

Parent College Prep

Junior and senior year in high school is a pivotal time in your student's life. The need to take challenging courses, earn good grades and stay focused on preparing for college can frequently be overwhelming — for them and for you! With so much to accomplish and so many deadlines, this checklist is designed to help you and your student keep on track.

Junior Year

- ✓ Request a copy of your student's academic record to verify that all requirements are nearly fulfilled and to make sure your student is taking the right classes for his or her college plans.
- ✓ Explore both colleges and financial aid programs at:
 - www.ohe.ct.gov/heweb/CollegesList.asp
 - www.ohe.ct.gov/heweb/ProgramSearch.asp
 - <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>
 - <http://collegecost.ed.gov/scorecard>
 - www.petersons.com
 - www.collegerealitycheck.com
- ✓ If you do not have a home computer, visit your closest public library or ask for help at your high school. Connecticut's public libraries and your high school have free online access, test preparation books, college and financial aid guides and career resources.
- ✓ Ask your high school about visits from college admissions representatives and upcoming college and financial aid information sessions. These sessions are held mostly at night to accommodate parents; often schedules are posted at guidance offices or on high school websites.
- ✓ Ask when your student should register and take the PSATs. Doing so will qualify him or her for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. Go to: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html.
- ✓ If your student has a disability, one SSD (Services for Students with Disabilities) Student Eligibility Form is needed to request accommodations on the College Board tests. As long as your student is enrolled at the same school, the school-approved accommodations will remain the same throughout high school. For more information on resources for students with disabilities, go to www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities/ssd-online.
- ✓ Start preparing for the SAT by going to www.collegeboard.com/satprep for practice questions, test-taking approaches, and to review math concepts, sample student-written essays and the official SAT practice test. Students can register for the "Official SAT Question of the Day" free e-mail or app.
- ✓ Ask your guidance counselor when your student should register and take the SATs or the ACTs (<https://sat.collegeboard.org/home>; www.actstudent.org) and whether you may be eligible for a fee waiver for the PSAT, SAT and ACT.
- ✓ Check with sports coaches for fulfillment of NCAA requirements available at: www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/eligibility-center.
- ✓ Ask your guidance counselor when the Advanced Placement (AP) class tests will be administered – www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html.

- ✓ Make sure your student continues to participate in activities outside of the classroom such as sports, student government, school clubs, band, chorus and community projects.
- ✓ Narrow down a list of colleges to visit. Tour campuses while colleges are in session, if possible. Before starting, review Questions to Ask When Choosing a College: www.ohe.ct.gov/edinfo/pdfs/Questions.pdf.
- ✓ Create a hard copy or electronic file for each college of interest and use these to organize and maintain notes, correspondence, deadlines or any other information you have accumulated.
- ✓ Attend the National College Fair held each spring in Hartford: www.nacacnet.org.
- ✓ Help your student select his or her senior year courses, continuing to take challenging college-preparatory and AP courses.
- ✓ Have your student check with his or her school for a summer reading list.
- ✓ Encourage your student to jump-start summer by working in a job, internship, or coursework that matches his or her professional interests.

Senior Year

- ✓ Check your student's transcripts for accuracy and fulfillment of graduation requirements.
- ✓ Help your student create a master calendar to keep track of test dates, admission application deadlines, financial aid deadlines, etc.
- ✓ Review your student's list of final college choices. Ask if these colleges require or accept the Common Application – www.commonapp.org.
- ✓ Verify with your student's guidance counselor which subjects and when your student should take SAT Subject tests: <https://sat.collegeboard.org/about-tests>.
- ✓ Ask your guidance counselor if your student should register for and take the SAT/ACT again.
- ✓ Double-check your student's college and financial aid application deadlines on your master calendar.
- ✓ Organize all application material respective college folders.
- ✓ Check with your student about selecting teachers/mentors who will write college recommendations. Have your student outline a "Brag Sheet" or list of accomplishments so recommendation writers will be able to highlight appropriate achievements.
- ✓ Have your student contact colleges to verify how interviews are handled. Colleges may invite students to interview or they may accept interview appointments from students. If a college accepts an interview appointment, have your student schedule a convenient time to meet admissions representatives. Use your "Brag Sheet" to create a student resume to present. Advise your student to note the name(s) of interviewers and addresses for follow-up thank-you notes.
- ✓ Talk to your student about the pros and cons of applying for an early decision or early action admission.
- ✓ Remember that Connecticut's community colleges www.ct.edu/connsctu have "open door admissions" policies requiring only a high school diploma or equivalency. These colleges offer many pathways for transferring coursework to four-year colleges and universities as well.
- ✓ Double check with the admissions office of each college to verify it has received all of your student's documents.

- ✓ Your student should contact the guidance department to have his or her first-semester transcripts sent to selected colleges. Final transcripts also will need to be sent at the end of the school year.
- ✓ Create your FSA ID to apply for federal student aid here: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/fsaid>
- ✓ Complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You will need to estimate your income taxes if they are not complete. Once taxes are finished, make sure to go back and enter the correct numbers by your colleges' financial aid deadline.
- ✓ If your student is a male and age 18 at the time you complete the FAFSA, he must register for selective service.
- ✓ If you need help completing your FAFSA, you may meet with financial officers in person on College Goal Sunday (www.collegegoalsundayct.org) or by visiting a CONNTAC, Connecticut Talent Assistance Cooperative office (www.conntacinc.org/contact.htm).
- ✓ Expect the Student Aid Report (SAR) from the FAFSA within 2-3 weeks after filing. The SAR compiles all the information you and your student submitted on the FAFSA. Be sure to check for accuracy and correct any errors. The SAR also provides you with your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which is the dollar amount used in awarding financial aid.
- ✓ Check with your student's list of colleges to make sure they do not require an additional financial aid form, the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile – <https://profileonline.collegeboard.com>.
- ✓ Discuss with your student your household budget for college expenses such as books, supplies, travel to/from school, eating out, etc. Use the calculator from the U.S. Department of Education available at: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/budgeting/creating-your-budget>.
- ✓ See if your student qualifies for any scholarships or grants listed at: www.ohe.ct.gov/edinfo/pdfs/FinancialAidResources.pdf or at www.ohe.ct.gov/SFA.
- ✓ Check your high school's webpage or guidance office for scholarships or grants that are available to town residents or from local organizations.
- ✓ Check the financial aid webpages of the colleges to which your student applied for financial aid deadlines and campus-based scholarships.
- ✓ Double-check with the financial aid office of each college to make sure it has received all required materials and applications.
- ✓ Be on the lookout for college acceptance notices. Schools without rolling admissions tend to start sending notices in March.
- ✓ Attend college Open House(s) with your student to help pinpoint a final choice.
- ✓ Review all admission decisions and financial aid awards. Note deadlines for response.
- ✓ In April-May, you and your student should make your final college choice. Your student should notify the college that he or she will attend and send in a deposit. Note deadlines for other fees and paperwork.
- ✓ If your student is not accepted to any college, discuss options with his or her guidance counselor.
- ✓ If your student is unsure of his or her future direction, joining AmeriCorps for a year or so may provide valuable training and community experience while earning income, an education award, health care benefits and, if eligible, child care. For information on AmeriCorps programs in Connecticut, visit the Join AmeriCorps page at [www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/join-amicorps](http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/americorps/join-amicorps).

- ✓ Your student should send thank-you notes to those who assisted in post-high school planning, including guidance counselors, teachers, community members and college interviewers.
- ✓ In the spring, make sure your student studies for AP exams.
- ✓ Contact your guidance counselor for final transcripts to be sent to your student's college.
- ✓ Congratulate your student and yourself on a job well done!