

12th Grade

How to Guide and Advise Your Senior

The senior year is when everything comes together. It is also the year in which students see the rewards of their hard work and planning.

1. Continue to monitor academic progress.

Students may think that their senior grades are not important. They need to know, however, that colleges often ask to see first semester grades. Students also need to realize that, at the end of the year, their high school will forward their final transcript (with their senior grades) to the college they plan to attend.

2. Have your son or daughter sign up for the first ACT or SAT if necessary.

Take a look at your son or daughter's previous test scores and determine if he/she need to retake the ACT and/or SAT. Highly selective colleges like Princeton and MIT look for ACT scores of 28+ and for SAT scores of 1275+. Selective colleges look for ACT scores in the 22-27 range and for SAT scores in the 1150-1250 range. For the majority of their programs, public colleges and universities look for ACT scores of 19-23 and for SAT scores of around 1000.

If your son or daughter is hoping to be accepted into a competitive college program, or if he/she is applying for scholarships, test scores can be important. For advice, on whether or not your son or daughter should retake the ACT and/or SAT, talk to your son or daughter's high school counselor and/or call the college admissions office.

If students do not do well on the ACT and/or SAT, this does not mean that they will not be accepted into the college of their choice or that they will not do well in college. Admissions officers look at a variety of criteria when evaluating applicants and many students who do not do well on the ACT or SAT do very well in college.

3. Obtain and complete college applications in the fall.

Students apply electronically to all colleges. All applications require a high school transcript and they are requested through Parchment.

If the counselor is required to write a recommendation, he/she would welcome written information and anecdotes with regards to your son or daughter's strengths, interests, talents, leadership skills, and educational plans. You should also have your son/daughter give the counselor a list of his/her "Activities and Awards" or fill out an information sheet.

In addition to counselor recommendations, many college and scholarship applications also require one or more teacher recommendations. If a student needs a recommendation from a teacher, he/she should put the request in writing and provide the teacher with a list of his/her "Activities and Awards." The student should also give the teacher instructions on what information to include in the recommendation, along with instructions on what to do with the recommendation once it's completed. If the teacher is to mail it, the teacher should be provided with an addressed, stamped envelope. (A thank you note to a teacher or counselor who has written a recommendation would be appropriate, and very much appreciated.)

Even if an application does not require a recommendation, you may still include one. Also, if there's information that you want the admissions office to take into consideration, you or your son or daughter can write an essay or letter and include it with the application. If a recommendation is needed, make sure to give your teacher/counselor a 2 week notice.

Tip: *It is important that your son or daughter apply to at least one "safe" college. This is a college to which he/she is sure to be accepted, and one that you can definitely afford.*

Tip: Students who are *absolutely* certain of where they want to go to college may want to consider early decision admission. Early decision students agree to enroll if they are accepted, and the colleges they apply to make an early decision on their acceptance. (Early decision students are usually notified between November and January.)

Tip: Many colleges will send a postcard to let you know that they have received your son or daughter's application. If you do not hear from a college, you may want to call to make sure that they've received the application and that they have all of the information they need or submit correspondence via email to the admissions office.

4. Attend local Financial Aid Workshop and complete financial aid and scholarship applications.

If you are applying for financial aid, complete the FAFSA and submit it as soon after January 1st as possible.

5. Make the decision.

At some point in the spring, you and your son or daughter must make a choice. ***Do not choose a college before making a college visit.*** Once the choice is made, complete the necessary forms and, as a courtesy, notify the other colleges. If your son or daughter is planning to live on campus, be sure to send in the required housing deposit before the deadline.