

Junior Night: Preparing for senior year and life after high school ...

What schools are seeking:

- Well-rounded students: community service (hours, consistency), sports, theater, work-experience, but not students who have crammed in whatever might look good. Genuine people who have genuine interests.
- A full schedule of classes all four years. Challenge yourself—it's the most important factor (academic electives, outside college classes). They are not expecting "honors" classes if your school doesn't offer them. However, our core classes are "college prep".
- No slacking off senior year. It is better for grades to be on an upward trend than a downward one.
- Test scores: not all schools weigh them heavily or even insist on them.

What should juniors be doing this semester?

VISIT, VISIT, VISIT...

- Visit schools you are not interested in: This is very helpful for a number of reasons.
 1. You can practice asking questions or even interviewing in a low-pressure environment.
 2. A number of students discover that they actually are very interested in a school that they didn't think they would like. Don't fall for the "there is only one school for me" syndrome.
 3. Determine if you want rural or urban, single-sex or co-ed, a core curriculum, fraternities/sororities, and so on.
 4. Find out what different ways there are of delivering curriculum.
- Schedule interviews. Not all schools will let you schedule interviews as juniors, but if they do, it is excellent practice. If it is a school that is relatively far away, it might be difficult to get back there for an interview in the fall.
- Use spring in-service days, February break, and April break for visiting. If you are interested in the school, you should try to stay overnight, if possible. You can also use Wednesday afternoons to visit local schools. There are 15 four-year institutions within 50 miles from TSA. There are 59 that are less than 100 miles away.
- The NECAP/PSAT days are available for multi-day trips in the fall, but there are not many other opportunities.
- Many colleges keep track of how many times you make meaningful contact. Get on their radar early.
- Get (and keep) the business card from the admissions person, so you can follow up.
- Send thank you notes.

FIND OUT ABOUT SCHOOLS

- Use guidebooks, internet resources, talk to alumni, and go to college fairs.
- Read the TSA College Guidance Handbook
- Colleges that Change Lives: www.ctcl.org This is also available as a book.

REVIEW APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- As you begin to build a list of potential schools, review their applications and websites now to find out what they will require.
- Determine what standardized tests you may need to take. Similar schools have similar testing requirements.
- Determine if the schools have any special requirements, such as a graded analytical paper.
- Your school may want you to acquire a login prior to allowing you access to the application, Be sure to save your login information (login name and password). It is helpful for both the parents and the student to have the login information.
- Completely fill out a draft copy of an application by the end of the summer, including "the essay".

TAKE STANDARDIZED TESTS

- Sign up for them in the spring. ACT in April or June. SAT in May or June.
- Schools will accept either the ACT or the SAT, but if you take the ACT, be sure you sign up for the “optional” writing section.
- Know if you might need Subject Tests. Pre-plan when might be the best to take them. You can NOT take the SAT Subject Tests on the same day you take the SAT Reasoning Test. These are single-subject matter tests. DO NOT take any of them without doing extra studying to prepare. For example, do not assume that, simply because you have taken a U.S. History course, you will do well on the History SAT Subject Test. It is also recommended that you take them very soon after taking the class (like chemistry) instead of waiting 6 months later.
- Arrange to send your free scores to colleges when you register. If you feel you have bombed the test, you can stop them from being sent out. Even if you do not know for sure where you want to apply, send the scores to some of the more obvious contenders: UVM or UNH, for example.
- If you are eligible for a fee waiver, see KB.

VSAC (Vermont Student Assistance Corporation)

- VSAC is one of the best state organizations of its kind. Students who live in Vermont or who attend school in Vermont are eligible for many programs.

TSA’s Code (CEEB code or Registration code)

- Our code is 460411. Put this everywhere someone wants your high school’s code.

Miscellaneous terminology:

PG year: Post-graduation. Students may choose to do an additional year of school between graduation and college.

Early Applications: Early Decision (ED) is binding. Early Action (EA) is not.

Deferral: Get accepted to a school and then ask to wait a year to go.

The Common Application: About 350 schools accept one common application, but they often require supplemental information. www.commonapp.org