

## College Application Timeline

Date	Regular Decision (Common App, Coalition)	Early Decision (Common App, Coalition)	QuestBridge Application*
Sept.			26th - QuestBridge Application Due
Oct.	1st - FAFSA/CSS Opens	1st - FAFSA/CSS Opens	1st - FAFSA/CSS Opens  10th - College Rankings/Match Agreement Due  16th - Finalist Notification
Nov.		1st - Common App/Coalition App Essays, Written Supplements, ED Agreement, Transcript, School Report, Two Recs, and \$75 fee due. *  1st - Architecture Portfolio and Application Due	4th - QuestBridge Regular Decision Opens
Dec.	1st - Rice/Baylor Medical Scholars Application Due  1st - Common App/Coalition App Essays, Written Supplements, ED Agreement, Transcript, School Report, Two Recs, \$75 fee, and Financial Assistance App due for Shepherd School of Music.  1st - Preliminary Audition Video submitted to Shepherd*	1st - Rice/Baylor Medical Scholars Application Due	2nd - QuestBridge Match Decisions Released  15th - Regular Decision Work due
Jan.	1st - Most Common App/Coalition App Essays, Written Supplements, ED Agreement, Transcript, School Report, Two Recs, and \$75 fee due. *  1st - Architecture Portfolio and Application Due  1st - Music Teacher Rec Due for		

	Shepherd		
Feb.	1st - Midyear Grades due	1st - Midyear Grades due	
Mar.	1st - Last Day to Submit FAFSA, CSS, and Supporting Financial Aid Documents due*	1st - Last Day to Submit FAFSA, CSS, and Supporting Financial Aid Documents due*	

\*For specific deadline dates, check with the individual school.

### Senior Tips

- Meet with your college counselor! If you haven't already, why aren't you? They're going to be a crucial point of contact for questions and guidance right up to and after you apply.
- Request letters of recommendation from your teachers and college counselors, if you haven't already! Make sure you give your teachers enough notice so they aren't rushing.
- Retake the SAT/ACT if you need to do so. Senior year should NOT be the first year you are taking these exams!
- SUBMIT your applications! Keep any eye on deadlines, especially if you intend to apply to specialized programs, Early Decision (I and II), and Restricted and regular Early Decision (I and II).
- Make sure you send your official transcripts on time! In addition, check in with your school to make sure that your mid-year report is also submitted, because colleges need them even if you can't submit them by the time you send in your application.
- Apply for financial aid and scholarships! Take note of the requirements you need for applying, the deadlines, and that you have enough time to fill out the FAFSA (and the CSS if you're applying to private schools), because they'll need a lot of important information involving your family's taxes, income, and assets.
- Make a decision! Once the admissions decisions start coming through, you'll have to consider which school you'll actually attend once you have your acceptances. If you've been waitlisted, let them know ASAP if you're still interested in their school, and don't miss the confirmation deadlines! Make sure you also let the other schools to which you've been accepted that you will not be attending, so they can offer your spot to a student on their waitlist as soon as possible.

### Junior Tips

- Start thinking about the kinds of schools you're interested in! The right school for you isn't necessarily based in rank. Consider things like location, size, professor/student ratio, cost of attendance, etc.
- Make a spreadsheet of potential schools! We recommend color coding based on reach/target/safety schools, organizing by preference, and noting down standardized test requirements, costs of attendance, applications deadlines, and any other information you might think is useful when you're comparing schools.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT, if you haven't already! IN ADDITION, if you're interested in applying for the national merit scholarship, you must take the PSAT your junior year to be eligible.
- Take the SAT/ACT early enough! You want to give yourself time to see if you need improvement and to take it again, or maybe even a couple times, if you get the chance.
- Keep up your grades! Your grades junior year/first semester senior year are the most important, because they will be the scores that colleges will evaluate most critically when looking at your application since they are indicative of your ability to perform at the time that you apply.
- Become a leader in your clubs! Having leadership positions demonstrates your initiative, ability to take responsibility, your passion, and your character.
- Research and visit schools once you compile a list, if you get the opportunity! If you aren't able to tour the schools you're interested in, most schools have virtual tours for you to watch online. College tours are great way to get a feel for what actually living and attending classes at those colleges and universities is actually like.
- Meet with your college counselor! This time is when they can give you the most information and be the most help to you when you're applying to college.
- Consider asking for letters of recommendation at the end of junior year! Teachers will have more time to think about what to write for you if you give them more of a head's up, and summer's a great time for them to start.

#### Sophomore/Freshman Tips

- Keep an eye on your grades! It's NOT TRUE that you can slack off until junior year; while it's true that your grades matter most junior and senior year, if it looks like you weren't putting in any effort when you started out, it reflects poorly on your motivations.
  - However, colleges value an upward trend! Don't be discouraged if you tried your best and didn't get the grades you want. Just continue to work hard to improve in the future.

- Set up your course load from the start so that you can take the most challenging and engaging courses you can. Colleges want to see that you've put in the most effort you can when it comes to your academic load.
- Begin to volunteer around your community and get involved at your school! It's fine to experiment when you're trying to find out what you're interested in, but if you find things you're most passionate about, it's better to have a few of those than to be involved in everything.
- Establish good relationships with your teachers and counselors. It's good to start out on the right foot rather than trying to create or mend those relationships further down the road.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT as a sophomore if you want to see earlier where you need to improve on the real exam!