



**Parent Action Plan:
Helping Your Child
Navigate High School While
Preparing for College**

Parent Action Plan: 12th Grade

Senior year is a whirlwind of activities. This is a big year for your child as he or she balances schoolwork, extracurricular activities, and the college application process. Use the suggestions below to help you and your child successfully navigate this important time.

Summer Before Senior Year

- Visit colleges together. If you haven't already, make plans to check out the campuses of colleges in which your child is interested. Use the Campus Visit Checklist to learn how to get the most out of these experiences.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-visit-guide/campus-visit-checklist>
- Ask how you can help your senior finalize a college list. You can help him or her choose which colleges to apply to by weighing how well each college meets his or her needs, for example. Find out more about how to finalize a college list.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/how-to-finalize-your-college-list-admissions-college-application>
- Encourage your child to get started on applications. He or she can get the easy stuff out of the way now by filling in as much required information on college applications as possible. Read about how to get started on applications.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-applications-how-to-begin-admissions>
- Help your child decide about applying early. If your senior is set on going to a certain college, he or she should think about whether applying early is a good option. Now is the time to decide because early applications are usually due in November. Read about the pros and cons of applying early.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/the-facts-about-applying-early-is-it-right-for-you>
- Gather financial documents: To apply for most financial aid, your child will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You'll need your most recent tax returns and an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA.

Fall

- Your child will meet with their School Counselor in August-October. This year, he or she will work with the counselor to complete and submit college applications, create a plan for applying to college, and discuss what is needed for them to apply. Students should have already taken the ACT and SAT or be scheduled to take it. They should also have their list of colleges narrowed down so they know which ones they're planning to apply to. Learn more about the counselor's role in applying to college.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/applying-to-college-your-counselors-role>

- Create a calendar with your child. This should include application deadlines and other important dates. Your child can find specific colleges' deadlines in College Search or on their Naviance account. If your child saves colleges to a list there, he or she can get a custom online calendar that shows those colleges' deadlines.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
- Help your child find and apply for scholarships. He or she can find out about scholarship opportunities from the school counselor or through the colleges they're applying to. Your child will need to request and complete scholarship applications and submit them on time. Learn more about scholarships.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-and-scholarships/where-to-find-college-scholarships>
- Offer to look over your senior's college applications. But remember that this is your child's work so remain in the role of adviser and proofreader and respect his or her voice.
- Fill out the FAFSA to apply for aid. The form will be available beginning October 1. The government and many colleges use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to award aid. Now it's easier than ever to fill out this form because you can automatically transfer your tax information online from the IRS to the FAFSA. Read How to Complete the FAFSA to learn more.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/how-to-complete-the-fafsa>

Winter

- Work together to apply for financial aid. Have your child contact the financial aid offices at the colleges in which he or she is interested to find out what forms students must submit to apply for aid. Make sure he or she applies for aid by or before any stated deadlines. Funds are limited, so the earlier you apply, the better.

Spring

- Help your child process college responses. Once your child starts hearing back from colleges about admission and financial aid, he or she will need your support to decide what to do. Read about how to choose a college.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/making-a-decision/you-got-accepted-now-what>
- Continue to encourage your child to keep their School Counselor in the loop of any college acceptance decisions. Your child will be asked to complete a Senior Plan Form that will be due in early May.
- Review financial aid offers together. Your senior will need your help to read through financial aid award letters and figure out which package works best. Be sure your child pays attention to and meets any deadlines for acceptance. Get more information on financial aid awards.
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/understanding-your-financial-aid-award-offers>
- Help your child complete the paperwork to accept a college's offer of admittance. Once your child has decided which college to attend, he or she will need to review

the offer, accept a college's offer, mail a tuition deposit, and submit other required paperwork. Learn more about your upper school senior's next steps.

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/making-a-decision/you-made-your-college-choice-whats-next>