

College Timeline - Freshman Year

1. Meet with your school counselor

At MISD you and your parents will meet with your counselor to discuss the degree plan you are seeking.

2. Get involved in an extracurricular activity

Colleges want well-rounded students

- What you do with your free time reveals a lot, such as:
- Whether you are mature enough to stick to something over the long haul.
- What your nonacademic interests are—what makes you tick
- How you've contributed to something beyond yourself
- Whether you can manage your time and priorities

Consider your interests and abilities first

Go for depth, not breadth

- Colleges are more impressed by a real commitment to one activity rather than a superficial involvement in multiple

Keep your balance – you don't have to do it all

If you're not a joiner

- You don't have to be in a group activity. You can do something that is by yourself and still be well-rounded

Working and/or volunteering counts

3. If you want to play a sport in college

Talk with your coach

Find out about academic eligibility rules

- GPA, SAT or ACT scores
- Check with our counselor to make sure you are on track

Attend a sports camp

Start a sports résumé – keep it updated, make a performance or skills video

Send letters of interest to coaches

Register with the NCAA eligibility center

Follow up

- Fill out questionnaires and profile forms
- The follow up call should come from you, not your parents

4. Start thinking about careers

5. Start saving for college

Sophomore Year

1. Meet with your school counselor—again

2. Take the PSAT in October

- This is how National Merit Scholar is determined
- Provides great feedback on academic weaknesses while there is still time to improve

3. Are you interested in attending a U.S. military academy?

- Request a precandidate questionnaire and complete it.

4. Tour a college campus in your area

- Even if you don't plan to attend that college it gives you an idea of what to look for when you do visit your dream school.

5. Update your résumé

6. Start an academic résumé

- Volunteer work
- Extracurricular activities
- GPA
- Clubs

7. Start looking for scholarships

8. Start practicing the SAT

- collegeboard.org has practice tests
- Khan Academy

9. Start practicing the ACT

- Act.org

10. Collegeboard.org

- Visit the site often
- Become familiar with “Big Future”
- Look up your dream colleges and look at their requirements for admission

Junior Year

The Summer Before

- ✓ **Read** interesting books—no matter what you go to college for you'll need a good vocabulary and strong reading comprehension skills.
- ✓ **Think about yourself.** What are your goals? What are you curious about? What are you good at? What do you like to do in your spare time? Knowing the basics about yourself will help you make the right college choices.
- ✓ **KNOW** the SAT and ACT testing schedule. Registration dates are IMPORTANT!!

September

- ✓ Meet with your counselor/GO Center
- ✓ Resolve to get the best grades
- ✓ Extracurricular Activity

October

- ✓ Take PSAT/NMSQT
- ✓ Attend a college fair
- ✓ Learn about financial aid

November

- ✓ Research scholarships
- ✓ Plan for the SAT
- ✓ Major in the arts?
 - Ask your teachers about requirements for a portfolio or audition.

December

- ✓ Review the PSAT/NMSQT Score Report with your school counselor.

January

- ✓ Start thinking about what you want to study in college.
- ✓ Majors and careers section at collegeboard.org.

February

- ✓ Think about letters of recommendation.
- ✓ Ask your counselor about SAT Subject Tests.

March

- ✓ Narrow your college list.
- ✓ Practice the SAT

April

- ✓ Plan your courses for your senior year.
- ✓ Plan campus visits.

May

- ✓ NCAA requirements to play Division I or II sports.
- ✓ Summer job or volunteer work

Before You Leave School for the Summer

- ✓ Check with your counselor about local scholarships, military academies or ROTC.
- ✓ Always send your SAT and ACT scores to the schools you want to attend. You are allowed 4 free sends. If you don't take the advantage you will have to pay to have scores sent to each school.
- ✓ **KNOW that deadlines are important!!! *Colleges will NOT extend their deadlines for you.***

Senior Year

The Summer Before

- ✓ Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center if playing sports in college (www.ncaa.org).
- ✓ Visit colleges—call for campus tour schedule.
- ✓ Application essays
- ✓ Write a résumé (accomplishments, activities, and work experiences). This will help with letters of recommendation and filling out applications.

September

- ✓ Finalize your list of colleges.
- ✓ Start checklist of application requirements, deadlines, fees
- ✓ Set up campus visits and interviews
- ✓ Get PINS for the FAFSA for both yourself and one for your parents from www.pin.ed.gov

October

- ✓ Early Decision and Early Action plan, get started now.
- ✓ Ask for letters of recommendation from your counselor, teacher, coaches, and employers.
- ✓ First drafts of college essays
- ✓ Submit your FAFSA as soon as possible.

November

- ✓ Final draft of college essays
- ✓ Apply for colleges with rolling admissions.

December

- ✓ Wrap up college applications before winter break.
- ✓ Apply for scholarships in time to meet application deadlines.

January

- ✓ Submit financial aid forms
- ✓ if college wants your midyear grade get them from your counselor
- ✓ New honors? Let college know.

February

- ✓ Contact colleges to be sure all materials have been received.
- ✓ File income tax returns early. Some colleges want your family's tax information before finalizing financial aid offers.
- ✓ Correct or update your Student Aid Report (SAR) that follows the FAFSA.

March

- ✓ Admission decisions start arriving.
- ✓ Revisit colleges that accepted you if it's hard to make a choice.
- ✓ Don't let senioritis set in. Finish strong!

April

- ✓ Carefully compare financial aid award letters.
- ✓ Notify colleges that you won't be attending (so another student can have your spot).

May

- ✓ Make sure your AP Grade Report is sent to your college.
- ✓ Thank everyone that helped you.
- ✓ If you weren't accepted, don't give up—talk to your counselor.

You are on your way!!

- ✓ Final transcripts to your college choice.
- ✓ Final transcripts to NCAA Eligibility Center if you're playing sports.