

College Application Timeline

Date	Regular Decision (Common App, Coalition)	Early Decision (Common App, Coalition)	QuestBridge Application*
Sept.			27th - QuestBridge Application Due
Oct.	1st - FAFSA/CSS Opens	1st - FAFSA/CSS Opens	1st - FAFSA/CSS Opens 11th - College Rankings/Match Agreement Due 18th - Finalist Notification
Nov.		1st - Common App/Coalition App Essays, Written Supplements, ED Agreement, Transcript, School Report, Two Recs, and \$75 fee due. 1st - Architecture Portfolio and Application Due	1st – Turn in college specific materials 5th - QuestBridge Regular Decision Opens
Dec.	1st - Rice/Baylor Medical Scholars Application Due 1st - Common App/Coalition App Essays, Written Supplements, ED Agreement, Transcript, School Report, Two Recs, \$75 fee, and Financial Assistance App due for Shepherd School of Music. 1st - Preliminary Audition Video submitted to Shepherd*	1st - Rice/Baylor Medical Scholars Application Due	3rd - QuestBridge Match Decisions Released 10th - Regular Decision Work due
Jan.	1st - Common App/Coalition App Essays, Written Supplements, ED Agreement, Transcript, School Report, Two Recs, and \$75 fee due. 1st - Architecture Portfolio and Application Due 1st - Music Teacher Rec Due for Shepherd		
Feb.	1st - Midyear Grades due	1st - Midyear Grades due	1st – Midyear Grades due
Mar.	1st - Last Day to Submit FAFSA, CSS, and Supporting Financial Aid Documents due	1st - Last Day to Submit FAFSA, CSS, and Supporting Financial Aid Documents due	

**QuestBridge is a nonprofit aimed at helping connect high achieving low income students with the nation's best colleges. There is a lot more to this program's distinct college application, as well as opportunities for low income underclassmen in high school than we can cover in this presentation. Please visit <https://www.questbridge.org/> to find more information about QuestBridge and the circumstances that may qualify you for the application or other programs.*

Senior Tips

- *Meet with your college counselor!* If you haven't already, why aren't you? They're going to be a crucial point of contact for questions and guidance right up to and after you apply.
- *Request letters of recommendation from your teachers and college counselors early!* Make sure you give your teachers enough notice, so they aren't rushing.
- *Retake the SAT/ACT if you need to do so.* Senior year should NOT be the first year you are taking these exams.
- *SUBMIT those applications!* Keep any eye on deadlines, especially if you intend to apply to specialized programs, Early Decision (I and II), and Restricted Early Action and regular Early Decision (I and II).
- *Send your official transcripts on time!* Followed by that are mid-year reports, which are usually required by colleges even after you've already submitted your application.
- *Apply for financial aid and scholarships!* Take a note of the requirements you need for applying, the deadlines, and that you have enough time to fill out the FAFSA (and the CSS if you're applying to private schools), because they'll need a lot of important information involving your family's taxes, income, and assets. Reuse essays!
- *Decision time!* Once the admissions decisions start coming through, you'll have to consider which school you'll actually attend. If you've been waitlisted, let them know ASAP if you're still interested in their school, and don't miss the confirmation deadlines! Make sure you also let the other schools to which you've been accepted that you will not be attending, so they can offer your spot to a student on their waitlist.

Junior Tips

- *Start thinking about the kinds of schools you're interested in!* The right school for you isn't just about rank, consider things like location, size, professor/student ratio, cost of attendance, etc. (Collegeboard college search engine)
- *Make a spreadsheet of potential schools!* We recommend color coding based on reach/target/safety schools, organizing by preference, and noting down standardized test requirements, costs of attendance, applications deadlines, etc.
- *Take the PSAT/NMSQT, if you haven't already!* IN ADDITION, if you're interested in applying for the national merit scholarship, you must take the PSAT your junior year to be eligible.
- *Take the SAT/ACT early enough!* You want to give yourself time to see if you need improvement and to take it again, or maybe even a couple times: you can always take released exams under testing conditions before spending money on an official test.
- *Keep up your grades!* Your grades junior year/first semester senior year are the most important, because they will be the scores that colleges will evaluate most critically when looking at your application since they are indicative of your ability to perform at the time that you apply.
- *Become a leader in your clubs!* Having leadership positions demonstrates your initiative, ability to take responsibility, your passion, and your character.
- *Research and visit schools once you compile a list, if you get the opportunity!* If you aren't able to tour the schools you're interested in, most schools have virtual tours for you to watch online. Some might even visit you or have conventions in your city. College tours themselves are great way to get a feel for what living and attending that university is like.
- *Meet with your college counselor!* This time is when they can give you the most information and be the most help to you when you're applying to college.
- *Consider asking for letters of recommendation at the end of junior year!* Teachers will have more time to think about what to write for you if you give them more of a head's up, and summer's a great time for them to start.

Sophomore/Freshman Tips

- *Keep an eye on your grades!* It's NOT TRUE that you can slack off until junior year; while it's true that your grades matter most junior and senior year, if it looks like you weren't putting in any effort when you started out, it reflects poorly on your motivations.
 - However, colleges value an upward trend! Don't be discouraged if you tried your best and didn't get the grades you want. Just continue to work hard to improve in the future.
- *Set up your course load from the start so that you can take the most challenging and engaging courses you can.* Colleges want to see that you've put in the most effort you can when it comes to your academic load.
- *Begin to volunteer around your community and get involved at your school!* It's fine to experiment when you're trying to find out what you're interested in, but if you find things you're most passionate about, focus in on those rather than be involved in everything.
- *Establish good relationships with your teachers and counselors.* It's good to start out on the right foot rather than trying to create or mend those relationships further down the road.
- *Take the PSAT/NMSQT as a sophomore if you want to see earlier where you need to improve on the real exam!*