Tesla STEM Post-High School Planning Handbook

(Class of 2027)

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/

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A Note on College Admissions Stress

Millions of American teenagers are chronically stressed out about their efforts to get into the most selective college possible. Ironically, most people who worry constantly about maximizing their potential are making it more difficult to reach their full potential due to the harm to their mental and physical well-being that stems from this stress. The good news, though, is that chronic college admission stress is based upon false assumptions and can be eliminated without negatively impacting your future success or happiness. This article referenced below is designed to prove this to you by bringing together all of the evidence in one place.

The 3-part essay in this section may hopefully change how you look at college admission. It's around a half-hour read with loads of useful information you've never seen anywhere else. Stress reduction guaranteed!

Part 1 was published in the National Association of College Admission Counseling's summer 2021 issue of the Journal of College Admission Counseling and examines how admission stress originates and how harmful it can be. Understanding the root source of any problem is the first step toward correcting it.

Part 2 was featured in an April 24, 2021 Washington Post article by Jay Mathews (author of Harvard Schmarvard) and provides overwhelming evidence that anxiety regarding gaining admission to the most selective college possible is unnecessary. **The range of college selectivity–from those that admit 5% of their applicants to those that have open admissions–is a continuum with significant overlap, not a pyramid with discrete steps.**

Take challenging courses. Work hard. Pursue your passions, whatever they may be. But get enough sleep. Leave time for fun with family and friends. Stop worrying about every single grade you get. Stop wondering if failure to get straight A's in your really tough classes is going to ruin your future (it's not). Do these things and then create your college list carefully and realistically. You'll be admitted to schools that will challenge you appropriately, that will have many other students who are similarly capable, and that will afford you the same opportunity for a successful and happy future regardless of whether it's the most selective college you applied to or one of your 'safety schools'.

Part 3 shows an alternative approach–without all the stress–that is at least as likely to lead to a successful and happy future.

Read more here

https://lesshighschoolstress.com/less-high-school-stress-llc/

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 (Bellevue College, Lake Washington Institute of Technology, Cascadia College, etc.). Community college enrollment is projected to increase over the next decade as it becomes an increasingly more attractive option for savvy undergraduate students seeking to continue their education but not enter into a 4-year university immediately.

Here are some of the common reasons students nationwide choose to attend community college:

1) Affordability: With a total outstanding student loan debt of $1.38 trillion in the United States, it's no wonder there's an existing and increasing concern over the idea of taking on debt for higher education. For families where four-year university costs may be burdensome, it is vital to have opportunities, such as community colleges, where tuition is roughly half that of state colleges. Community colleges offer an affordable variety of degrees/certificates including Associate degrees, Bachelors of Applied Sciences, certificates and more that can compete for lucrative job positions. For students seeking an eventual four-year university degree, community colleges can also act as an affordable stepping stone toward earning a four-year diploma.

2) Stepping Stone for Growth or Transfer: Many Tesla STEM students look at UW-Seattle as their dream in-state school. Those who feel underqualified for direct admission may apply to UW-Bothell thinking of an easy transfer between campuses. However, many are surprised to learn that a community college student is more likely to find success transferring to UW-Seattle 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; they are concerned about being far away from home or 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. With greater variety in community colleges, there are great options closer to home with 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 can get hands-on experience in: dental hygiene, early childhood education, health sciences, computer science, and etc. Students who struggled with not having hands-on experiences in their high school classrooms, though they love the STEM field, will thrive in one of these degrees. 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 with autism. Many other programs exist to match students' career interests and serve their

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.

   Community colleges host a higher percentage of students pursuing a university-transfer degree. Similar to universities, 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 as part of a two-year 'package' degree which gives 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 (example: https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/ws/1920/Transfer/AAS_DTA.pdf). Community colleges also offer non-transferrable technical associates and certificates which two-year programs.

   Technical colleges have a high percent 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, less homework loads, and courses tailored towards the specific major. Although some university transfer degrees are offered, most are in a specific program and not intended for students who are not certain of their major. Example of technical degrees: 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 April of Senior year. Once they receive confirmation of acceptance, students send their high school transcript, AP scores, etc., and will sign up for a college orientation and registration day.

What to Consider When Searching for "Right Fit" Colleges

There are *thousands* of colleges out there, and it is important that you find the school that is right for you. Many use the term "fit" to refer to how well an institution matches your individual interests, abilities, preferences, personality, financial need, etc. Looking at different aspects of fit might help you narrow down your options and figure out which colleges you would like to apply to and ultimately attend.

Here are some factors you will want to research/consider:

General Individual Priorities: What are my top priorities in my college education? Do I have 2-3 "non-negotiable" factors (e.g. cost, location, non-academic opportunities)?

Academic Fit: Depending on the school, there are many different types of learning environments that are available to you. Some things to think about in terms of your preferences are class structure, calendar, majors, specialized programs, professor interaction, etc. Below are some questions that might help you determine if a school is an academic fit for you:

- How big is the student body?
- What is the faculty/student ratio?
- Who teaches the lecture classes (professor vs adjunct vs T.A.)?
- What is the average class size for Freshman classes?
- Are there study abroad opportunities? Internship? Research?
- What majors are offered? What minors are offered?
- What is the academic atmosphere?
- How are career placement and counseling services offered to students?
- Do they offer pre-professional programs, such as Pre-Med, Pre-Dentistry or Pre-Law programs or additional support?

Personal/Social Fit: Colleges vary *dramatically* in terms of the life on campus, whether it includes clubs, sporting events, Greek life, theater, or more. There are many things that contribute to the overall culture of the school, including:

- How many students live on-campus vs off-campus?
- Is there a Greek Life or something similar?
- What athletic programs are available? Intramurals? Club sports?
- What is the ethnic or geographic diversity of the campus?
- What is the availability of religious services?
- What types of activities are available to all students?
- What types of involvement opportunities are there (clubs/organizations, student government, community service, etc.)?

Location/Physical Environment Fit: Colleges are located all around the country ranging from small towns to major cities. It is important that you choose a college that is located somewhere you'd be happy to live for the next four years:

- Do you want to live at home and commute?
- Do you want to live on-campus?
    - What are the living spaces like?
    - Dining options and costs?
    - Off-campus housing options?
- Do you like a small town environment? Urban? Rural? City?
- What is the weather like?
- What is the cost of transportation (i.e. plane tickets) from home to school each year? How often will you be coming home?
- What opportunities exist for outdoor activities?
- What is the surrounding area of the college like?
- Do I need a car? Bike? Public transportation?

Financial Fit: Colleges can range in price depending on the institution. It is important that you and your parents discuss the amount that college will cost your family. There are many factors that will influence your decision and many times you cannot make a decision until you have seen the financial package that is sent to you after acceptance, in conjunction with your FAFSA application. Go to collegescorecard.ed.gov to research any college's data about the cost of attendance, personal net price calculator (roughly calculates your out-of-pocket cost to attend a particular school), and average salary post-graduation at various schools.

Helpful Websites

Searching for the right career and Identifying your interests/priorities

- Xello: Navigate to ClassLink and find the Xello app to explore careers and schools!
    - Tip: reset your career matchmaker by clicking "About Me"→ "…" -> "Reset Matchmaker"
- **CollegeEssayGuy's How to Choose What Colleges to Apply to :** Insightful information about how to choose which colleges might be right for you.
- **CollegeMatch's College Inventory :** Survey to help you analyze which of the 17 most common factors are most important to you in finding the "right-fit" college.
- **CollegeMatch's Personal Inventory :** This survey helps you analyze what kind of personal experience you are looking for in a college

College Search Sites

- Xello: Navigate to ClassLink and find the Xello app.
- **Big Future:** CollegeBoard's college matching tool identifies college fit through personalized search filters. Also has good information on potential college majors and careers.
- **College Navigator:** Government website with highly accurate and updated college search. Includes easily readable individual college information and a College Affordability Center.
- **College Results:** An excellent way to compare colleges and discover new comparable institutions
- **Colleges That Change Lives listings:** Small liberal arts colleges that are consistently rated in the top academic tier and praised for building character.
- **College Express Lists:** Lists of colleges by major, ranking, learning, environment, and more!
- **Princeton Review's College Search Tool:** Another college matching tool with search filters and information.

Rankings:

- **London Times' Worldwide College Rankings** - rankings by major, good performance data
- **PrincetonReview.com** - College search guide and rankings
- **Petersons.com** - college search guide and ranking
- **Usnews.com/education** - college search tools and rankings, interesting articles

Test Prep

- **https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat** - Register for the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, free and paid test prep, and send scores to colleges
- **https://www.act.org** - View ACT test dates, register for test and send scores to colleges
- **https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep** - free test-prep articles, videos, official SAT practice exams
- **Xello –** there is a built in 20-week online SAT and/or ACT prep course called **Methodize,** on your Xello profile homepage!

College Selection Spreadsheet

Reach schools: Have 1-3 colleges listed here

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

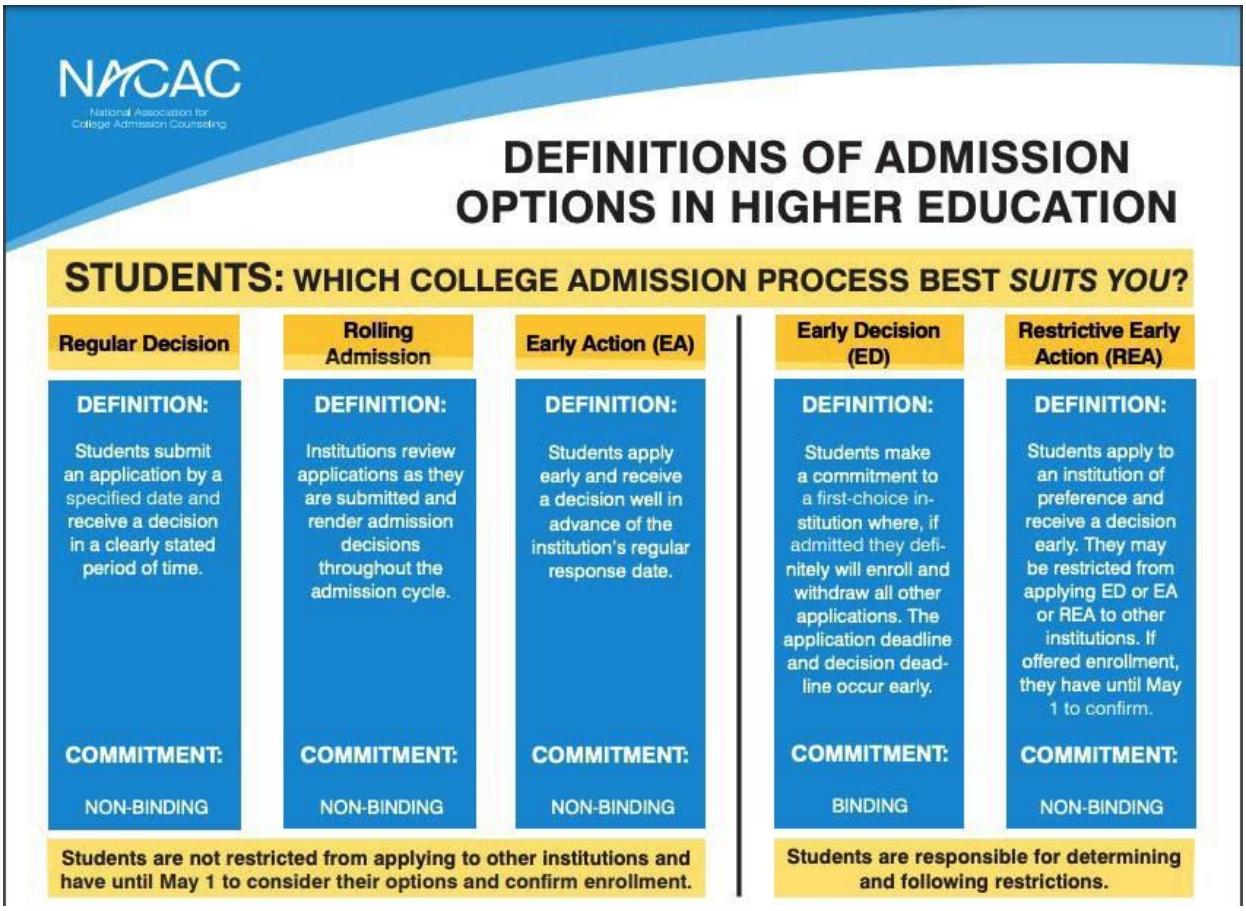
Comfort schools: Have a minimum of 3 schools here

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

Safety schools: At Least 1

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

Applications: Regular Decision vs Early Options



Note on Early vs. Regular Deadlines:

Many colleges, particularly public colleges, do not solicit early applications and will have only 1 deadline (eg. UW, UC's). For those that do offer early application options, as you consider which deadline is best for you, ask yourself the following questions:

- Will you be prepared to submit all application materials by the early deadline (including recommender letters)?
- Is it advantageous for a college to see your first semester senior year grades when reviewing your application?
- Is there an advantage for you in applying early? (e.g. admissions, scholarship, early decision limits applying to other colleges?) Or to not apply early? (e.g. time to consider options, ability to show first semester grades, later SAT/ACT scores, other Senior activities)
- Do you understand the commitment of applying Early? Early Decision vs. Early Action?

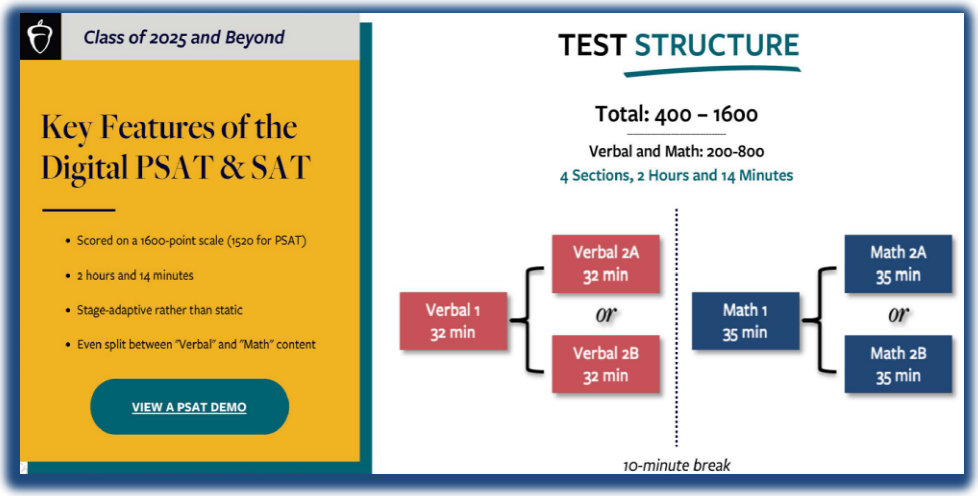
Approximate Dates for Typical Deadlines:

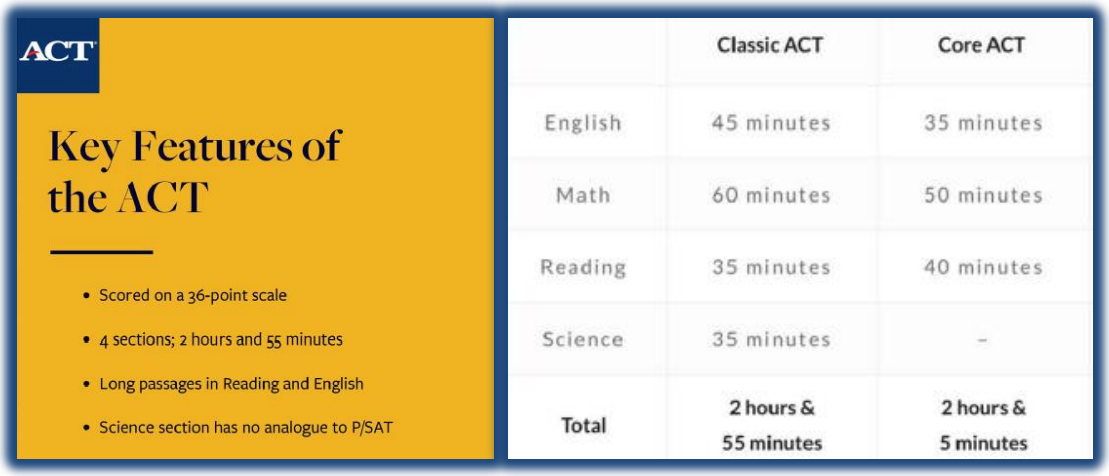
Early Deadlines	October 15 to November 15
Regular Deadlines	Nov 15 to February 15
Rolling Admission	August 1 until seats are filled up

Should I take the SAT or the ACT?

As you explore potential college matches, it's important to find out what tests each college requires to apply. More than 80% of colleges are currently "test-blind" or "test-optional", including many public universities including West Coast states. Students can look up college testing policies at https://fairtest.org/test-optional-list, but should also verify testing policies directly with the colleges they choose to apply.

Colleges that accept test scores accept both the SAT/ACT interchangeably. Below is a breakdown of some of the similarities and differences between the two tests. Students can register themselves for upcoming tests several weeks or months ahead of time; see information at www.collegeboard.com or www.act.org





Your College Application Breakdown

College applications contain multiple components. Each college's application might be different, so it is important that you look at each application carefully to see what is required. Below is a list of items you should be looking for as you complete your applications.

1. **Main Application Form:** Your application will begin with a main profile that you complete with information about yourself as well as your education (school, classe, grades). Some applications can be used for multiple schools (e.g. CommonApp, Scoir). You will need to create a username/password before being allowed to complete the application and view it prior to submitting it. Independent app schools will have their own application for their one campus.

2. **Supplements to Main Application:** In addition to the main application, some schools require supplemental parts

   - **Personal Statement/Essay:** Many colleges require one common personal statement.

   - **Additional writing prompts:** (including entire essays or short responses) may be required. This information can be found on a college's Admissions website, in the "College Information" section of CommonApp, or listed as additional essays in Independent apps. *Hint: college essays tend to take more time than students expect – plan these carefully and give yourself plenty of time for reviews and editing.*

   - **Activity List/Extracurriculars/Honors/Awards:** You will use your Reference Form & Resume to develop your Activities List. Be strategic in your descriptions of your involvements and what you choose to include as many platforms have a limit.

   - **Portfolios/Auditions:** Based on your major, select schools may require a portfolio or audition submission. This is typical for visual and performing arts majors.

   - Keep an eye out for check boxes on the application that will allow you to be considered for **financial aid, honors, or scholarships.** Some schools might have that within their application while others will have a separate application - read carefully!

   - Some colleges will have you list out your entire transcript's courses like in the **"Courses & Grades" section** of the CommonApp or via a private "Self-Reported Academic Record" (SRAR) portal. This enables a college to easily re-weight your GPA or re-prioritize specific coursework based on that college's standards.

3. **Additional Documents**: additional documents may need to be sent to colleges to be considered for admission. Here is a list of typical items you should be aware of:

- **Official High School Transcript:** For CommonApp colleges, you will invite your school counselor as part of your profile, and they will upload your transcript as part of the "School Report". They will also upload your Senior Semester 1 transcript as part of your "Midyear Report". Some schools require an official high school transcript be sent via school counselor in your application. **Double check each college's admission website** to determine if/when an official transcript must be submitted.

- **Letters of Recommendation (instructions listed on LOR pages):** Some schools require a letter of recommendation from a teacher and/or school counselor

- **SAT/ACT scores (***for colleges that accept or require SAT/ACT tests***)**: Many colleges have you "self-report" your test scores within the application. Some schools require official scores be sent to them - check the admission website of each school to determine policy.
  - For SAT score reports, must log into collegeboard.org and request/pay for
  - For ACT score reports, must log into actstudent.org and request/pay for

- **AP Exam Scores:** Many colleges ask you to self-report AP Exam scores. Others require official AP scores be sent to them, in a similar manner to SAT scores through collegeboard.org

- **Application Fee:** Many colleges require an application fee (range in price). This fee is paid by credit or debit card prior to submitting your final application.
  - Please see your counselor if you believe you qualify for a fee waiver either because you are on free/reduced priced lunch or face other financial concerns. Some colleges accept waivers.

4. **Final Review:** We recommend students do a final review/preview of their entire application before hitting "submit". In CommonApp you will see when any additional documents (e.g. transcripts, rec letters) are submitted.

5. **After your Application is Received:** Many colleges will contact you via the email you provided in your application, prompting you to create an account in their college's school portal. This is how many colleges will communicate with you regarding updates to missing documents, scholarship deadlines, and, eventually, your admissions decision. Be sure to bookmark each portal, save your login information, and add each college's general address into your email provider's "safe list".

Important Information for completing your Apps

TSHS School Code/CEEB Code	480976
School Name and Address	Tesla STEM High School 4301 228th Ave NE Redmond, WA 98053 425-936-2770 https://tesla.lwsd.org
School Profile/Course Information	Profile & Catalog available at: https://tesla.lwsd.org/about-us
Counselor Information	**Molly Touran** | Last names A - J | mtouran@lwsd.org **Chase Covington** | Last names K-SH | chacovington@lwsd.org **Anthony Smith** | Last names SI-Z | antsmith@lwsd.org
Senior Class Size	145 (typically)
Class Rank Information	TSHS DOES NOT RANK
GPA	4.0 scale, "Unweighted"
Term You Are Applying For	Fall 2027
Date of Graduation	June 2027
FAFSA or WAFSA	File on or after October 1of Senior year Research the filing deadline for each college you apply to (typically Nov for Early Action/Early Decision or Jan/Feb for Regular Decision) Federal Student Aid Accounts are required for you and your parent/guardian FAFSA: File online at fafsa.ed.gov WAFSA: File online at wsac.wa.gov/wasfa CSS Profile: Required by some private schools in addition to FAFSA – check list at CSS Profile Participating Institutions and Programs (collegeboard.org). File online at https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org

Letters of Recommendation from Teachers

Colleges vary in whether they require teacher letters of recommendation or not. Some examples for the class of 2024 are:

- All Washington universities, UC Berkeley, 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***
- U of Chicago, MIT, Case Western: ***2 teachers, 1 counselor***

Most colleges allow students to **choose any teacher** as their recommender (typically in a traditional academic discipline, related to your intended major).

- Examples: Cornell, USC, Boston U, Stanford, UT-Austin, Harvard

Some 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
- Duke: 2 teachers from Core Academic subjects from 10-12th grade

Most students will only need 1 teacher recommendation letter; some will need 2. We suggest in June of 11th grade students ask for 1 primary teacher letter of recommendation. Students may request, at that time, for a teacher to be their "second recommender if needed", and reserve that teacher's recommendation on an 'as-need' basis. Students will inform both teachers in the Fall if their letter is necessary. More than 2 recommendations from teachers is not beneficial, nor usually allowed by colleges. Under no circumstances should a student request a 3rd teacher recommendation. For all the reasons they are not needed nor wanted, it is seen as disrespectful to teachers time to ask beyond two. If your college allows additional letters of support, seek these from internship supervisors, troop leaders, music or athletic instructors, or congregation leaders.

When requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher, it is important to select someone who knows you well (priority #1), can speak to your learning/performance in class (priority #2), and/or teaches within your intended program of study (priority #3). Plan to give your teacher writers at least **4 weeks'** 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. **College Tracking Spreadsheet:** listing names of colleges, application deadline, and application platform *(e.g. University of Michigan/February 1 [Regular Decision]/ Common App)*
2. **Resume**
3. **Tesla Reference Form**

For colleges that require recommendations be submitted electronically or via an online platform (e.g. CommonApp or Scoir), you must 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 Materials & requesting a Counselor Letter of Recommendation

ALL Tesla seniors are required to complete a senior college packet as part of their High School and Beyond Plan. Your Senior Materials are required to be submitted to your school counselor prior to requesting a counselor letter of recommendation.

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

- Count back 2 weeks from your earliest due date that requires a letter of recommendation - that is the LAST day you may meet with your school 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 PRIOR TO SENIOR MEETING):*

- ❒ Your completed "College Tracking Spreadsheet" (see next page)
- ❒ Completed "Resume"
- ❒ Completed "Tesla Reference Form"
- ❒ Copy of one of your college essays (optional)
- ❒ 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 (and uploaded it!) you may make an appointment with your school counselor to 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. Remember to be respectful of their time commitment and THANK THEM!

Courtesy suggestions: thank them when you ask for a letter of recommendation, let them know when you are admitted to schools, and thank them before graduation for their part in your success :)

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College tracking Spreadsheet

A college tracking spreadsheet should accompany the Reference Form & Resume you turn in to your school counselor and teacher recommender to ensure they are up-to-date on your deadlines and the application platforms you will be inviting them to. Your college tracking spreadsheet should include: the **College's Name**, **App Platform** you're using (e.g. CommonApp, Scoir, etc.), your **application deadline** (varies if you are applying early vs regular and if they accept/ require teacher or counselor letters)

You can use a design similar to the examples below:

Name and contact of your colleges:	App Type:	Application due date.	Recommendation Letters
Reach Schools MIT	MIT independent app	Nov 1 (Early action)	1 counselor 2 teacher
Case Western U	CommonApp	Jan 0	1 counselor optional, 2 teacher
Comfort Schools University of Washington	CommonApp	Nov 15	No rec letters
UC Berkeley	UC app	Nov 30	No rec letters
Safety Schools ASU	CommonApp	Rolling (goal Nov 15)	1 counselor optional

College App Tracker

Use this tool to keep track of the colleges for which you will apply, customizing the columns to fit your needs.

College			Rec			
Name of College	Website and admissions requirement urls	Deadline	Application platform	Essays	Counselor Letter of Rec	Teacher Letters of Rec
Example U	*xxu.edu; admit.xxu.edu*	##########	*Common App*	*Yes (2)*	*No*	*Yes (1)*

	A	D	H	I
1	College	Rec Letters?	Platform	DEADLINE
2	UW	n/a	Common app	15-Nov
3	UW Bothell	1 teacher optional, 1 other opti	Common app	15-Jan
4	WSU	n/a	Common app	29-Jan
5	Seattle U	1 teacher required, 1 other opt	Common app	15-Jan
6	Gonzaga	1 teacher required, 2 other opt	Common app	1-Dec
7	UO	1 other optional	Common app	1-Nov
8	UBC	BS, BAS (Engineering)	EduPlanner BC	15-Jan
9	SFU	Biological Sciences, BSC Heal	goSFU	31-Jan
10	UC Berkely	n/a	UC app	30-Nov
11	UC Irvine	n/a	UC app	30-Nov
12	UC Davis	n/a	UC app	30-Nov
13	Cal Poly		Cal State Appl	30-Nov

Tesla Reference Form

This form is used to provide important information to anyone who may write you a college letter of recommendation. This should highlight what you feel have been significant accomplishments during your high school years. ***Please be thorough and thoughtful in this process as it helps us write the best letter of recommendation on your behalf!***

Your Formal Name: _____ Unweighted GPA ___ Highest SAT: ____ Highest ACT: __

1. Which 3 words **best describe you**, and why?
2. What 3 **skills or abilities do you feel are strengths** of yours?
3. **Review your resumé and provide detailed information on 3 items of your choice** *(e.g. academic experiences, athletics, internships, paying jobs, travel, community service, projects, etc.)*
4. If not covered in #3, provide brief additional details (including specific projects, responsibilities, and/or impact) for any of the following:
    a. **Community Service:**
    b. **Internships**
    c. **Paid jobs:**
5. What else do you do with your **free time outside of school/academics/formal extracurriculars** (e.g. hobbies, interests, unique talents, responsibilities)?
6. List any **contests you have entered (or are going to enter)** and any awards you have won (if any). Describe your projects. We want to hear about the experience, the ups and downs, and what you learned from it, regardless of if you placed or won an award.
7. What is the most **meaningful experience** you've had as a high schooler? How did it affect you, what did you do, and how did you change as a result?
8. Which high school experience, moment, or achievement are you **proudest of?**
9. **In what ways do you feel your academic performance is or is not reflective of your abilities**?
10. **How have you changed or grown as a person and as a student over the last four years?** Please share examples.
11. What are you **interested in studying** in college and why?
12. List your **top 3 programs/colleges that you want to apply to and your specific reasons why.** 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. campus culture, research, extracurricular opportunities, etc.)?
13. Which other teachers/staff have you asked to write a recommendation letter on your behalf? Are there any other staff members who know you well?
14. What **other important things would you like your recommenders to highlight** in your letter of recommendation:

- **For your Counselor:** Are there any features about yourself or your experiences that distinguish you from other Tesla STEM students that you would like your counselor to share? Is there anything (in or out of school) that you feel would be better told or explained in your college applications through your counselor recommendation letter rather than from you?

- **For your Teacher:** What is a memorable experience you had in this teacher's class? Were there any challenges in this class that you overcame? Why do you feel this teacher would be a great recommender for you?

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 to coach you in this life skill and meet your High School & Beyond Plan requirement. Below are tips, resources, and an example of a well-crafted resume. Make sure 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
Prepared
Recorded
Created
Designed
Developed
Invented
Performed
Authored
Communicated
Collaborated
Contacted
Edited
Presented
Reported
Analyzed

Collected
Compared
Determined
Experimented
Measured
Tested
Assigned
Delegated
Led
Managed
Motivated
Organized
Prioritized
Scheduled

Built
Adapted
Engineered

Installed
Maintained
Operated
Programmed
Solved
Clarified
Coached
Encouraged
Explained

Avoid overused phrases:

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

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

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

Resume Example

Identifying Information

Include your name, phone number, and a pro*fessional* email address.

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

A role does not have to be a paid job or an award-winning leadership position! Colleges primarily want to know how you spend your free time. If you spent 50 hours building a drone for fun in your garage or knitting scarves for charity, don't hesitate to write it down!

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

Other Categories

The titles of your categories will vary depending on what you want to convey. Some common examples include: Activities, Honors, Volunteer, Research, Leadership Experience, Athletics, etc.

College Funding Options

Before applying to college, your family should discuss the cost. Many institutions have a variety of aid opportunities available to students to alleviate the cost. These could include: **scholarships, loans, grants, work-study, and exemptions**. If you apply for Financial Aid, you will be provided with a financial aid offer tailored to your family's situation and what the college can offer you. It is important to look at all financial aid packages as they will vary by institution. Here are some steps to consider:

- Complete the **FAFSA** on fafsa.ed.gov: starting no earlier than October 1 of senior year, you can complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This is the guiding document for financial aid, so it is very important to submit it. Our counseling website (Financial Aid/Scholarships tab) has guided videos and tutorials for completing your FAFSA.
    - **Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA)** - If you are an undocumented student, you may qualify for the WAFSA.
    - A few trusted Financial Aid resources are https://studentaid.gov, www.collegeplan.org, & https://finaid.org
    - Investigate if your colleges require you to also complete the **CSS Profile** in addition to FAFSA. The CSS Profile is available on CollegeBoard's website at https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org. Deadlines vary, so check carefully.
- **Scholarships** - Check out the scholarship section of the counseling webpage and our High School & Beyond Plan platform for up-to-date information about scholarships available. Other reliable scholarship search engines are www.fastweb.com or https://washboard.wsac.wa.gov.
- **Institutional Scholarships** – these are specific to the college/university you are applying to. Information on these types of scholarships will be housed within a college's Admissions or Financial Aid website
    - Many colleges require their own additional scholarship application
    - Double check with each institution that you are following their guidelines
- **Net Price Calculator/U.S. Dept. of Education** – Consult https://collegecost.ed.gov/net-price to research the "net price" for each college that you are interested in applying to. This helpful tool will link you to the Net Price Calculator at any college, estimating the out-of-pocket expenses for each institution based on your individual circumstances.

High School Graduation Requirements & College Requirement Comparisons

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

Subjects	Class of 2023+ LWSD Grad Requirements	Most Universities/colleges (~90%)	Some Highly Selective Colleges (10%)	*Example: UW*	*Example: WWU*
English	4	4	4	*4*	*4*
Sciences	3	3	4	*2*	*2*
Math	3 (must include Alg 1, Alg 2, and Geometry)	3	4	*3*	*3*
Social Studies	3 (must include US History, CWP & Civics)	3	3-4	*3*	*3*
Fine Arts	1-2 (STEM only requires 1)	0.5-1	1	*0.5*	*0.5*
World Language	2 (must be same language)	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 plan for STEM students)				
Occ. Ed.	1				

You can research the competitiveness of admissions for specific 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 Xello. Two local examples are:

	UW Seattle (2025 admits)	*Seattle U (2025 admits)*
Average GPA	*Typical admission range 3.75-3.99*	*3.4 - 3.88*
SAT (EBRW & Math)	*(not considered)*	*1160-1360 (Middle 50%)*
ACT	*(not considered)*	*24-30 (Middle 50%)*
Acceptance Rate	*46% in-state, 42% overall*	*77%*

JUNIOR & SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

JUNIOR YEAR

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

- Apply yourself in your studies
- Suggested Winter Break Activities:
  - Explore a few college search engine websites to familiarize yourself with different search tools
  - "Visit" a couple of colleges. Most colleges have self-guided virtual tours available on their Admissions website which can be helpful in identifying campus preferences.

JANUARY

- Work on a timeline for any SAT/ACT tests you may plan to take this Spring or Summer. If you have a list of potential colleges, research if they are "Test-Blind" or "Test-Optional"
- Prepare well for semester finals and attend any/all study sessions for your classes

FEBRUARY-MARCH

- Review your senior schedule request with your family. Thoughtfully select your Senior year courses, keeping in mind academic requirements of your colleges of interest
- Explore possible summer internships/programs
- Continue researching career fields. Ask questions/advice from industry mentors you meet. Research related college majors for those careers
- Continue researching colleges of interest. Visit university blogs to ask/read additional questions about your campus of interest. Visit colleges' YouTube channels for student tours

APRIL

- Enjoy Spring Break! Consider working a college visit into your vacation plans
- Schedule a Junior Meeting with your counselor and parents/guardians. During this meeting, we will discuss questions you have about your post-high school planning and any remaining graduation requirements
- Plan on attending any College Financial Aid presentations available in our community in-person or online

MAY-JUNE

- Prepare for and take your AP Exams
- Draft an updated resume
- If you plan to ask teachers for letters of recommendation, review the information in this handbook so teachers can write the best letter of recommendation for you!

JULY-AUGUST

- Research colleges that meet your top-choice criteria on majors, clubs, environment, etc.
- Use College Board's Net Price Calculator tool to view net costs of your schools of choice.

- Tour prospective colleges, especially if you have clear top choices. Research/make a list of questions you want to ask/departments you would like to visit before you arrive
- Create your Common App and Scoir accounts for college applications; browse their tutorials and videos on how to fill out applications
- Start to narrow your list of prospective colleges and fill in your college spreadsheet
- Become familiar with the FAFSA and the documentation required

SENIOR YEAR

SEPTEMBER

- Decide if you are going to apply Early Decision, Early Action or Regular
- Sign up for a final SAT/ACT (if needed)
- Consider setting up a visit or interview with potential colleges if the opportunity is available.
- Continue to build and revise your activities list and college essays.
- Attend Tesla STEM on-campus College Visits for any colleges you may consider applying to (September-November).

OCTOBER

- Finalize the list of colleges you are applying to and update your college spreadsheet with application deadlines & important details
- Send your official SAT/ACT test scores from College Board (if needed)
- ~Oct 1 FAFSA opens - complete with your parents. Refer to the Financial Aid Resources information on our website for helpful tools. ED/EA applicants should have their FAFSA completed by early Dec; regular decision students should have their FAFSA complete by their college's financial aid deadline
    - The College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile can be completed in October. Note your college's CSS Profile deadline date.
- Schedule your Senior Meeting with your counselor to review your *completed* Senior Materials and discuss any recommendation letter requests.

NOVEMBER

- Complete all university applications (most are due November - December). Community college applications can wait until April!
- 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

- *Keep Studying*!!
- Double-check the status of all online college applications and that all components (i.e. test scores, transcripts, etc.) have been received
- Thank any teacher recommender for their help in your college applications
- Be sure to fill out the FAFSA and CSS Profile to meet your colleges' deadlines
- Look, and begin to apply, for scholarships. Refer to the list of scholarship resources on our High School & Beyond Plan platform and counseling webpage
- REview your SAR (Student Aid Report) generated after completing the FAFSA. If there are discrepancies, correct the information.

JANUARY

- **Study**, **Study**, ***Study***! Semester 1 grades will be sent to colleges. For non-Common App/ Scoir colleges, send your Semester 1 transcript to any colleges per their instructions

FEBRUARY

- Peak time for Scholarship Applications! Refer to the list of resources provided
- Participate in competition opportunities; some can generate scholarship $$!

MARCH

- When receiving acceptance letters, you will receive an 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
- 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
- If applying to community colleges, complete your online application! Once you have applied, you will receive information on the college's placement testing, orientation, and registration process

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 and attend graduation…

You made it through high school!

Now it is time to prepare for college!