



**SENIOR PLAN**  
**Montrose High School**

## September

1. Use a calendar/planner to stay organized and keep track of important dates.
2. Narrow your college choices; see your school counselor for assistance; see list of college search websites in this packet.
3. Get Involved in your Senior Year! If you have not been involved in school or community activities, now is the time to build your résumé!
4. College and military recruiters frequently make visits to our school; this is a great opportunity to gather information about different programs and schools. Listen for announcements.
5. Allocate time for college searches and applications. It is a process that takes time, it can't be done in a few minutes.
6. Clean up your social media. Selective schools and scholarship programs check your cyber footprint, so get those unflattering photos and posts off the web!

## October

1. Fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) Have a frank discussion with your parents/guardians about college costs and how much they're planning to contribute. Discuss financial aid.
2. Begin asking teachers and/or counselors to complete recommendations for colleges that require them. Make your requests at least two weeks in advance of due date.
3. Familiarize yourself with deadlines for schools or programs to which you are applying; some deadlines are as early as November.
4. Schedule college campus visits and/or interviews. These can be excused absences with appropriate documentation and prior notification to the high school office.
5. Begin writing college essays for applications that require them.
6. Begin scholarship search and applications. Popular free websites are listed in this packet. Many deadlines are in the fall so pay attention to those dates. Local scholarships can be found in the Counselor's office. Scholarships are added as the new information becomes available during the school year, so check in regularly.
7. Register with Fast Web <http://www.fastweb.com> or other scholarship search websites. (Fast Web and other websites provide FREE information on scholarships, college search, jobs and internships customized to the INDIVIDUAL student profile).

## November

1. If you are applying early action or early decision, complete your applications; deadlines are usually between mid-November and December 1. Apply online, but make sure all materials are sent completed and on time, with necessary signatures, letters of recommendation if needed, and transcripts and test scores.
2. Continue scholarship search and applications! Many deadlines are in the fall so pay attention to those dates. Local/popular scholarships will be located in the Counselor's Office.

## December

1. You should try to finish your ACT and/or SAT testing by the end of this month.

2. Please do not expect counselors or teachers to write recommendations or do college paperwork for you while school is out for Winter Break. Some applications have January 1 deadlines; remember -- school is not in session until AFTER January 1.
3. Visit with recruiters if you are planning to join the military after graduation.
4. Continue scholarship search and applications!

### **January/February**

1. Check with your counselor for Mid-Year School Report Forms if required by the institution to which you are applying.
2. If you need to, register for the February or April ACT test dates.

### **March**

1. Complete and submit your housing information to the college of your choice.
2. Continue scholarship search and applications.
3. Work on your resume and begin a job hunt if you need to a job before or during college.

### **April**

1. If you have been going through the college application process you will begin to receive admission decisions. Compare financial aid awards; you can sometimes negotiate a better financial aid package.
2. If you are ready, make a decision and send in your deposit.
3. Arrange summer activities early, including volunteering, an interesting job, internship, or job shadow in a profession that interests you.

### **May**

1. Request final transcript be sent to chosen college/program.
2. Prepare for final exams. Remember, colleges will see your final transcript and GPA.
3. Find a summer job.

## **APPLYING TO COLLEGES**

### **Application Forms**

Colleges and universities now have their applications online that you can either print out and send in, or complete online. If you desire a hard copy of an application you need to request it from the institution of your choice. You might also use the Common Application, which over 150 colleges use to streamline the application process. Check it out at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

## **A Student Should Apply to No More Than 10 Schools**

Our guideline is that students have a final list of no more than 10 colleges. This maximum allows a varied and competitive list without becoming counterproductive. Between visiting colleges, interviewing, demonstrating interest and spending the time to write a compelling application, students' efforts can be diminished at each individual school by trying to apply to too many. Because students can only attend one college, this guideline requires students and families to make choices earlier about which institutions will be the best match. Lastly, excessive applications to an institution can adversely affect the chances for all applicants. This guideline helps give each student the best chance possible for acceptance.

## **When to Apply**

The best time to apply is NOW. Colleges have different deadlines for accepting applications. Some schools will close application deadlines by November, while others will accept applications two weeks before classes begin.

The following guidelines may help:

- Apply to selective private schools by December 1.
- Apply to other colleges and universities before the end of the first semester.
- Be sure to check with your college admissions office for specific deadlines.

## **College Visits**

Seniors can have absences excused for a small number of college visits. When you return to school, your parent/guardian should be sure to excuse your absence. Be sure to plan ahead and make up any class work you miss. It is best to plan visits during the school year so you can get the feel for the school while students are on campus.

## **Test Scores**

ACT and/or SAT scores are included as part of your transcript request. More and more schools want the scores sent directly from ACT or SAT. This is done one of two ways:

- List the code of the college on the test registration form before taking the test.
- Log On to your ACT or SAT account and have the scores sent to the college.

## **TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

In early September, students need to be thinking about who they will approach for recommendations. Students who know they are applying early (Nov. 1/Nov. 15 deadlines) need to approach teachers in early September. Each institution will indicate how many teacher recommendations are required, so please read the application carefully. Students should give some thought to whom they will ask for a recommendation. This should be a teacher with whom they have developed an excellent rapport – or a teacher who knows their work ethic.

Many recommendation forms ask students to indicate whether or not to waive the right to review the information contained in the teacher recommendation. It is strongly suggested that students waive this right, because a confidential letter has more credibility, and some teachers will not feel comfortable writing the recommendation if this right is not waived.

When you approach a teacher for a recommendation, please be prepared with:

- A copy of your updated résumé, with the deadline for the recommendation.
- The recommendation form -- filled out at the top (if applicable)
- If you are asking the same teacher(s) to do more than one recommendation [they will write one letter], then present them with a folder in which you place your recommendation forms, your resume, your stamped and addressed envelopes and clearly marked deadline dates.
- Write your recommending teachers a brief thank you note. Writing recommendations is a time-consuming task that all teachers take seriously; so thank them, even before you get word on your status with the school(s).

## ADMISSION POLICIES

Colleges and universities have varying admission practices. Here are some of the terms you might see:

**Early Admission** -- An exceptional student would terminate his/her high school education after the junior year and enroll in college. Admission is highly selective.

**Early Decision** -- Students who have demonstrated sound academic ability apply for admission to their first choice college during the summer or very early in their senior year. Notification of admission is given usually in December. Restrictive policies vary with each school and must be checked carefully to see if early decision works to the individual's advantage. Students who are accepted under early decision plans have an ethical commitment to attend the school. Only students who are very certain of their first choice school should go early decision.

**Early Action** -- This plan does not require the commitment to attend that early decision does. Some selective colleges are increasing the number of students accepted under early decision and early action, thereby decreasing the number of slots available for regular admission. However, students should be very certain of their plans before attempting early decision or early action.

**Rolling Admission** -- The college will notify the applicant as soon as the application has been processed. Most state colleges and universities fall under this category.

**Deferred Admission** -- Some colleges may ask students to wait up to a year before entering based on specific admission requirements.

**Open Admission** -- Students are accepted upon application and only a high school diploma or Hi SET is required for admission. Most community colleges and technical colleges have open admissions.

**Deadline Admissions** -- If the student meets the application deadline (often Jan. 1, or Jan. 15, etc.), the student is then notified of an admission decision by May 1st.

## FINANCIAL AID

The primary responsibility for paying a student's educational expenses belongs to the family. However, family finances alone should not determine the choice of a college. Your child should also examine their desire and ability to attend a specific college or other postsecondary program. If you prepare and follow the steps to applying for financial aid, a partnership of parents, student, government and institution can provide a viable financial aid package for most students.

### Important Facts to Know About Financial Aid for College

- There are funds available to help all students who demonstrate need. You do not need to be poor to qualify for financial aid for college.
- Schools with higher tuition costs are not necessarily more expensive. They sometimes provide the best financial aid.
- The expected family contribution (EFC) remains the same regardless of the cost of the college. Because expenses at different colleges vary and the amount the family is expected to pay remains the same, you could be eligible for more aid at a higher cost college than at a lower cost college.
- Most financial aid is awarded on the basis of demonstrated need: Cost of attendance minus expected family contribution equals financial aid.
- Financial aid is usually offered as a "package". The financial aid package may consist of grants, loans, and student employment.
- In order to receive financial aid you must ask for it! This means you must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form and other paperwork for scholarship applications. These forms must be completed each year a student wants financial aid.

- FAFSA forms should be filed online as soon after October 1st as possible in your senior year. Make sure you are aware of deadlines at the colleges to which you are applying, and contact the financial aid office if you have questions.
- After you submit your FAFSA you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). This gives you your eligibility index for federal and state aid. Your SAR will be sent to the colleges you indicate on your FAFSA. Your colleges will notify you of your eligibility and amount of your financial aid package.
- Colleges will differ in the amount of aid offered to you. You are not obligated to attend a college if the financial aid offered is not sufficient to meet your needs. Also, it is possible to negotiate with the financial aid director at the college you want to attend if you feel more explanation would help in determining your financial aid situation.

## **Federal Financial Aid Programs**

There are several sources of financial aid for prospective college-bound students. One starting point is the link: [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

Here you will find descriptions of federal programs such as:

- Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG)
- Federal Work Study
- Federal Perkins Loan
- Federal Stafford Loan
- Federal Plus

## **POST-SECONDARY PLANNING WEBSITES**

### **COLLEGE INFORMATION**

- The College Board- <http://www.collegeboard.com>
- The National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) - A good resource to an array of links: <http://www.nacacnet.org/memberportal/>
- ACT - Includes test registration and test-prep information: <http://www.act.org>
- Peterson's -Links to the company's many resources: <http://www.petersons.com>
- College View - A good source for information on all colleges: <http://www.collegeview.com>
- College Quest – College Search: [www.collegequest.com](http://www.collegequest.com)
- Fiske Guide Books -From the author of the reliable and popular guidebook comes a full array of college admission-related resources: <http://www.fiskeguide.com/>
- Princeton Review - Test prep, college search and other college-related info: <http://princetonreview.com>
- Mapping Your Future - General info site with 20 variety of information includes a sign-up for monthly e-mail reminders and a newsletter: <http://www.mappingyourfuture.org>

### **APPLICATION SERVICES**

- The Common Application - 200+ schools accept it and you should use it. <http://www.commonapp.org>
- Princeton Review - Direct link to on-line applications for 700+ schools: [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)

### **FINANCIAL AID**

- The Financial Aide Information Page - [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)
- Missouri MO\$T Program – [www.missourimost.org](http://www.missourimost.org)
- Missouri Department of Higher Ed – [www.dhe.mo.gov](http://www.dhe.mo.gov)
- US Department of Education – [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)
- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - A must for anyone applying for need-based aid. You can apply online: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
- Get your PINs for the web-FAFSA – [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)

- Sallie Mae - Information about loans and payment options: [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)
- How Stuff Works - Interesting and comprehensive site with loads of details and helpful tools: <http://money.howstuffworks.com/college-financial-aid.htm>

## SCHOLARSHIPS

- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)
- [www.gocollege.com](http://www.gocollege.com)
- [www.collegeanswer.com](http://www.collegeanswer.com)
- [www.unigo.com](http://www.unigo.com)

## SPECIAL INTEREST

- The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) - <http://www.ncaa.org>
- The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) - <http://www.naia.org>
- Macleans - For those looking into Canadian schools, this is an invaluable resource: [www.macleans.ca/universities](http://www.macleans.ca/universities)
- Canadian Colleges - A general and very helpful site: <http://uwaterloo.ca/canu>
- Learning Disabilities Association - [www.ldanatl.org](http://www.ldanatl.org) 9 • Students with Learning Disabilities – [www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)
- Association on Higher Education and Disability - Host of information posted by international, multicultural organization of professionals committed to full participation in higher education for persons with disabilities: <http://www.ahead.org>
- Children and Adults with ADD - <http://www.chadd.org> • American Association of University Women- [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org) • LD Online - Interactive learning guide on disabilities for parents, children and educators: <http://www.ldonline.org>

## CAREER INFORMATION

- Missouri Connections- [www.missouriconnections.org](http://www.missouriconnections.org) \*Forgot your password? Use the guest login.\*
- ASVAB Career Exploration Program - Developed by Department of Defense; free, comprehensive career site: <http://www.asvabprogram.com>
- Mapping Your Future - Multi-lingual tool kit on career planning: <http://mappingyourfuture.org/planyourcareer/>
- Military Career Guide Online – [www.militarycareers.com](http://www.militarycareers.com)
- Internship Programs - Listings of +7800 programs and 200,000 positions: <http://www.internshipprograms.com/>

## ALTERNATIVE AND YEAR-OFF PROGRAMS

- Study Abroad - <http://www.studyabroad.com>
- AmeriCorps - National Service Program: <http://www.americorps.org>
- Gap Year – A host of travel and work ideas for students prior to heading off to college: <http://www.gapyear.com>
- Outward Bound - Link for adventure-based environmental program: <http://www.outwardbound.org>
- Taking Off - Resources for gap year programs all over world: <http://www.takingoff.net>
- World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms - Dedicated to helping those who would like to volunteer on organic farms internationally: <http://www.woof.org>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### A+ Designation

If you are earning your A+ designation, you must remember to arrange a meeting with your counselor prior to graduation to be sure you have met all program requirements.

### NCAA/ NAIA Eligibility Centers

If you are planning to attend college on an athletic scholarship, or are being recruited as a college athlete, you must register with the NCAA and/or the NAIA Eligibility Center and follow specific procedures to ensure your eligibility.

Register at: <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/> AND/OR <https://play.mynaia.org/>

See your counselor for more information as soon as possible. \*You must request a test score be reported directly to NCAA or NAIA. These organizations will not accept test score reports from your high school\*