioeconomic and ethnic mix, and that gives information about the education level of parents, major employers, and other features of interest. Independent schools may include history, mission, and admission guidelines.
- Describe your student population; include the number of students in each grade and the demographic makeup.
- Provide the percentage of students who participate in low-income programs (e.g., Title I, AVID, and free or reduced-price lunch).
- Include accreditation, institutional memberships, and special recognitions and honors.

CURRICULUM

- List graduation requirements.
- Describe the available academic programs, special diplomas, tracks, and any nontraditional or unusual curricula.
- List AP® and honors courses. Specificity is crucial to a college knowing the highest level of rigor your campus provides in each subject.
- Detail AP participation—the number of students in the school and the number and percentage taking AP courses and exams.

GRADING AND RANKING PROCEDURES

- Explain procedures, especially any weighting system used.
- Include explanations for any computer codes that appear on the transcript.

TEST SCORE INFORMATION

- Report distribution and ranges for SAT® and ACT.
- Include other test information (e.g., AP, National Merit®) of interest to colleges.

COLLEGE ATTENDANCE HISTORY

- Include the percentage of graduates attending two-year and four-year, in-state and out-of-state institutions.
- Include a listing of colleges attended by recent graduates.

EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

- List the activities in which students can participate, e.g., band, drama, leadership, sports, student council, etc.
- List clubs and other organizations students can join.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- Use the preferred format: both sides of one 8 1/2" × 11" sheet of non-glossy paper. Use dark ink on light paper—many colleges scan profiles into their systems.
- Highlight changes to any grading and ranking policies, as well as any changes to the curriculum.
- Highlight school and student achievements or recognitions that can make a statement about your school, i.e., Blue Ribbon School, Distinguished School state recognition, National Merit Scholarship winners, state champions in a sport, etc.
- Include information or data that help differentiate your school and programs from others (e.g., block scheduling, dual enrollment, etc.).
- The most challenging piece of creating your school profile is to condense all the information and data you have collected onto one sheet of paper in a clear, concise, and visually appealing way. Visit counselors.collegeboard.org/counseling/advising/school-profiles/sample.

The High School Transcript

Grades in academic subjects are the single best predictor of success in college, and colleges look for evidence that a student has undertaken rigorous coursework. The transcript must clearly indicate AP[®], IB, and honors courses because these are key indicators of demanding classes. So for most students, the transcript is the most important document in the college application process.

COURSES

Do what you can to ensure that the names of your courses are crystal clear to colleges. You don't want a college admission committee wondering why a student took "Youth Conflict" in their senior year instead of English when that happens to be the name of the English class the student took.

GPA

Most colleges recalculate GPAs. In her monograph [Admissions Decision-Making Models](#), Gretchen Rigol explains:

Because there is no uniformity in the way high schools calculate a student's overall grade point average (GPA), many institutions recalculate the GPA. In some cases, the GPAs are "weighted," with extra points being given for honors or Advanced Placement[®] courses. In other cases, the GPAs are all "unweighted," with all courses treated equally and no extra points given for more challenging courses. Some institutions simply count

the number of honors, AP, IB, and other advanced-level courses. And still others simply reorganize the transcript information so that it's easy to see coverage by subject and/or trends over the student's school career. Although labor intensive, this customization helps institutions evaluate all applicants on a similar basis. It also has the advantage of making the information easily available for use in other forms, such as in an academic index and for placement reports for individual applicants, and for general summaries of the preparation of the applicant pool as a whole.

CLASS RANK

If your school does provide class ranking of students, make sure your ranking policies are clear and that you explain any weighting policies you may have. Although colleges require different academic information, most large state universities require applicants to report class rank (as do many scholarship programs) and rely on it to help them sort through the high volume of applications received.

TRANSCRIPTS AND FERPA

Be sure to follow the law in releasing transcripts. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is the federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives families certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18 or attend a school beyond the high school level.

Your school should have a method of distributing and then collecting release forms so that your office can send transcripts to colleges. Schools often need to send a midyear report in January and a final transcript to the student's selected college. Some schools have families and students sign a form that authorizes the release of documents, waives the rights to see recommendations, and asks them to acknowledge their understanding of school policies. Here is the language used on a Student/Parent Authorization form used by a private school and signed by all students and parents:

- ♦ I authorize the release of my school transcript and other relevant school records to the colleges and universities to which I will apply.
- ♦ I understand that teacher and counselor recommendations are confidential documents and hereby waive access to them.
- ♦ I understand that it is the policy of (name of school) to inform colleges of serious disciplinary matters (i.e., those resulting in probation, out-of-school suspension, or dismissal), and I authorize the release of that information.
- ♦ I acknowledge my obligation to be honest with my college counselor and with the colleges to which I am applying.

You might include some or all of these statements on your document release form.

REMINDER

- ♦ College Board assessments (PSAT-related, SAT®, and AP® Exams) should not be included on the school transcript.

Planning for High School

High school can seem like a long way off. In reality, it will be here sooner than you think! How you use your time and your interests in middle school can help you prepare for high school and your future. Work with your counselor to create a plan for middle school and set goals based on the opportunities you have.

“I tell my middle school students to plan their academics carefully, but also to get involved in extracurriculars as well. Pick a few activities, whether they are school sports, clubs, or outside volunteer organizations. Just be sure your choices outside the classroom are of good quality (and not just video games or social media!).”

ACADEMIC CHOICES

All the classes you take now are important and can determine the classes you take in high school. In addition, the skills and study habits you form now will carry over into high school and college. **List three classes in middle school that will be the most helpful in preparing for high school:**

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

EXTRACURRICULAR CHOICES

Although classes are important, extracurricular activities—school or community-sponsored activities outside the classroom—also play a role in preparing you for college. **List three extracurricular activities in which you can be involved:**

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

YOUR INTERESTS

You don't need to have your whole life figured out during middle school. However, it is helpful to start thinking about your interests and where they might take you. **List the top three interests you hope to explore in middle school:**

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

LEARN ABOUT COLLEGE

Even if you don't have all your future plans completely worked out, you can still plan for college. You can research different colleges to find out which ones offer the programs that are the best fit for you. **List three colleges from your research that are interesting and why:**

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Your High School Resume

A helpful resource to have during the college and scholarship application process is a resume. A resume provides a quick summary of your extracurricular activities, special abilities and talents, and leadership skills. You may want to prepare several versions for different audiences (colleges, scholarship organizations, etc.). Be sure to have several people review your drafts for feedback on format and information.

KEY FEATURES OF AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

- **Be concise:** Most readers will not have time to review a lengthy, rambling resume. You want to make the most of the time you have their attention.
- **Prioritize:** Know your audience and what information will be most important for them to see. Choose your key activities or skills to highlight at the beginning of the document. This shouldn't be a long list of activities, but rather the top activities to which you have committed a longer period of time and had in-depth participation.
- **Highlight honors and awards:** With the name of the award be sure to summarize what the award was for, why you received it, and the date.
- **Provide detail:** Give a short description of the activity, time commitment, specific projects on which you served, and the leadership roles and your specific responsibilities in that position.
- **Avoid acronyms:** Although initials may reference a school club, an acronym may have no meaning to your reader. Be sure to provide a clear name of the group, and if not self-explanatory, a short description of the club's purpose.
- **Include summer programs or jobs:** Be sure to provide a brief description of the program or your job responsibilities.

YOUR AUDIENCES

- **Colleges:** If the college requires or encourages the inclusion of a resume with the application, be sure to do so. You don't need to repeat any academic information that is available on other parts of the application (i.e., transcript).
- **Scholarship organizations:** Be sure to highlight your specific achievements or talents that meet the criteria for the scholarship. This is where your details and descriptions can be very important.
- **Educators:** For someone writing a recommendation for you, a resume can be helpful in reminding them of your talents outside the classroom.
- **Teachers:** Mention a specific class assignment, project, or participation that they can reference in their recommendation.
- **Counselors:** Highlight any specific circumstance you would want them to comment on in their letter.
- **Interviewers:** If you are interviewing for a college, scholarship, internship, or job, you may want to have a resume to give to the interviewer or to include in your follow-up thank-you note.

Academic Road Map: Tracking Progress

Distribute the Academic Tracker with either a student sample or the student's own individual report card or transcript. Then have them review their academic progress with college requirements by completing the academic tracker.

Once the student has completed the tracker chart, have them answer the reflection questions.

- What was it like to track academic progress and compare it to college requirements?
- What did you realize about your current academic progress and future plans?
- What is one specific thing you could do to make sure you are on track to graduate?
- What is one specific thing you could do to make sure you are taking challenging courses in order to have as many postsecondary options available to you?

NOTE: The difference between fulfilling high school graduation requirements and taking college prep classes should be stressed. Students should know the importance of taking college preparatory classes starting in ninth grade, even if they aren't sure they will go to college.

Subject	Your High School's Graduation Requirements	On Track? Fill in classes taken and plan to take				Minimum College Preparation	State Universities and Other Selective College Requirements
		GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12		
English						4 years, with emphasis on written/oral communications and literature	4 years at the honors/Advanced Placement® level when possible
Math						3–4 years, including algebra, geometry and advanced algebra, trigonometry, and/or calculus	4 years, including algebra, geometry and advanced algebra, trigonometry, and/or calculus
Social Studies						3 years, including one year of U.S. history, U.S. government, world history, or geography	3–4 years, including one year of U.S. history, U.S. government, world history, or geography
Science						3 years of lab science: biology, chemistry, or physics	3–4 years of lab science: biology, chemistry, or physics
Foreign Language						2 years of foreign language	3–4 years or more of one foreign language
Academic Electives							

College Admission Glossary

What's a transcript? What's the difference between early action and early decision? When applying to college, you are bound to come across unfamiliar terms. This glossary can help you make sense of all the information you're sorting through.

ACT

A standardized college admission test that features four main sections: English, math, reading, and science—and an optional essay section.

Admission Tests

Also known as college entrance exams, these tests are designed to measure students' skills and help colleges determine if students are ready for college-level work. The ACT and SAT® are two standardized admission tests used in the United States. The word "standardized" means that the test measures the same thing in the same way for everyone who takes it. Visit bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/which-college-admission-tests-do-i-need-to-take.

Articulation Agreement

An agreement between two-year and four-year colleges that makes it easier to transfer credits between them. It spells out which courses count for degree credit and the grades needed to get credit.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA)

An agreement many colleges follow that gives applicants until May 1 to accept or decline offers of admission. This agreement gives applicants time to receive responses from most of the colleges to which they have applied before deciding on one.

Class Rank

A measurement of how your academic achievement compares with that of other students in your grade. This number is usually determined by using a weighted GPA that takes into account both your grades and the difficulty of the courses you've taken.

Coalition Application

A standard application form accepted by members of the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success. You can use this application to apply to any of the more than 90 colleges and universities that are members of the Coalition. For more information, visit: coalitionforcollegeaccess.org

College Application Essay

An essay that a college requires students to write and submit as part of their applications. Some colleges require applicants to answer specific questions, while others simply ask them to write about themselves. Colleges may refer to this as a "personal statement." Visit <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays>.

College Credit

What you get when you successfully complete a college-level course. You need a certain number of credits to graduate with a degree. Colleges may also grant credit for scores on exams, such as those offered by College Board's AP Program and CLEP®. Visit <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/learn-about-the-ap-program>.

Common Application

A standard application form accepted by all colleges that are members of the Common Application association. You can fill out this application once and submit it to any one—or several—of the nearly 700 colleges that accept it. For more information, visit: commonapp.org

Deferred Admission

Permission from a college that has accepted you to postpone enrolling in the college. The postponement is usually for up to one year.

Early Action (EA)

An option to submit your applications before the regular deadlines. When you apply early action, you get admission decisions from colleges earlier than usual. Early action plans aren't binding, which means that you don't have to enroll in a college if you are accepted early action. Some colleges have an early action option called EA II, which has a later application deadline than their regular EA plan. Visit <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/the-facts-about-applying-early-is-it-right-for-you>.

Early Decision (ED)

An option to submit an application to your first-choice college before the regular deadline. When you apply early decision, you get an admission decision earlier than usual. Early decision plans are binding. You agree to enroll in the college immediately if admitted and offered a financial aid package that meets your needs. Some colleges have an early decision option called ED II, which has a later application deadline than their regular ED plan. Visit <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/the-facts-about-applying-early-is-it-right-for-you>.

Financial Aid

Money given or loaned to you to help pay for college. Financial aid can come from federal and state governments, colleges, and private organizations. Visit <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics/what-is-financial-aid/how-does-financial-aid-work>.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

A number that shows overall academic performance. It's computed by assigning a point value to each grade you earn. See also Weighted Grade Point Average.

Legacy Applicant

A college applicant with a relative (usually a parent or grandparent) who graduated from that college. Some colleges give preference to legacy applicants (also called "legacies").

Need-Blind Admission

A policy of making admission decisions without considering the financial circumstances of applicants. Colleges that use this policy may not offer enough financial aid to meet a student's full need.

Open Admission

A policy of accepting any high school graduate, no matter what their grades are, until all spaces in the incoming class are filled. Almost all two-year community colleges have an open-admission policy. However, a college with a general open-admission policy may have admission requirements for certain programs.

Placement Tests

Tests that measure the academic skills needed for college-level work. These tests cover reading, writing, math, and sometimes other subjects. Placement test results help determine what courses you are ready for and whether you would benefit from remedial classes. Visit <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/after-youve-applied/what-are-college-placement-tests>.

Priority Date or Deadline

The date by which your application—whether it's for college admission, student housing, or financial aid—must be received to be given the strongest consideration.

Registrar

The college official who registers students. The registrar may also be responsible for keeping permanent records and maintaining your student file.

Rolling Admission

An admission policy of considering each application as soon as all required information (such as high school records and test scores) has been received, rather than setting an application deadline and reviewing applications in a batch. Colleges that use a rolling admission policy usually notify applicants of admission decisions quickly.

SAT

College Board's standardized college entrance exam. It features three main sections: math, reading, and writing and language, including an optional written essay. For more information, visit: sat.org

Sophomore Standing

The status of a second-year student. A college may grant sophomore standing to an incoming freshman if they have earned college credits through courses, exams, or other programs.

Transcript

The official record of your coursework at a school or college. Your high school transcript is usually required for college admission and for some financial aid packages.

Transfer Student

A student who enrolls in a college after having attended another college.

Undergraduate

A college student who is working toward an associate or a bachelor's degree.

Universal College Application

A standard application form accepted by all colleges that are Universal College Application members. You can fill out this application once and submit it to any one—or several—of the more than 3,044 colleges that accept it. For more information, visit: universalcollegeapp.com

Waitlist

The list of applicants who may be admitted to a college if space becomes available. Colleges wait to hear if all the students they accepted decide to attend. If students don't enroll and there are empty spots, a college may fill them with students who are on the waitlist. Visit bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/making-a-decision/what-to-do-if-youre-wait-listed.

Weighted Grade Point Average (GPA)

A grade point average that's calculated using a system that assigns a higher point value to grades in more difficult classes. For example, some high schools assign the value of 5.0 (instead of the standard 4.0) for an A earned in an AP class. Visit <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/collegebasics/how-to-convert-gpa-4.0-scale>.

College Planning: 11th Grade

Junior year marks a turning point. This is because for most students and families, it's when college planning activities kick into high gear. Here are some things you can do this year to stay on track for college.

FALL

- Start with you:** Make lists of your abilities, social/cultural preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college.
- Learn about colleges.** Look at their websites and find colleges at bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search. Talk to friends, family members, teachers, and recent grads of your school now in college. List the college features that interest you.
- Resource check:** Visit the counseling office and meet the counselors there. Is there a college night for students and families? When will college representatives visit your school? (Put the dates in your calendar.) Examine catalogs and guides.
- At school, speak to your counselor about taking the PSAT/NMSQT[®],** which is given in October. If you plan to ask for testing accommodations (because of a disability), be sure College Board has approved your eligibility.
- Make a file to manage your college search, testing, and application data.** If appropriate (for example, if you're interested in drama, music, art, sports, etc.), start to gather material for a portfolio.
- Estimate your financial aid need.** Financial aid can help you afford college. Use College Board's *Getting Financial Aid* and the financial aid calculator at bigfuture.org to estimate how much aid you might receive.

WINTER

- Sign up to take the SAT[®] in the spring.** You can register online or through your school. SAT fee waivers are available to eligible students. To prepare for the SAT, you can access free, personalized SAT practice tools at satpractice.org, including thousands of interactive questions, video lessons, practice tests, and more.
- Begin a search for financial aid sources.** National sources include BigFuture's Scholarship Search and electronic sources. Don't overlook local and state aid sources. (Ask a counselor for help or check your public library.)
- With your family, make an appointment with your counselor** to discuss ways to improve your college-preparation and selection processes.
- Explore AP[®].** Advanced Placement[®] Program helps hundreds of thousands of high school students achieve their college dreams each year. Get the facts at apstudents.collegeboard.org.

SPRING

- Contact your counselor** before leaving school for the summer if you are considering military academies or ROTC scholarships. If you want a four-year ROTC scholarship, you should begin the application process the summer before your senior year.
- Develop a list on BigFuture of 15 or 20 colleges that are of interest to you.** You can find many colleges at which you'll be happy and get a great education. The college search is about exploring who you are and what you want and then finding colleges that will meet your goals.
- Stay open to all the possibilities—don't limit your search.** To find the best college for you, you should apply to colleges of varying selectivity. Selective colleges admit a portion of students who apply. Some colleges are highly selective while others are less selective. Make sure to apply to public, private, in-state, and out-of-state schools so that you have plenty of options from which to choose.
- Take the SAT.** The test is typically offered in March, May, and June. Make sure you start preparing for the test several months in advance using the tools available at satpractice.org. And remember, if you're not happy with your scores when you get them, you might want to test again in the fall. Many students take the test a second time as seniors, and they usually do better.
- Start to gather documents for financial aid:** Be sure to keep a copy of your tax returns handy. You'll use these to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®).

SUMMER

- Register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center** if you are an athlete planning to continue playing a sport in college (eligibilitycenter.org).
- Get your FSA ID:** Before you can fill out your FAFSA, you and your guardian need to get a username and password (also known as an FSA ID).
- Find a full-time or part-time job,** or participate in a summer camp or summer college program.
- Visit colleges.** When planning your campus visits, make sure to allow time to explore each college. While you're there, talk to as many people as possible. These can include college admission staff, professors, and students. Take campus tours and, at colleges you're serious about, make appointments to have interviews with admission counselors.
- Create a resume**—a record of your academic accomplishments, extracurricular activities, and work experiences since you started high school.
- Download applications.** Go to the website of each college's admission office and either complete the application online or request a paper application from colleges to which you'll apply. Check application dates—large universities may have early dates or rolling admission.
- Visit some local colleges**—large, small, public, and private. A visit to a college campus can help you decide if that college is good for you. Make a plan ahead of time to get the most from your visit. Attend college fairs and view virtual tours, too.
- Scan local newspapers** to see which civic, cultural, and service organizations in your area award financial aid to graduating seniors. Start a file.

College Planning: 12th Grade

Want to know if you're on track in the college application process? This checklist shows you what you should be doing, and when.

FALL

- Narrow your list of colleges to between 5 and 10.**
Meet with a counselor about your college choices and, if you've not yet done so, download college applications and financial aid forms. Plan to visit as many of these colleges as possible.
- Create a master list or calendar that includes:**
 - ◆ Tests you'll take and their fees, dates, and registration deadlines
 - ◆ College application due dates
 - ◆ Required financial aid application forms and their deadlines (aid applications may be due before college applications)
 - ◆ Other materials you'll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.)
 - ◆ Your high school's application processing deadlines
- Ask a counselor** to help you request a fee waiver if you can't afford application or test fees.
- Take the SAT® one more time:** Many seniors retake the SAT in the fall. Additional coursework since your last test could help you boost your performance. Plus you already know what to expect on test day.
- Be sure** to have your SAT scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®):** To apply for most financial aid, you'll need to complete the FAFSA.
- Complete the CSS Profile:**
CSS Profile® is an online application used by certain colleges and scholarship programs to determine eligibility for their aid dollars.
- Prepare** early decision/early action or rolling admission applications as soon as possible. November 1–15: Colleges may require test scores and applications between these dates for early decision admission.
- Ask a counselor or teacher** for recommendations if you need them. Give each teacher or counselor an outline of your academic record and your extracurricular activities. For each recommendation, provide a stamped, addressed envelope and any college forms required.
- Write first drafts** and ask teachers and others to read them if you're submitting essays. If you're applying for early decision, finish the essays for that application now.
- Complete** at least one college application by Thanksgiving.
- Ask counselors** to send your transcripts to colleges. Give counselors the proper forms at least two weeks before the colleges require them.

WINTER

- Keep photocopies** as you finish and send your applications and essays.
- Give the correct form** to your counselor if the college wants to see second-semester grades.
- Have your high school send a transcript**—it is sent separately to colleges if you apply online.

SPRING

- Keep active in school.** If you are waitlisted, the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and the time you learned of its decision.
- Visit your final college before accepting.** You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April. Notify your counselor of your choice. If you have questions about housing offers, talk to your counselor or call the college.
- Inform every college** of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid by May 1. Colleges cannot require your deposit or your commitment to attend before May 1. Talk to your counselor or adviser if you have questions.
- Send your deposit** to one college only.
- Take any AP® Exams.** Show what you've learned in your AP classes. A successful score could even earn you credit, advanced placement, or both, in college.
- Waitlisted by a college?** If you intend to enroll if you are accepted, tell the admission director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask whether funds will be available if you're accepted.
- Work with a counselor** to resolve any admission or financial aid problems.
- Ask your high school** to send a final transcript to your college.
- Review your financial aid awards:** Not all financial aid awards are the same, so it's important to choose the aid package that's best for you and your family. Be sure to note what you have to do to continue receiving financial aid from year to year, and how your aid might change in future years.

Family Action Plan: 11th Grade

Junior year marks a turning point. This is because for most students and families, it's when college planning activities kick into high gear. Here are some things you can do this year to support your child and provide the best options.

SUMMER

- Get the facts about what college costs.** You may be surprised by how affordable higher education can be. Start by reading Understanding College Costs. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/understanding-college-costs
- Explore financial aid options.** These include grants and scholarships, loans, and work-study programs that can help pay for college costs. Find out more about how financial aid can make college affordable. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics/what-is-financial-aid/how-does-financial-aid-work

FALL

- Make sure your child meets with the school counselor.** This meeting is especially important this year as your 11th grader starts to engage in the college application process. Learn more about the counselor's role in applying to college. <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/college-prep/get-advice/applying-to-college-your-counselors-role>
- Help your child stay organized.** Work with your 11th grader to make weekly or monthly to-do lists to keep on top of the tasks required to get ready for applying to colleges. For more time management tips, see 8 Ways to Take Control of Your Time. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/8-ways-to-take-control-of-your-time
- Help your junior get ready for the PSAT/NMSQT® in October.** This is a preliminary test that helps students practice for the SAT® and assess their academic skills. Juniors who score well on the test are also eligible for scholarship opportunities. Find out more about the PSAT/NMSQT. satsuite.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt
- Encourage your child to set goals for the school year.** Working toward specific goals helps your high school student stay motivated and focused.
- Encourage your child to register for AP® Exams.** If your 11th grader takes AP or other advanced classes, have your child talk with teachers now about taking these tests in May. Read more about the AP Program. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/learn-about-the-ap-program

WINTER

- Review PSAT/NMSQT results together** by logging in to the student score reporting portal. Your child's score report shows what they should work on to get ready for college, lists Advanced Placement® courses that might be a good match for them, and connects them to free, personalized SAT practice on Khan Academy® based on their results. [satpractice.org](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/satpractice.org)
- Help your child prepare for the SAT.** Many juniors take the SAT in the spring so they can get a head start on planning for college. See which other tests your high school junior may need to take. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/which-college-admission-tests-do-i-need-to-take
- Discuss taking challenging courses next year.** Taking AP honors courses or college-level courses as a senior can help your child prepare for college work—and these are also the courses that college admission officers like to see. Learn more about advanced classes. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/how-to-take-your-classes-to-the-next-level

SPRING

- Search together for colleges that meet your child's needs.** Once you have an idea of the qualities your junior is looking for in a college, help your child enter these criteria into College Search. There your child can create a list of colleges to consider applying to. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search
- Help your child research scholarships.** This form of financial aid provides money for college that doesn't need to be repaid. Learn more through BigFuture's Scholarship Search. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search
- Attend college fairs and financial aid events.** These events allow you to meet with college representatives and get answers to questions. Your child can ask the school counselor how to find events in your area. Check out the College Fair Checklist for more information. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-to-find-your-college-fit/college-fair-checklist
- Help your child make summer plans.** Summer is a perfect time to explore interests and learn new skills—and colleges look for students who pursue meaningful summer activities. Help your high school student look into summer learning programs or find a job or internship. Help your high school student look into summer learning programs or find a job or internship. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/summer-learning-programs-what-why-and-how
- Visit colleges together.** Make plans to check out the campuses of colleges your child is interested in. Use the Campus Visit Checklist to learn how to get the most out of these experiences. <http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-visit-guide/campus-visit-checklist>

Plan de acción para la familia: Grado 11

El penúltimo año de la preparatoria (año “junior”) suele ser un momento decisivo. Esto se debe a que es cuando los estudiantes y sus familias realmente inician las actividades para planear el ingreso a la universidad. Estas son algunas cosas que puede hacer este año para ayudar a su hijo o hija y ofrecerle las mejores opciones.

VERANO

- Consiga información sobre el costo de asistir a la universidad.** Podría sorprenderse de lo accesible que puede llegar a ser la educación superior. Para empezar, lea Comprender los costos universitarios. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/understanding-college-costs
- Considere las opciones de ayuda financiera disponibles.** Estas incluyen becas, préstamos y programas de trabajo-estudio que ayudarían a pagar los costos de asistir a la universidad. Averigüe más sobre cómo la ayuda financiera puede hacer que la universidad sea accesible. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-can-help-you-afford-college

OTOÑO

- Asegúrese de que su hijo o hija se reúna con su consejero escolar.** Esta reunión es especialmente importante este año porque su hijo o hija empieza a conocer el proceso de admisión a la universidad. Averigüe más sobre el papel del consejero en la admisión a la universidad. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-can-help-you-afford-college
- Ayude a su hijo o hija a organizarse.** Ayude a su hijo o hija a hacer listas semanales o mensuales de cosas por hacer para estar al día en todo lo que debe tener listo para presentar solicitudes a las universidades. Para más consejos sobre administración, vea 8 maneras de administrar el tiempo. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/8-ways-to-take-control-of-your-time
- Ayude a su hijo o hija a prepararse para el PSAT/NMSQT® en octubre.** Se trata de un examen preliminar que le sirve como práctica para el SAT® y para evaluar sus habilidades académicas. Los estudiantes que obtienen un buen puntaje en el examen son candidatos para las becas disponibles. Averigüe más sobre el PSAT/NMSQT. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/the-psat-nmsqt-and-psat-10
- Anime a su hijo o hija a establecer objetivos para el año escolar.** Trabajar con objetivos específicos ayuda a su hijo o hija en términos de motivación y concentración.
- Anime a su hijo o hija a inscribirse en un curso AP.** Si su estudiante de Grado 11 presenta el AP u otras clases avanzadas, pídale que hable con sus maestros sobre presentar estos exámenes en mayo. Lea más sobre el Programa AP. bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/learn-about-the-ap-program

INVIERNO

- Revisen juntos los resultados PSAT/NMSQT.** El informe del puntaje que obtiene su hijo o hija viene acompañado de un plan gratuito de estudios SAT. Se ingresa en línea y el plan está adaptado con base en su puntaje para ayudarlo a trabajar en las materias en las que necesita mejorar. Averigüe más sobre este plan de estudios SAT personalizado.
satpractice.org
- Ayude a su hijo o hija a prepararse para los exámenes de admisión de las universidades.** Muchos estudiantes presentan exámenes de admisión, como el SAT, durante la primavera para adelantarse en sus planes para asistir a una universidad. Lea qué exámenes necesitará presentar su estudiante de penúltimo año.
bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/which-college-admission-tests-do-i-need-to-take

PRIMAVERA

- Busquen juntos universidades que cumplan con las necesidades de su hijo o hija.** Una vez que tengan una idea de lo que su hijo o hija requiere de una universidad, ayúdelo ingresar estos criterios en la Búsqueda de universidades para hacer una lista de las universidades a las que podría mandar una solicitud.
bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search
- Ayude a su hijo o hija a investigar sobre becas.** Esta forma de ayuda financiera otorga dinero para la universidad que no debe pagar después. Averigüe más en la Búsqueda de becas de College Board.
bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search
- Asistan a ferias y eventos de ayuda financiera de las universidades.** Estos eventos le servirán para conocer a representantes de las universidades y obtener respuestas a sus dudas. Su hijo o hija puede hablar con su consejero escolar para identificar los eventos que se llevan a cabo en su localidad. Revise la Lista de ferias universitarias para obtener más información.
bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-to-find-your-college-fit/college-fair-checklist
- Ayude a su hijo o hija a planear actividades para el verano.** El verano es un excelente momento para profundizar en sus intereses y aprender nuevas habilidades —tome en cuenta que las universidades se interesan en estudiantes que realizan actividades significativas durante el verano. Ayude a su hijo o hija a buscar en los programas de aprendizaje de verano o a buscar un trabajo o un programa de pasantía.
<http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/summer-learning-programs-what-why-and-how>
- Vayan juntos a las universidades.** Organícense para visitar los campus de las universidades que le interesan a su hijo o hija. Use la Lista de visitas a campus universitarios para averiguar cómo pueden aprovechar mejor estas experiencias.
<http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-visit-guide/campus-visit-checklist>

Make Your Social Media Work for You

The impression that you make on a college admission officer may involve more than just an essay, a transcript, and some test scores. According to new data, colleges and universities do pay attention to what prospective students post on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. In addition, potential employers for internships or permanent positions may also review your public social sites.

WHAT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA TELLS OTHERS

- It sheds light on your interests and passions.
- It may give a more in-depth look at your volunteer work or special projects.
- Your creativity and technology skills may be spotlighted.
- It may provide evidence of your interest in a particular major, college, or career.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA TIME

- Keep your profile information up to date.
- Consider providing a link to your social media sites in your college application materials (provided the college allows/encourages this).
- Invest the time to maintain quality in your postings, blogs, and videos.
- Showcase your leadership, awards, or expertise in a meaningful manner.

REMINDERS

- Review your email address to ensure it doesn't include rude or inappropriate language or references.
- Carefully consider your tweets and other comments, particularly any negative references about prospective colleges, your teachers, or your peers.
- Monitor what photos you choose to post. Don't include those that may depict alcohol and certain party and peer activities that would reflect poorly on your judgment or character.
- A good rule of thumb is: Don't put anything on social media that you wouldn't include with your college application.

NCAA Eligibility Center

The NCAA Eligibility Center is responsible for certifying the academic and amateur status of all Division I and II incoming student-athletes. College-bound student-athletes can create an account with the Eligibility Center by visiting eligibilitycenter.org. We recommend that students register during their sophomore year of high school to ensure they have adequate time to confirm they are on track for meeting initial eligibility requirements.

Academic requirements for each college-bound student-athlete are based on the student's core-course grade point average and their coursework.

WHAT IS A CORE COURSE?

Core courses are those that are academic in nature, taught at or above your high school's regular academic level, receive credit toward high school graduation, and are four-year college preparatory courses. To be used in an academic certification, the courses need to be listed on the student's transcript with their grades and credits. Core courses must be in one of the following academic areas:

- English
- Math (Algebra 1 or higher)
- Natural/physical science
- Social science
- Foreign language
- Comparative religion or philosophy

DIVISION I ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Graduate from high school.
- Complete 16 core courses in the following areas:
 - ◆ English—four years
 - ◆ Math (Algebra 1 or higher)—three years
 - ◆ Natural/physical science (one year of lab if offered)—two years
 - ◆ Additional English, math, or natural/physical science—one year
 - ◆ Social science—two years
 - ◆ Additional courses (in any of the above subject areas or comparative religion or philosophy)—four years
- Complete 10 of the 16 core courses prior to the start of the seventh semester, including seven in English, math, or natural/physical science.
- Complete the 16 NCAA-approved core courses in eight academic semesters or four consecutive academic years from the beginning of ninth grade. If students graduate from high school early, they must still meet core-course requirements.

DIVISION II ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Complete 16 core courses in the following areas:
 - ♦ English—three years
 - ♦ Math (Algebra 1 or higher)—two years
 - ♦ Natural/physical science (one year of lab if offered)—two years
 - ♦ Social science—two years
 - ♦ Additional English, math, or natural/physical science—three years
- Additional courses (in any of the above subject areas or comparative religion or philosophy)—four years
- Graduate from high school

COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT-ATHLETES TIMELINE

GRADE 9: PLAN

- Start planning now! Take challenging courses and earn the best grades you can.
- Ask your counselor for a list of your high school's NCAA core courses to make sure you take the required classes. Or, find your high school's list of NCAA core courses at eligibilitycenter.org/courselist.

GRADE 10: REGISTER

- Register for a Certification Account or Profile Page with the NCAA Eligibility Center at eligibilitycenter.org.
- If you fall behind on courses, don't take shortcuts to catch up. Ask your counselor for help with finding approved courses or programs you can take.

GRADE 11: STUDY

- Check with your counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate on time.
- At the end of the year, ask your counselor to upload your official transcript.

GRADE 12: GRADUATE

- Request your final amateurism certification after April 1 (fall enrollees) or October 1 (winter/spring enrollees).
- After you graduate, ask your counselor to upload your final official transcript with proof of graduation.

Counseling Future NCAA Student-Athletes

THE ROLE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

We know that high school counselors are pulled in many different directions every day. When working with future NCAA student-athletes, you should be aware of the following:

- Maintain your school's list of NCAA core courses to ensure it is accurate and up to date. We recommend you update the list after your school determines new course offerings and before you begin to register students for courses.
- Encourage your college-bound student-athletes to create an account at eligibilitycenter.org at the beginning of their sophomore year.
- Know the Division I and Division II initial-eligibility standards or where to find them.
- Upload official transcripts at the end of your students' sixth semester (junior year) and when they graduate from high school.
- Submit fee waivers online for student registrations, when applicable.

One of the main tools you will use as a counselor is the High School Portal. Through the portal, you may submit core-course changes, upload official transcripts, submit fee waivers, update your grading scale, search for students from your high school who have registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center, and update your school's contact information. You can find a tutorial on using the portal at ncaa.org.

RESPONSIBILITIES THAT MAY BE DELEGATED TO OTHERS

Who determines who should and who shouldn't register with the NCAA Eligibility Center?

- The student's family should make the final decision on whether their son or daughter should register for a Certification Account (Division I or II) or a Profile Page (undecided or Division III).
- Coaches should provide advice on how likely it is that the student will play NCAA sports.

How are students noticed or recruited for college sports?

- Coaches should advise and assist students during the recruiting process.
- The student's family should contact colleges and universities that their child is interested in attending.

Who helps the student and their family understand recruiting rules?

- The NCAA school(s) recruiting the student should be sure that the recruiting rules are followed. Rules differ by sport and by division.

How does a student become eligible upon graduation?

- When an academic certification is requested by a member institution, the NCAA Eligibility Center will perform a certification based on the academic information provided by the student and the high school(s). This certification determines if the student is eligible to compete in Division I or II.
- Student-athlete academic achievement begins in grade nine. Eligibility is a four-year process and every semester counts.
- Ultimately, students are responsible for their own academic decisions, progress, and performance.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

It's not just about testing accommodations! Preparing for college transition encompasses many issues, such as college readiness, admission, and fit. Needs and concerns differ depending upon age, setting, and demands, as well as how the accommodation is provided. Remember that issues may differ in high school, in testing, and in college settings.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

- Different settings require specific considerations
 - ♦ Some items on 504/IEP may not be appropriate for SAT® or college (e.g., explaining questions).
 - ♦ Some additional accommodations may be needed (e.g., permission for food/medication, for testing, for housing, for college).
- Accommodations on IEP/504 don't necessarily carry over to college.
- Students must request accommodations for college.
- It's not only academics. Considerations include dorms, cafeteria, and access.
- Students need to advocate for themselves, as they are now adults. Families need to remove themselves from the process.
- Different legal requirements
 - ♦ High school: FAPE—Public schools are required to provide a free and appropriate public education and to identify, evaluate, and place students with disabilities. The responsibility is on the school.
 - ♦ College and standardized tests: Reasonable accommodations for taking the test.
 - ♦ College Board documentation guidelines often mimic that of various college institutions and may be the first time that students encounter an outside organization requesting documentation or not approving all of their requests.

BEFORE THE SENIOR YEAR

- Be sure that documentation is current and complete.
- Help the student and family understand the meaning of an accommodation.
- Request appropriate accommodations for standardized tests.
- Foster student advocating for themselves, including understanding their needs and limitations.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SSD STUDENTS WHEN APPLYING

- Student must be mindful of researching colleges that would meet their needs, including accommodations, services, or special programs.
- Students should research what services are offered, contact the disability office early, and plan to meet with the disability office personnel.
- Student will need to decide how/when to address the issue of their disability with the college.
- Students must think of the functional impact of their disability in various settings:
 - ♦ Housing
 - ♦ Meals
 - ♦ Counseling
 - ♦ Tutoring

SUPPORTING STUDENTS DURING THE ADMISSION PROCESS

- Help students to understand the impact of their disability in new situations, and to determine which accommodations are needed as their skills develop.
- Assist students with researching various school settings.
- Discuss and compare your student's expectations for support and what the college may expect of the student.
- Assist with generating a list of possible questions that students can ask the disability personnel of the university/college.
- Discuss how the students will address their disability in applications and interviews, and how they will respond to questions.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

The U.S. Department of Education, through the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, publishes *A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities*, which is available for download. This guide addresses the planning necessary to facilitate a seamless transition from school to post-school activities, and is a vital resource for school counselors who support students with special needs. Visit www.ed.gov.

Requesting Accommodations

Students with disabilities may need testing accommodations, such as large print, extra breaks, and extended time. Your school's SSD coordinator can submit accommodation requests through SSD Online on the College Board website. Accommodations for many College Board tests (SAT®, AP, PSAT™ 10, and PSAT/NMSQT®) must be approved by Services for Students with Disabilities.

Under College Board's streamlined process, College Board will automatically approve most accommodations that are part of a school plan, and that are provided to a student for classroom tests. Therefore, it is important to request appropriate accommodations that are needed by the student due to their disability and will help them on test day. Keep in mind:

NEEDED FOR TEST DAY

- Only request accommodations that are needed for test day.
- DON'T request accommodations that a student may use in school but aren't needed for an entrance exam test in a quiet environment.
- There are differences between what is required for a student to participate in College Board testing and what is needed for a student to appropriately access all classes and other programs at their school—not all accommodations on the student's IEP or 504 Plan may be needed for the SAT.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT NEEDS

Don't request the same accommodations for all students—only request accommodations that the individual student actually needs and uses.

- Students requesting accommodations should have a documented disability, demonstrate functional impact, and show the need for the specific accommodation being requested.
- The requested accommodation should be directly related to the functional impact of the diagnosed disability.
- The purpose of accommodations is to provide access to tests. The fact that a student didn't score well, didn't score as well as hoped, or didn't score within the range of students usually accepted to a particular institution of higher education, does not, in itself, mean that they have a disability that requires accommodations.

COLLEGE BOARD ACCOMMODATIONS

College Board accommodations may be provided differently than classroom accommodations. Know how accommodations are given on College Board tests, and which are the most appropriate for your student.

- Once approved, with limited exceptions, a student remains approved until one year after high school graduation and doesn't need to request accommodations again for subsequent exams. College Board offers many types of accommodations and frequently receives and approves requests for new types of accommodations.
- There is no "self-pacing" for the SAT or the PSAT/NMSQT. A student must stay for the entire length of the test and can't move onto the next section, or leave, until the time (including extended time) is complete.
- Extended time is appropriate where a disability impacts the need for time. If a student is requesting extended time solely for the purpose of taking a break, request "extra breaks" and not extended time.

Resources

bigfuture.org

Students and families are provided with a wealth of information regarding postsecondary education planning at this website. Topics range from the college search to the financial aid process. Videos from students and counseling professionals provide insightful advice.

sat.org

This website provides information regarding the SAT® Suite of Assessments. Included on the site are descriptions of the assessments, important dates, practice questions, and much more.

satpractice.org

Access free, world class test practice for all students through Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy®. Students can practice for the SAT using diagnostic quizzes, full-length practice tests, interactive problems, and personalized practice recommendations. Students will also receive instant feedback on their answers so they can see their progress and make the most of their study time.

studentaid.gov

This is the comprehensive U.S. government site that covers all information related to financial aid. It also has a “Prepare for College” section that details the financial benefits of attending college, explores career options, and provides academic and financial aid checklists.

collegeboard.org/counselors

In addition to providing registration links for our counselor workshops, this website also provides registration links for all webinars offered during the school year. The webinars are specifically designed for counselors and cover college advising topics such as the college application process, writing letters of recommendation, financial aid, advising special student populations, building your counseling program and leadership, and much more.

nacacnet.org

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) is an organization of more than 14,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. This site provides excellent resources for counseling professionals, students, and families.

schoolcounselor.org

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors’ efforts to help students focus on academic, career, and social/emotional development so they can achieve success in school and be prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA provides professional development, publications, and other resources, research, and advocacy to professional school counselors around the globe.