Tesla STEM Post-High School Planning Handbook

(Class of 2022)

CEEB/School Code for tests &
application identification: **480976**

Nikola Tesla STEM High School
4301 228th Ave NE
Redmond, WA 98053
Phone: (425) 936-2770
http://tesla.lwsd.org/

Table of Contents

Options After High School

Apprenticeship

Who: If you would like career training without attending a technical program or college and if you learn best by a hands-on approach, you may want to begin an apprenticeship.

What: Apprenticeship is an organized system through which practical skills of a trade are learned. A craft worker supervises the learning process while teaching trade skills on the job. Examples of apprenticeships include automotive utilities, energy, and construction.

How Long: Depending on the trade, your training term can last from one to four years. While you are learning your trade, you must also take classes on related subjects. This is usually provided by the employer, a community or technical college, or through an approved correspondence course.

Cost: Apprentices earn a wage while enrolled in an apprenticeship program.

Community and Technical Colleges

Who: Community or technical colleges offer two-year liberal arts programs or specific career training programs. After completing their studies, students receive a certificate, diploma, or an associate's degree. Many students then transfer to a four-year college or university to continue their education. Other graduates go directly into the work setting.

What: Community and technical colleges offer numerous degrees and certificates in a wide variety of academic professional, and technical fields. Check with community or technical colleges for more information.

How Long: Associate degrees usually require two years. Technical associated degrees, certificates, and diplomas may be two years or less.

Cost: Costs for attendance varies depending on the school. Community and technical colleges are usually less expensive than a 4-year college or university.

Private Career Schools

Who: These schools are for students who have chosen particular occupations and want to learn specialized training in a specific field. Many colleges of technology function like a community/technical college and offer general courses that students can use transfer. These programs are available at privately owned schools and at many community/technical colleges or colleges of technology. Students usually receive a license, a certificate/diploma, or an associate's degree.

What: These programs offer practical training in specific employment fields such as computers, electronics, automotive, cosmetology, and health occupations.

How Long: Program completion varies from several weeks to several years, depending on career requirements.

Cost: Varies with the program selected and length of the program.

Gap Year
(Travel or Community Service)

Who: Some students choose to take time after high school or in between college breaks to explore another culture through travel or volunteer.

What: There are many programs available for students such as: - American Field Service (AFS) Intercultural Programs: full-year, semester or summer programs abroad. AmeriCorps Corporation for National Service: offers students opportunities for community service through full and part-time programs. National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS): wilderness education expeditions in the US and abroad.

How Long: Formal programs can last from weeks to months. Many students schedule their breaks from school with college calendars.

Cost: Many programs are in a volunteer capacity, but stipends may be available for housing and food. Participants may be awarded scholarship incentives for education.

Military Options

Who: The Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard offer a variety of options for part-time and full-time service. Other training and education opportunities for high school students include: Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at a traditional college, or the service academies, which offer baccalaureate degrees tuition-free; The US Military Academy (West Point, NY), The US Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD), The US Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO), and the US Coast Guard Academy (New London, CT).

How long: Varies with the selected option and associated service obligation. For more information about the military, visit www.military.com or www.usmilitary.com.

Work Full-Time

Who: If you are interested in earning a paycheck and not attending school, you may choose to work full-time.

What: Full-time work for high school graduates varies, but most jobs are available in the service industry (retail, food industry, etc.)

How Long: Most jobs available for high school graduates do not require formal structured training.

Cost: The full-time worker usually earns money on an hourly basis.

Colleges and Universities

Who: Colleges and universities offer four-year degrees such as a Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), or graduate degrees. Some also offer two-year associate degrees. Universities offer a huge course selection and have extensive resources. Class size varies with the subject area, course level and total student enrollment.

What: Colleges and universities offer many programs of study. They may provide a liberal arts education or more specific specialization such as nursing. College professors see teaching as their primary responsibility and classes tend to be smaller than those in universities. University professors are usually involved in both teaching and research. Graduate students, rather than professors, may teach some of the classes at universities.

How Long: Bachelor's degrees usually require four years or longer of study. Master's and doctoral degrees require more time following the bachelor's degree and vary in length of time to complete.

Cost: Costs for colleges and universities vary depending on the type of institution (public/ independent) and other factors such as housing, books, and supplies.

Community/Technical College

Every year, approximately 6 % of graduating Tesla STEM Seniors attend local community colleges such as Bellevue College, the Lake Washington Institute of Technology, Cascadia College, and more. Community college enrollment is projected to increase over the next decade as it becomes an increasingly more attractive option for undergraduate students.

To help educate our Tesla STEM students and families on the breadth and variety of meaningful options that exist for students after high school, below are some of the most common reasons students share nationwide that they choose to attend community college:

1) **Affordability:** With a total outstanding student loan debt of $1.38 trillion in the United States, it is no wonder that there is existing and increasing concern over the potential burden of taking on debt for higher education. For families where four-year university tuition costs may be burdensome to daily living, it is vital to have opportunities, such as those found at community colleges, where tuition is **roughly half that of state colleges**. The extreme price difference makes students and families look toward community colleges as an affordable alternative to receive a variety of degrees/certificates such as Associate Degrees, Bachelors of Applied Sciences, certificates and more that can compete for lucrative job positions. For students seeking a university degree, community colleges can also act as an affordable stepping stone toward earning a four-year university diploma.

2) **Stepping Stone for Growth or Transfer:** With many of our Tesla STEM students looking at UW-Seattle as their dream state school, many who feel underqualified to be admitted directly to the Seattle campus apply for UW-Bothell thinking it would be easy to transfer between campuses. However, many students and families are surprised to learn that a community college student is more likely to find success transferring to UW-Seattle campus than a UW-Bothell/Tacoma student. So, if a student is facing, or has previously faced, academic difficulties and has not been able to demonstrate their full potential on their high school transcript for universities, community college is one place where students can prove their academic abilities/growth after high school and yield great admissions results!

   In addition to issues surrounding academic preparation, there are students who do not feel quite emotionally prepared yet for university education; whether it's because they are concerned about being far away from home or have other concerns. Most community colleges in our area accept any applicant with a high school diploma so admission based off of GPA will not be applicable and, with greater variety in community colleges, there are greater options to stay closer to home or get familiar, specialized services.

3) **Intended Majors/Specialties/Programs:** Many community colleges offer unique educational opportunities for a variety of interests and demographics. The Lake Washington Institute

of Technology offers popular Bachelors of Applied Science degrees, where students get plenty of hands-on experience in their intended career in fields such as: dental hygiene, early childhood education, health sciences, computer science, and more. Students who struggled with not having hands-on experience in their high school classrooms, though they loved the STEM field, would likely thrive in one of these degrees. In addition, the Navigators Program at Bellevue College is an example of a program for students with specific needs, being geared towards teaching job/life skills to students impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder. Many other programs exist out there to match students' career interests and serve unique needs to obtain a degree/certificate after high school.

4) **Community College vs. Technical College:** Community colleges and technical colleges can offer similar degrees and certificates but there are some traditional differences in types of degrees offered, as well as in the teaching/learning models offered at these institutions.

   Community colleges host a higher percentage of students pursuing a university-transfer degree, sometimes referred to as an Associate of Arts & Sciences with a Direct Transfer Agreement attached. Similar to universities, the teaching/learning model in community colleges have lecture-based courses, high homework loads, and specific prerequisites for applying to majors. A student's Associate degree may transfer to four-year universities they're accepted to as part of a two-year 'package' degree which gives the student Junior standing and possible acceptance into their major. Students can also pursue general transfer degrees if they are university-bound but not certain what they'd like to major in (examples found here: https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/ws/1920/Transfer/AAS_DTA.pdf). Community colleges also offer a variety of non-transferrable technical associates and certificates which are less than two-year programs.

   Technical colleges have a higher percentage of students pursuing a Technical Associates degree or certificate in a specific vocational field, with the intention of going straight into employment after completing their program. The teaching/learning model is hands-on, with longer class times, lesser homework loads, and all courses specifically tailored towards the specific major. Although some University transfer degrees are offered, most are likely in a specific program and not intended for students who are not certain of their major. Examples of technical degrees can be seen at http://catalog.lwtech.edu/content.php?catoid=9&navoid=439.

5) **Community/Technical College Application Timeline:** Students should complete their Financial Aid (FAFSA) forms by mid-March of Senior year to meet priority deadlines for financial aid. Students will also need to complete a brief, separate college-specific Financial Aid form in late Spring once they determine which community/technical college they will be attending. To apply to these colleges, students should complete their online application in late April/early May of Senior year. Once they receive a confirmation of acceptance, students may send their high school transcript, AP scores, etc., and be allowed to sign up for a college Orientation & Registration day which typically take place in June.

What to Consider When Selecting a College

Every college has unique attributes that may appeal to some but seem unattractive to others. Factors that may be extremely important to one student may not even be a consideration for another. When researching colleges, make sure you keep in mind what your unique considerations are. Things you may want to research are:

- What are my top priorities in my college education?
- In what environment do I learn best (lecture-based, hands-on, etc)?
- Where do I want to be in ten years & how will my college education help me get there?
- Is there a particular part of the country or world I want my college to be located?
- What do I do in my free time? Does the college allow me to do this activity?
- What kinds of qualities do I look for in a friend? Where will people like this go to college?
- Do I have spiritual/religious interests that I want my college to support?
- Do I want to go to a large school? Small school? Medium school?
- How far away am I comfortable being from home?
- What kinds of internships or co-ops does the college offer?
- Is there an opportunity to study abroad?
- What is the educational philosophy or mission of the college?
- Do I want to go to a 2-year school?
- How many students graduate within 4 years? How many students return after the first year?
- Where do students tend to live at this college (dorms, Greek system, apartments)?
- Are there athletics available?
- What kind of student groups/clubs are on campus?
- How long is the library open?
- What credit is given for AP, SATIIs and transfer credits?
- When is the dining hall open? Where do I get a midnight snack?
- What is the social scene on the weekends like? What do students do for fun?

Not sure yet what you consider important? Look in the T-STEM Counseling Website for STEM Counselor-recommended resources and surveys to help you analyze what qualities will make a college right for you!

College Comparisons (Example)

Colleges typically require more academic subjects than what is needed for high school graduation. Below are some examples of minimum college requirements:

Required Courses/LWSD	Class of 2022 LWSD HS Graduation	Public Universities	Selective Colleges	*Example: UW*	*Example: WWU*
English/Language Arts	4	4	4	*4*	*4*
Sciences	3	3	4	*2*	*2*
Mathematics	3 (Alg. 1 & 2, Geom.)	3	4	*3*	*3*
Social Studies	3	3	3-4	*3*	*3*
Fine/Performing Arts	1-2	0.5-1	1	*0.5*	*0.5*
World Language	2	2-3	2-4	*2-3*	*2-3*
Health	0.5	Note: It is important to remember that each college or university has different entrance requirements. Visit their individual websites and review their admission requirements for the most up-to-date admissions information.			
PE	1.5 cr or PE waiver				
Occ. Ed.	1				

You can research the competitiveness of admissions for who gets accepted to colleges by going to the "Freshman Admissions" section of a college's website and viewing the universities' "Freshman Profile". You can also use college search sites, such as College Board or Peterson's online college search tools. Two local examples are:

	UW (2018 admits)	*WWU (2018 admits)*
GPA	*Typical admission range 3.5 – 4.0 (3.72-3.95 Median)*	*Typical admission range 3.0 - 3.8 (3.29-3.83 Median)*
SAT (EBRW & Math)	*1240-1440 (Middle 50%)*	*1100-1300 (Middle 50%)*
ACT	*27-33 (Middle 50%)*	*23-29 (Middle 50%)*
Acceptance Rate	*22,351 applicants (49%)*	*9,551 applicants (87%)*

College Selection Spreadsheet

Starting in 11th grade, using a spreadsheet such as the one below (in Excel, Word, etc.) can be helpful in the college search process as a way to evaluate and compare all your college choices. This is a valuable and time-saving tool for organizing college information. Your list may start off very long (up to 20 colleges), then gradually narrow down to a final list of 4-10 colleges. Your final list should include:

Reach schools: Have 1-3 colleges listed here. These are colleges you would like to attend but whose last year statistics show that they accepted freshmen with slightly higher overall scores than yours. Ivy League schools are <u>always</u> reach schools for <u>everyone</u>. This may also include a college's selective Honor's Program or Direct Admission (such as UW/WSU).

College Name and freshman admissions requirements URL	Application deadline	Appealing factors	Average test Scores & GPA	o Costs o Scholarship info and deadline	Additional criteria?

Comfort schools: Have a minimum of 3 schools here. These schools are meant to be a reasonable fit for you to gain entrance that you have personal interest in. The test scores of admitted freshmen should be similar to yours and you should have all of the requirements needed for entrance.

College Name and freshman admissions requirements URL	Application deadline	Appealing factors	Average test Scores & GPA	o Costs o Scholarship info and deadline	Additional criteria?

Safety schools: At Least 1. These schools require less than your GPA and course work. You should be a "shoe-in" for these schools and be interested in attending.

College Name and freshman admissions requirements URL	Application deadline	Appealing factors	Average test Scores & GPA	o Costs o Scholarship info and deadline	Additional criteria?

Resume Building & Examples

Create a pre-resume: Start with a blank sheet of paper and make a "master list" of all your experiences, activities, projects and awards since the **beginning of 9th grade.** This allows you to track your achievements and lets you see all the skills you've developed. Remember, you do not need to have won an award or had a leadership position to include an activity, participation, role, etc.!

Create a resume: After you compile all your experiences, activities, awards, etc., it's time to start creating a professional resume. We will do a Resume Workshop in class with you this Spring that will be a valuable tool to use in the college application process, as well as for your first potential job after Tesla! Below are some tips, resources, and an example of a well-crafted resume. Make sure your information is accurate and reflects your unique skills and personality!

Some Resume Considerations...

Content & Effective Descriptions: Your primary goal is to convey your skills and experience effectively. Clarity is key! Use strong action verbs, be specific, and avoid personal pronouns.

Example: Head of Media, Envirostories

    Needs work: *I was responsible for advertising the club and planning projects.*
    Better: *Led the club's advertising department and managed fundraising efforts for 3 major events*

Consider: *What kinds of projects? What was the purpose? What was in impact/outcome?*

Best: Designed informational posters, managed Facebook page, and led an advertising team of 5 students to raise the club's membership from 10 to 24 members over the course of 1 year.

Planned 3 events, coordinated volunteers, and collaborated with community leaders to successfully fundraise over $2,000. in 2016.

Try using strong action verbs!

Organized	Collected	
Prepared	Compared	
Recorded	Determined	
Created	Experimented	
Designed		Built
Developed	Measured	Adapted
Invented	Tested	Engineered
Performed	Assigned	Installed
Authored	Delegated	Maintained
Communicated	Led	Operated
Collaborated	Managed	Programmed
Contacted		Solved
Edited	Motivated	Clarified
Presented	Organized	Coached
Reported	Prioritized	Encouraged
Analyzed	Scheduled	Explained

Avoid overused phrases:

- Responsible for
- Assisted with
- Helped with
- Duties included

Find Many More Resources on our Counseling Dept TEAM under "College Planning"!

- Resume Guide
  (from University of Puget Sound)
- Resume Writing & Examples
  (from UMich)
- More action verbs!
  (from UW)

9

Resume Example

Your Name

12345 SE 2nd Place, Sammamish, WA 98074 | (253)-452-5555 | yourprofessionalemail@gmail.com

Education

Tesla STEM High School, Redmond, WA *Expected Graduation June 2021*

- *3.7 GPA (unweighted)*
- *7 AP courses completed*
- *Extensive STEM lab and internship experience*

Experience

Intern, STEM Reach Program, Redmond, WA

Tesla STEM High School and Nat'l Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWOT)
- Mentored local middle school girls in STEM topics after school on a weekly basis
- Taught basic computer science skills to a group of 4 girls, using various programming tools such as Scratch, PyGame, and Kodu

Activities

Member, National Art Honor Society *Sept. 2018—Present*
- Met weekly to promote art in a STEM-focused environment. Created art through glass work, bleach dye, watercolor, photoshop, and photography
- Designed, created, and organized installment of intricate decorations for 5 school dance
- Managed a team of 5 to design senior class logo and oversaw order and production of senior class sweatshirts

Team Leader, Tesla STEM Key Club *Sept.2017—Present*
- Volunteered over 100 hours of service over 4 years
- Organized 7 holiday clothing and food drives, with items reaching over 100 families in need
- Ran 4 monthly meetings for school's chapter of over 50 members
- Successfully advocated for school sponsorship of trip to regional Key Club conference in Portland, OR
- resulting in a 12-member delegate traveling to represent Tesla STEM on the regional level

Central Sound Regional Science and Engineering Fair *March 2018*
- Researched primary sources, connected with a mentor from the UW Psychology department, and conducted an experiment over a period of 5 months on the effects of social isolation as a result of social media deprivation
- Studied whether the effects of social isolation, primarily as a direct result from social media being taken away, can be compared to the stages of grief and/or addiction withdrawal symptoms
- Submitted and professionally presented final project in March 2018 related to 3D printed prosthetics to improve surgical processes for treating osteoarthritis

NWABR BioExpo *May 2018*
- Submitting project related to 3D printed prosthetics to improve surgical processes for treating osteoarthritis

Tesla Reference Form

Your reference form will be used to provide important information to teachers, your counselor, and others who may eventually write you college letters of recommendation. This should highlight what <u>you</u> feel have been significant accomplishments during your high school years. Below are examples of helpful information to provide your recommenders. Please be thorough and thoughtful in this process as it helps others to write the best letter of recommendation on your behalf!

1. Your formal name

2. List the AP classes you have already taken and AP test scores (1-5) you received

3. List the AP courses you are currently taking

4. List the UW in the High School courses you have taken and/or are currently taking

5. List your GPA and SAT/ACT test scores

6. List and describe any **paying jobs** you have held

7. Which 3 words **best describe you**, and why? What 3 **skills/abilities do you feel are strengths** of yours?

8. **Describe in detail any internships you completed** and any internship-related project you did (Be detailed!)

9. List any **contests you have entered (or are going to enter) and year(s)**, prizes won, and science awards you have won – describe your contest projects. Winning or placing is not necessary to include a contest! We want to hear about the experience, the ups and downs, and what you learned from it, regardless of awards.

10. **Review your resumé & give detailed information on 3 items, topics, and/or projects.** (e.g. academic experiences, internships, jobs, travel, volunteer work, etc.)

11. Describe in detail any **volunteer work** you have participated in (if you already thoroughly answered this in Question #10, you can skip this question)

12. Describe the **2 most meaningful experiences you have had** to date (in or out of school, academic or non-academic related)

13. What do you do with your **free time outside of school/academics** (e.g. hobbies, interests, unique talents, responsibilities)?

14. What are you **interested in studying** in college and why?

15. List your **top 3 colleges and your reasons for applying to those specific schools.** What specific features about this college make it a good "fit" for you? What sorts of programs does this school have that makes it attractive to you? Any other important factors (e.g. research, extracurricular opportunities, etc.)?

16. **IMPORTANT** - What **other important things would you like your recommenders to highlight** in your letter of recommendation, or what other things do you want to make sure universities hear about you?

CHOOSING TO APPLY:

Restrictive Early Action/Early Decision vs. Early Action vs. Regular Decision

Who should apply Early Decision or Restricted Early Action?	Who should apply Early Action?	Who should apply Regular Decision?
ED is typically "binding", which mean if accepted, the student will decide within a few days of acceptance, withdraw any applications to other colleges and commit to attending that college	Acceptance is non-binding, with decision to college due May 1	Acceptance is non-binding, with decision to college due May 1
College search complete by Oct 1	College search somewhat complete by Oct 15-Nov 1	College search ongoing
Clear #1 choice	Top 1-2 choices clear	Student research ongoing
Outstanding transcript through 11th grade	Outstanding transcript through 11th grade	Senior year 1st semester considered in application
Standardized testing complete	Standardized testing complete	Taking or retaking standardized tests in fall of Senior year
Prepared to present application, including teacher rec. letters by 10/15-11/1 to compete in strong pool	Prepared to present complete application, including teacher rec. letters by EA deadline	Would prefer additional months to complete application thoughtfully
Sometimes a slight preference may be given to ED or REA applicants (depends on college)	No preference given over other applicants in Admissions Decision	No preference given over other applicants in Admissions Decision
Restricted from applying to any other schools' Restricted Early Admission program	Flexibility to apply to other schools early	Flexibility to apply to any other schools
FAFSA/CSS profile app must be completed by ED/REA deadline in order for tentative award to be determined by notification date	FAFSA/CSS profile app must be completed by EA deadline in order for tentative award to be determined by notification date	FAFSA/CSS profile must be completed by college's financial aid priority deadline in order for tentative award to be determined by notification date
Notification of Acceptance typically in Dec-Jan	Notification of Acceptance typically Dec-Jan	Notification of Acceptance typically in Mid-March

Should I take the SAT or the ACT?

As you explore potential college matches, it is important for you to find out what tests each college requires in order to apply. Colleges accept both the SAT/ACT interchangeably. More than 50% of colleges are "test-optional". A few colleges may have additional requirements such as the SAT Subject Tests. Some students elect to take both tests and send their higher score.

SAT	vs.	ACT
Reasoning Test measuring academic aptitude	Type of Test	Content-Based Test measuring academic achievement
3 hours (without essay) 3 hours, 50 mins (with essay)	Length	2 hours, 55 mins (without essay) 3 hours, 40 mins (with essay)
4 sections: Reading, Writing/Language, Math w/o calculator, Math w/ calc, Essay Optional	Test Structure	4 tests: Reading, English, Math, Science Essay Optional
Tricky, questions can be phrased in ways that make them difficult to decipher	Test Style	Straightforward, questions may be long but are usually less difficult to decipher
Reading/Writing & Math scores will each range between a 200-800; total SAT score ranges between 400-1600 Essay results reported separately with 2-8 score range evaluated on 3 dimensions	Scoring	English, Math, Reading, and Science scores will each range between 1-36. Composite ACT score is the average of your scores on the four sections; ranges between 1-36. Essay results reported separately with a 1-36 score range.
No – you do not lose points for incorrect answers	Penalty for Wrong Answers?	No – you do not lose points for incorrect answers
Yes – you can choose which set(s) of SAT scores to submit to colleges	Score Choice?	Yes – you can choose which set(s) of ACT scores to submit to colleges
Questions increase in difficulty level as you move through that question type in a section (except reading passage questions, which progress chronologically through the passage)	Difficulty Levels	Difficulty level of the questions is random
Arithmetic, data analysis, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; formulas are provided in the test booklet	Math Levels	Arithmetic, algebra I and II, functions, geometry, trigonometry; no formulas are provided
None	Science	1 Science sections testing your critical thinking skills (not specific science knowledge)
Optional, but recommended. Tests your comprehension if a source text.	Essay	Optional, but recommended. Tests how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
With private schools and schools on the east and west coasts; however, every four-year college in the US accepts SAT scores	Tends to be more popular	With public schools and schools in the Midwest and south; however, every four-year college in the US accepts ACT scores
Seven times per year: March, May, June, August, October, November, December	Offered When?	Seven times per year: February, April, June, July, September, October, December
Typically, about six weeks before the test date	Registration Deadline?	Typically, about five to six weeks before the test date
Yes	Subject Tests?	No
www.collegeboard.com	More Information	www.act.org

Helpful Websites

Searching for the right career and/or "right fit" college

- ✓ **Xello -** available via LWSD HERE (scroll down to the Blue "XELLO" tab), good career interest test, career and college research tools
- ✓ **Tesla STEM Website, Counseling page -** go to College Research and find self-surveys to help identify what factors are important in finding your "best-fit" college
- ✓ **mynextmove.org/explore/ip** - Holland Interest Inventory for identifying work-based interests
- ✓ **humanmetrics.com** - free Jung/Myers-Briggs Personality Type test

College Search Sites

- ✓ **bigfuture.collegeboard.org -** college matching tool identifies college fit through personalized search filters, with information on potential college majors and careers
- ✓ **nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator -** government website with a highly accurate college search, easily readable college information, College Affordability Center
- ✓ **collegeresults.org/search_group.aspx -** excellent way to compare colleges or find comparable institutions
- ✓ **onetonline.org -** government website with highly accurate and up-to-date career info, links to colleges by career/major
- ✓ **PrincetonReview.com -** college search guide and ranking
- ✓ **Petersons.com** - college search guide and ranking
- ✓ **timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings -** London Times' worldwide college rankings, rankings by major, good performance data
- ✓ **Wiche.edu/wue -** (Western Undergraduate Exchange) a consortium of Western-US colleges that offer reduced-tuition rates at some state colleges.
- ✓ **Usnews.com/education** - college search tools and rankings, interesting articles
- ✓ **Youvisit.com/collegesearch** – Immersive & extensive virtual tours of 700+ university campuses
- ✓ **Ecampustours.com** - Virtual tours of over 1300 campuses & career exploration
- ✓ **Nacacnet.org -** Find national college tours & resources for college preparation

College Testing

- ✓ **College Board.org** - Register for the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, free and paid test prep, and send scores to colleges
- ✓ **ACT.org -** View ACT test dates, register for test and send scores to colleges
- ✓ **khanacademy.org/test-prep -** free test-prep articles, videos, official practice exams
- ✓ **Xello –** pre-paid 20 week online SAT/ACT prep course via Method Test Prep, on homepage

Financial Aid

- ✓ **T-STEM Counseling Website under College/Career and Financial Aid Resources tab –** various links to financial aid resources including FAFSA, Net Price Calculator, and other counselor-approved websites for getting financial aid information
- ✓ **FAFSA.ed.gov (Free Applications for Student Aid) -** federal and state aid is issued via the FAFSA. FAFSA applications are ALWAYS free. FAFSA4caster lets students forecast their potential federal aid before applying.
- ✓ **wsac.wa.gov** - The Washington Student Achievement Council offers information on college costs, explanations of state financial aid options, and tips for completing FAFSA forms.
- ✓ **studentaid.ed.gov/sa -** government website offering information on all forms of aid, includes tips on FAFSA completion
- ✓ **EStudentloan.com -** resources and info for finding and comparing private student loans
- ✓ **college-financial-aid-advice.com -** Private website with helpful info & explanations of all things related to financial aid and scholarships. Lots of commercial ads on the website. Very comprehensive scholarship database, frequently updated.
- ✓ **Finaid.org -** non-profit reputable site providing information, advice, and financial aid calculators
- ✓ **Collegeplan.org -** provides students, families and education professionals with information on financial aid, scholarships, and general college information

Scholarships

- ✓ **Xello –** local and national scholarship search & information
- ✓ **WashBoard.org –** Washington non-profit that connects Washington students of all types with Washington scholarship providers
- ✓ **Fastweb.com -** scholarship matching service, most comprehensive in the nation
- ✓ **Fastaid.com -** commercial scholarship database
- ✓ **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search -** College Board website to help find scholarships, other financial aid and internships
- ✓ **gocollege.com -** commercial scholarship database
- ✓ **Collegenet.com -** commercial scholarship database
- ✓ **Scholarships.com -** commercial scholarship database
- ✓ **gmsp.org -** the Gates Millennium Scholars scholarship program offered to 1,000 students each year
- ✓ **waopportunityscholarship.org -** the State-funded Washington State Opportunity Scholarship helps low and middle-income Washington state residents pursuing STEM degrees.

College Materials

Material Submitted to Colleges	Responsible Party for Mailing/Sending
College Application (Including Personal Statement and any additional Essays)	√Student
Transcripts	√STEM counselor, completed as part of the Common App or Coalition app √For paper transcripts, Student must pick up & return Transcript Request Form from the Main Office √Some colleges (e.g. UW, UCLA) have students self-report grades and do not require a transcript be sent as part of the application
Letters of Recommendation	√STEM counselor, part of the Common or Coalition App √Teachers, typically part of Common/Coalition √For colleges requiring letters to be sent via postal mail, student must submit addressed envelopes to each teacher/recommender
SAT/ACT Scores and Subject Tests	√Some colleges allow students to self-report scores or upload unofficial test records directly in the application √If a college requires Official Test scores, student must request scores be sent directly from the testing agency (College Board or ACT) to the college. Fees typically apply
"UW in the High School", Tech Prep or other College in the High School Credits	√If requested, student must send college transcript directly from the college to each university applying for
Supplemental Material/Student Portfolios/Etc.	√Student. (*Please check if your college accepts specific supplemental materials. Do not send unnecessary materials, as they will not be considered in the application process.*)
Mid-Year Report/Transcript	√STEM counselor, part of Common or Coalition App √For independent app colleges, if requested Student must pick up & return Transcript Request Form from the Main Office
Final Report/Transcript	√Student will request Final Transcript to be sent from the Main Office to their chosen college as part of their Graduation checkout

Letters of Recommendation from Teachers

Colleges vary in whether they require teacher letters of recommendation or not. Some Examples for the class of 2020 are:
- University of Washington, UC Berkeley, all State schools in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California: *do not accept rec letters*
- University of Michigan: *1 teacher**
- Whitman, Cornell, WPI, Northeastern, Seattle U, Babson, CMU: *1 teacher, 1 counselor*
- CalTech: *2 teachers**
- U of Chicago, MIT, Case Western: *2 teachers, 1 counselor*

(*note: many colleges will read additional counselor recommendations even if not required)

<u>Most</u> colleges allow students to choose any teacher as their recommender (typically in a traditional academic discipline, related to your intended major). Examples are:
- Cornell, USC, Boston U, Stanford, UT-Austin, Harvard

<u>Some</u> colleges specify what subjects teacher recommenders should come from. Examples are:
- MIT: 1 STEM, 1 Humanities
- Olin College: 1 Math/Science, 1 of student's choice
- BYU: 1 Math/Science/English from 11th or 12th grade
- Duke: 2 teachers from Core Academic subjects from 10-12th grade

Many students will need 1 teacher recommendation letter; some will need 2 letters. We suggest that <u>in June of 11th grade</u> students ask for 1 Primary teacher letter of recommendation, and only request a 2nd teacher recommendation if they already know it will be needed for one or more intended college applications. Students may also ask in June of 11th grade for a teacher to "be their Second Recommender if needed", and essentially reserve that teacher's recommendation only if needed in Fall of 12th grade. More than 2 recommendations from an academic perspective is not considered beneficial nor usually allowed by colleges. Under no circumstances should a student request a 3rd teacher recommendation unless they show specific need based on identified college recommender requirements. If your college allows for additional letters of support, you should seek these from other adults such as an academic counselor, internship supervisor, troop leader, music or athletic instructor, or congregation leader.

When requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher, it is important to select someone who knows you well, can speak to your learning/performance in class, or teaches within your intended program of study. Plan to give your writers at least <u>**4 weeks'**</u> notice prior to any due dates you have (some teachers have a firm deadline such as end of June in junior year). For Tesla STEM staff, please have a copy of the following items in hand to give to your recommender:

1. "Recommender's Cover Sheet" listing colleges, deadline, and application platform *(e.g. University of Michigan, November 1 Early Action, Coalition App)*
2. "Resume"
3. "Tesla Reference Form"

For colleges that require recommendations be submitted electronically or via an online platform (e.g. CommonApp or Coalition), <u>you must</u> list their email address correctly on your online application (otherwise your recommender will not have a method of uploading your letter to your application file).

Completing Your Senior College Packet & requesting a Counselor Letter of Recommendation

<u>ALL</u> Tesla Seniors are <u>required</u> to complete a senior college packet as part of their High School and Beyond Plan. Your Senior College Packet is required to be submitted to your counselor prior to requesting a counselor letter of recommendation, or by the end of November. If you are applying Early Decision or Early Action, your deadline will be sooner than this, depending on individual college application due dates.

1.   MAKE A TIMELINE OF ALL YOUR APPLICATION DUE DATES:

◊ Count back 2 weeks from the earliest due date - that is the LAST day you may meet with your counselor for a letter of recommendation (add in additional time to account for holiday breaks!)
◊ This is also the target date for you to have your application materials completed.

2. ITEMS FOR YOUR SENIOR COLLEGE PACKET
(due to Counselor in printed form):

❏ Your completed "Recommender's Cover Sheet" (see next page)

❏ Completed "Resume"

❏ Completed "Tesla Reference Form"

❏ Copy of one of your college essays

❏ Any additional supplemental college material you would like counselor feedback on

3.   MEET WITH YOUR COUNSELOR

◊ Once you have completed the entire Senior College Packet (printed out and in hand!) you may make an appointment with your counselor to turn in your Packet, discuss your college application materials, your counselor recommendation letter (if needed) and ask clarifying questions prior to submitting your applications to colleges.

* *

It is important to remember the time commitment and consideration teachers/counselors give in writing thoughtful and quality letters of recommendation. Please remember to be respectful in their time allotment, and be sure to THANK THEM, THANK THEM, & THANK THEM (repeatedly)!!!!!

* *

Recommender's Cover Sheet for Senior Packet

Name:_____ Recommenders:_____ Date_____

A copy of this cover sheet (or a similar worksheet of your design) should be page 1 of your Senior Packet that you turn in to your counselor.

The 4 to 10 colleges to which you are applying to should be researched and chosen as an appropriate fit for you personally, academically and financially. Remember to give any teacher recommendation writers at least 6 weeks' notice prior to due date (2 weeks for counselors).

Name and contact of your colleges: address, phone, admissions url email	App Type: Common, Independent, Coalition, etc	Application due date. (send out materials at least 2 weeks prior to final due date!)	Exactly which pieces are needed for this college? Transcript, School Report, SAT/ACT scores, Application, Letter(s) of Recommendation, STEM Profile, Supplement, other?
Reach Schools 1--2			
Comfort Schools 2--4			
Safety Schools 1--3			

JUNIOR & SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

JUNIOR YEAR

November - December

- Continue to apply yourself in your studies and make sure you complete and/or clarify all winter assignments/grades before you leave for Winter Break.
- Suggested Winter Break Activities:
  - Explore a few college search engine websites to familiarize yourself with different search tools and find your preferred college search tool (see "Helpful Websites" for suggestions).
  - "Visit" a couple of colleges during your Winter Break. Most colleges have self-guided virtual tours available on their Admissions website. Even if you don't plan to attend the specific colleges you visit, it can be helpful in exploring your campus preferences. Taking notes on a college visit worksheet may also be helpful.
  - Visit our Counseling Dept Team and Counseling website for useful college & career tools.

January-February

- Review your Tesla STEM Senior schedule request with your family. Thoughtfully select your Senior year courses, keeping in mind any academic requirements your colleges of interest may have.
- Work on a timeline for any SAT/ACT tests you may plan to take this Spring or Summer. Mark down registration deadlines and test dates in your calendar.
- An excellent online test-prep program from Method Test Prep is now provided by LWSD for FREE via students' Xello accounts. Access it via the "Method" link at the bottom right of the Xello dashboard.
- Prepare well for your course semester finals and attend any/all study sessions held for your classes – Junior year classes are typically the most important grades your college will see!

March

- Explore possible summer internships/programs to apply for this Spring that apply to your potential future major or that satisfies a lifelong dream or interest of yours!
- Continue to search for colleges of interest. Visit university blogs to ask additional questions about your campus of interest. Visit colleges' YouTube channels for student tours.
- Continue researching career fields. Ask questions and advice from industry mentors you will meet during academic competitions this Spring.

April

- Enjoy your Spring Break! Consider working a college visit or two into your vacation plans.
- Schedule a Junior Meeting with your counselor and parents/guardians. During this meeting, we will discuss questions you and your family have about your post-high school planning process, review your selected Senior courses and any remaining graduation requirements.

o Plan on attending any College Financial Aid presentations available at Tesla STEM or through outside community resources.

May-June

o Prepare for and take your AP Exams.
o Thoughtfully complete two college application essays (this will be part of your assigned work in English class).
o Begin work on the Tesla Reference form for your Senior packet (recommendations, activities list, etc.)
o Write an updated resume (will be part of your assigned work in English class).
o If you plan to ask teachers for letters of recommendation before you leave for Summer, be sure to review the information in this handbook so teachers have the information to write the best letter of recommendation for you!

July-August

o Continue to research colleges that meet your top-choice criteria on majors, clubs, environment, etc.
o Use College Board's Net Price Calculator tool to view net costs of your schools of choice. All universities are required to provide this on their websites.
o Tour prospective colleges, especially if you have clear top choice colleges. Research/make a list of questions you want to ask/departments you would like to visit before you arrive.
o Create your Common App and Coalition accounts for college applications.
o Finalize your list of colleges and complete your college selection spreadsheet including application due dates and required materials from each college (letters of recommendation, number of essays, test scores, financial aid form due dates, etc.).
o Become familiar with the FAFSA and the documentation required to fill it out/opens Oct 1.

SENIOR YEAR

September

o Decide if you are going to apply Early Decision or Early Action to any of your colleges.
o Sign up for a final SAT/ACT (or subject tests if needed).
o Schedule a meeting with your counselor if you are unsure which colleges might be a good fit for you.
o Familiarize yourself with the list of scholarship resources provided on Xello and outside scholarship providers such as The Washboard.
o Consider setting up a visit or interview with potential colleges if the opportunity is available. It is a great way to get to know the college/university you are applying to!
o Continue to build on and revise your activities list and college essays.

- o Attend Tesla STEM on-campus College Visits for any colleges you may consider applying to (<u>September-November</u>).

October

- o Solidify the list of colleges you will be applying to and update your College Selection worksheet with application deadlines & important details with test requirements, essays, recommendation letters, etc.
- o If needed, send your official SAT/ACT test scores from College Board to the colleges you are applying to (this is not required if the college allows you to self-report).
- o October 1st - FAFSA opens. Complete the FAFSA with your parents starting on 10/1. Refer to the Financial Aid Resources information on Xello for instructions and helpful tools. ED/EA applicants should have their FAFSA completed by their first college's deadline; regular decision students should have their FAFSA complete by their college's financial aid deadline or by Dec 15th (T-STEM counselor recommended deadline).
  - o The College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile is required by some private colleges to be considered for institutional financial aid and scholarship opportunities. Visit [PROFILE](#) on College Board. Be sure to note your college's CSS Profile deadline date.
- o Mark down dates and times of college representative visits to Tesla STEM for institutions you will be applying to.
- o Schedule your Senior Meeting with your counselor to review your <u>*completed*</u> Senior College Packet. Be sure to bring any college application questions.

November

- o <u>Keep Studying</u> - your grades count all the way through graduation!
- o Complete all university applications (most are due November - December). Community college applications can wait until April for this step!
- o Students should have completed their Senior Meeting with their counselor by the end of November. Schedule follow-up meetings as needed for extra help with applications or essays!

December

- o *<u>Keep Studying</u>*!!
- o Double-check the status of all online college applications and that all pieces (i.e. test scores and transcripts) have been received.
- o Thank any teacher recommenders for their help in your college applications!
- o Be sure to fill out the FAFSA and CSS Profile to meet your colleges' deadlines.
- o Look, and begin to apply, for scholarships. Refer to the list of scholarship resources provided on Xello.
- o Review your SAR (Student Aid Report generated after completing the FAFSA). If there are any discrepancies, correct the information.

January

- Study, Study, *Study*! Semester 1 grades will be sent to all Common App colleges.
- For non-Common App or Coalition colleges, send your Semester 1 transcript to any colleges that request this in their application instructions.

February

- Peak time for Scholarship Applications! Refer to the list of resources provided.
- Make sure you participate in competition opportunities. Some can generate scholarship $$!

March

- After you receive your acceptance letters, you should your receive aid award. If financial circumstances have changed or you are concerned with the lack of aid offered, write a letter of appeal to your university for additional aid.
- As you receive acceptances, consider signing up to attend Freshman April "Preview Days" for admitted students to help solidify your top choice.

April

- Use College Board's Compare Your Aid Calculator to compare your colleges' aid awards.
- Research loans offered and other potential financing opportunities.
- As you make your final college selection decision, consider visiting College Board's Now What? page for additional questions to consider. Remember, **you** need to make the best academic, personal and financial decision for yourself. Be sure your priorities are aligned with who you are and your future goals, not your friend's. ☺
- If you will be applying to Community Colleges, now is the time to complete your online application! Once you have applied, you will receive information on the college's placement testing, orientation, and registration process, which usually happens in June of Senior year.

May

- May 1st – "Decision Day"! Inform **all** colleges of your intent to attend their university, or not, and make your deposit.
- Follow up with your university regarding any additional requests for information they may ask of you about Financial Aid, Housing, Freshman Orientation signup, etc.

June

- Request a final transcript be sent to your chosen college.
- Thank your teachers and school staff for help in applications.
- Attend your graduation ceremony!
- *You made it through high school*! Now it is time to prepare for college! ☺