

Ready, Set, Go!

COLLEGE

Senior Handbook

NOTE: This PDF file contains the indexes from each of our grade appropriate handbooks and several sample pages from our Senior Handbook.

Ready, Set, College!

Our goal is to assist our clients in gaining admission to the highest quality college for his/her career at the lowest possible out-of-pocket cost.

In today's competitive college marketplace, excelling in a single activity or course is not enough. To gain admittance to college you must present a résumé of academic excellence, showing participation and leadership in extracurricular activities, and have above average test scores. You should be working toward compiling a résumé of your high school career that will make you the most desirable candidate at any college to which you apply.

But that is only half of the college equation. Financial preparation is equally important. College costs have risen dramatically in the last few years, and with our help you will have the best information available about the expenses your family must bear, the schools that offer the best aid packages, and the colleges where you will fall in the top 25% of the student body academically.

Ready, Set, College is a program designed to help you be prepared. We have developed a plan that encompasses the many aspects of getting into and paying for college. First, we send you handbooks that explain the tasks you will need to complete each year as you progress through high school. You will receive our newsletter, giving you important and timely information. We provide you with comprehensive PSAT, SAT and ACT study aids. We have an expert team of financial aid counselors on staff to assist you with calculating your family's monetary contribution and, if possible, lowering it. We will fill out all need-based financial aid forms for you. We will also help you to identify suitable colleges that will maximize your financial aid.

Ready, Set, College is like no other program! We work with you and your family throughout every step of your high school career. With our help and expertise, you will follow a path that will enable you to achieve your goal of a quality education at the lowest possible cost.

Monthly Activities For Seniors

Shaded areas indicate topics of greatest importance

Month	Activity	Page
September:	“Knowing and showing your reasons for going”	
	What are your reasons for going to college?.....	4
	What are the most valid reasons for going to college?.....	5
	How to organize, complete the application process correctly and get help if needed.....	9
	How to order the Profile form.....	10
	How to use your time wisely and apply to the right college for you.....	11
	How to prepare for tests, score highly and send the results to your college choices.....	14
October:	Designing a plan of action: Dates, duties, tests, visits, interviews, questions	
	How to answer the 21 questions asked most by seniors.....	15
	How to conduct college visits and interviews.....	17
	Decide when to apply and when to request transcript mailings.....	18
	Decide about early admission plans.....	19
	Questions for parents or guardians to ask of college staff during a campus visit or other contact.....	20
	How to make sure your information is complete so we can send finished forms to you.....	22
November:	Research: The printed page, online references, catalogs and application kits	
	How to find college lists in print, using the four best available guidebooks.....	21
	How to find college lists online that match the criteria you have chosen.....	22
	Summarize the six application steps.....	23
	How to do application paperwork.....	25
	How to use a “noun rundown” checklist for each college.....	26
	How to fill out application forms to your best advantage.....	27
	How to tell colleges the ten things they most want to know about you.....	28
December:	Applications and attachments	
	How to compile four enclosures; your achievement record, work sample(s), résumé, and photo.....	29
	How to file the application fee and provide teacher reference forms to each college.....	31
	How to create the school transcript packet for mailing.....	31
	How to write an effective essay. Is your essay “typical?” Can it be better?.....	32
	Be sure to send Ed;fi your “final list of colleges”.....	34
January:	Wrap-up: Financial aid, choice of major, midyear grades, checklist items	
	How to declare a major when you’re unsure which major to choose.....	34
	How to complete the FAFSA form, and what to do with other forms you may receive.....	35
	How to use a pre-application checklist to ensure all details are correct.....	36
	How to send your mid-year grades to each college.....	36
February:	Their move: How colleges make decisions, what they value most in their applicants	
	How students are selected.....	38
	What to do with your Student Aid Report (SAR).....	40
	How to understand admissions categories; “tie-breakers” and “heart-breakers”.....	41
	How to assess your strengths and weaknesses.....	42
March:	Strategies: Coping with problems, provisional admissions, waiting lists and rejections	
	How to cope with problems after the paperwork is filed.....	43
	How to keep an admission offer open or handle a provisional acceptance.....	43
	How to proceed with the proposal of financial aid you’re offered.....	44
April:	In closing: Waiting list offers, final transcripts and preparations	
	Handle a waiting list offer and provide a final transcript.....	46
	Preparing for your college adventure!.....	47

ALL YEAR LONG: Match your timing to each college’s requirements; the months listed above are approximate! Beat all deadlines by two weeks or more to allow for office delays, mail times, etc. It is never too late to add last-minute good news to your application file via a letter, fax or e-mail!

Things To Do Each Month

September - Call your chosen colleges to set up visits and interviews.

- Look at your present school schedule. Is it challenging?
- Look at your daily schedule. Are you making the best use of your time, talents and energies?
- Finalize your list of college choices.
- Call for catalogs, applications and any other information needed from each college you've chosen.
- Order the Profile Form; after September 14th, order the paper copy if you need it and send it to our office to be completed.
- Ask two teachers from your senior classes if they'd write references for you later in the school year.
- Start important writing projects such as the final résumé, the application essay and the activity summary sheet.
- Get your file completed by your guidance counselor.
- Pay any overdue book fines, get a copy of your senior yearbook photo, finish your résumé and activity sheet, etc.
- Closely follow the directions from your guidance counselor.
- Set up your files at home so your instruction materials, testing program materials and individual college application materials are organized and separated.
- Read completely through the "How to Apply" booklet to get an overview of the whole admission process for the year.
- Register by mail for the next SAT testing date.
- Learn when your counselor will accept informal drop-ins for quick questions.
- Reduce your preliminary list of colleges to a manageable number. Five to seven is typical.
- Plan organized use of recess weeks: Christmas, February and Easter breaks.
- Review your college comparison data and refine your choices.
- Ask advice from family, friends, alumni, teachers and counselors.

Use this general schedule of events to plan where you should be in the process. Be sure to look ahead to the next month and plan out your time accordingly.

October - Get materials and decisions ready for your guidance counselor conference.

- Talk with college representatives when they visit your school.
- Meet the late application deadline for the SATs, if you missed the first one.
- Make the choice of essay topic and outline.
- Enjoy the college visits you arranged during September.
- Complete applications for no-need financial awards, including essays.
- Divide your college choice group into the 3 categories: *reach, match and safe*.
- Send your parents to a guidance department evening workshop for college planning.
- Mail your applications and send your transcript to any early decision pick.
- Earn your best-ever grades at the end of the fall term!
- Review sample questions and procedures for SATs.

- Register for the SAT II in December, if college requirements specify that date. Review your transcript contents with your counselor for completeness.
- Schedule interviews with local college alumni.
- Make early admission, rolling admission and time-frame decisions.
- Assume leadership roles in athletic and service organizations, at school or in your community. Aim for creativity.
- Finalize résumé and give a copy to teachers writing references.

November - Take the SAT.

- Watch for special application deadlines in November.
- By the end of this month your information should be complete at Ed;fi, meaning we have received parent/student confidential information sheets, spoken to someone in your household to gather additional information, and that you have sent us a final list of schools to which you are applying.
- Ask two teachers for recommendations; provide forms and envelopes.
- Make final college visits.
- Start application paperwork.
- Attend local “college night” programs.
- Talk to undergraduates who are home from college for Thanksgiving break.
- Study college catalogs to learn subject major offerings and related requirements.
- Tour nearby colleges on weekends or over Thanksgiving.

December - Order your transcripts now if you completed your file; allow guidance 15 school days to process before deadlines.

- Take the December SAT II.
- Update the activity page in your folder, and your résumé.
- Make holiday contacts with grads now attending the colleges you want.
- Sign up for the January exams if you missed the December ones.
- Retake SATs in January if scores suggest.
- See your counselor BEFORE you order a transcript to be sure records are ready.
- Watch application deadlines.
- Complete essay drafts now; ask teachers to offer help.
- Use holidays to finish ALL your paperwork for colleges.
- Complete all applications for admission to selective colleges and/or transcript orders.
- Make sure you have sent your final list of colleges to Ed;fi so we can prepare your FAFSA.
- Provide supplemental samples of your work, achievement or talent.
- Study SAT scores and brochures to understand score uses.
- Expand involvement with service or charity activities.
- During recess week, read college guidebooks; talk colleges with friends and relatives.

- Start family work on need scholarship forms.
- Thank teachers who wrote reference forms for you.

January - Mail your completed FAFSA to the government for processing! Make sure both parent and student sign it before you mail it.

- Mail applications to all selective colleges.
- Order transcripts for all February deadlines; remember, processing takes 15 working days.
- Follow up on requests from colleges for midyear grades.
- Update your résumé, your activity page and your other records to reflect your growth.
- Assess test scores; address any problems or new plans needed.
- Complete semester work with top grades.
- Do in-depth research on your chosen colleges by reading, talking and visiting.
- Do a mid-year inventory regarding; applications, transcripts, tests, records, financial aid, contacts, research, visits and interviews and all school work.

February - Submit mid-year grades unless your fall term grades were sent earlier.

- Register to take AP examination in May.
- Send your Student Aid Report (SAR) with your completed taxes to Ed;fi to be updated.
- Get materials and resources for in-depth research on choices.
- Visit college campuses during recess week.

March - Respond to college contacts promptly.

- Send updated added info to colleges.

April - Choose among college acceptances and inform Ed;fi and your counselor of your plans.

- Review your acceptances and financial aid offers with your parents, Ed;fi, and your counselor.
- Visit colleges again before your final decision is made.
- If rejected, discuss options with your counselor.

May - Take Advanced Placement Exams.

- Keep Ed;fi and your counselor informed of your offers, decisions and scholarships.
- Follow wait list instructions if needed.

June - Order a graduation transcript sent to the chosen college.

SUMMER - Prepare college reading requirements after courses are chosen.

- Visit the library of a college near you and get familiar with the facilities.
- Accumulate the items you will need for apartment or dorm life.
- Take advantage of the orientation programs offered by your college.
- Contact your new roommates.
- Submit health, housing and scheduling forms to college.
- Prepare yourself and your family for "Separation Anxiety."

Shaded areas indicate topics of greatest importance

TIME - MANAGING IT WELL

Topic	Page
Why do we do what we do? Clarifying values.....	4
All persons are created equal ... BUT ... Some axioms to live by.....	5
Time-wise; what it really is, how to evaluate your uses.....	6
Seven steps to using time better.....	7
Planning and using a time management record during high school.....	9
Plotting and meeting your own weekly schedule.....	11
What DO you do? How productive is it?.....	12
14 facts about time.....	13
The only way to start; the 5 dimensions of self-appraisal.....	13
Reporting your time management history - a year-end duty we all face.....	17
The Time Management Record (TMR); a sample for grades 9 and 10.....	18
A blank TMR for you to start working on.....	19
Who are you? How will others decide?.....	20
Doing something for nothing; a great way to use time.....	20
Volunteer opportunities to explore.....	22
College preparation by month - what you do adds up to where you go!.....	23
What does WHO want? Colleges want the same things you value.....	24
A college planning fable: Time uses for the wrong reasons.....	25
College reading prep list. Start your four-year check-off list here today.....	27
A career preparation chart - take these courses for these kinds of colleges....	29
When a low grade shows up.....	30
What's your excuse?.....	31
New Year's opportunities.....	31
In Closing.....	32

Your Grade 9 Goal: a planned, busy, happy, full year of accomplishment and growth that results in a Time Management Record you will be proud of and that colleges will admire.

Sophomore Handbook

Shaded areas indicate topics of greatest importance

Topic	Page
The only way to start; a logical system for self-appraisal.....	4
Your five dimensions of self; filling in the blanks of who you really are.....	5
Your résumé; a 3-year record of what you do and who you will become.....	7
A sample résumé blank; make your first-draft notes on this page.....	9
Family history; a good home project to begin your notes.....	11
Academic history; by the end of this year, what kind of student will you be?...	12
Personality profile; ways of feeling about, doing, and thinking about things....	14
Personal history; what do the years of your personal life add up to so far?....	16
Achievement and Experience Summary; what have you accomplished so far?....	18
Ability profile; what does your record show you are good at?.....	19
Interest profile; what does all the above suggest you might enjoy doing?.....	21
Values profile; which of these values seem to match the way you feel?.....	22
Have you returned your basic information to Edjfi?.....	25
Job characteristics questions; how do you answer them?.....	25
Contribution in college; what will you do there that encourages admission?...	26
Do you have a 'hook'? Is there a special talent colleges should know about?...	28
Plans following college; jot down some general future ideas.....	29
A sample résumé form; practice filling in the blanks again!.....	32
Final résumé blank; do a more carefully worded response to each area.....	33
College qualities; which of these features will mean most to you?.....	36
College emphases; which of these best match your needs?.....	37
College characteristics; do a 'dry run' of your choices now.....	39
Preparing for your 'best' college.....	41
College preparation tasks for Sophomores.....	41
Your strengths: Different colleges suit different needs.....	43
Time: the great Equalizer, the great Developer, the great Choice-maker.....	44
Time Management Schedule.....	45
When a low grade shows up.....	46
In closing.....	47

Of course your answers will change as you grow and mature over the next two years. But carefully following the above pages will get you started on what you want to do based on a clear record of what you are like today! If you feel frustrated figuring out what you are like, ask us for a Personal Inventory Questionnaire to explore your attributes with more depth and clarity.

Monthly Activities For Juniors:

Shaded areas indicate topic groups of greatest importance

<u>Month</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Page</u>
September:	Is college for you?	4
October:	A timeline of activities	6
	Making important decisions	7
	Appraising yourself	8
	You are what you do	8
November:	Common questions and answers, common mistakes	
	How to answer frequently asked questions about college planning	10
December:	Turn college characteristics into your own “Spec-Sheet” of priorities	
	Summarizing yourself in three important ways	12
	How college differences relate to your needs	13
	Junior “Spec-Sheet” of college priorities	16
January:	Find college information - where to look	
	How to find college lists in print using the four best guide books	18
	Finding college facts online	19
	Have you sent in your basic information to Ed;fi?	19
February:	Evaluate your chances - how colleges differ by characteristics and focus	
	Evaluating your chances of admission	20
	How college characteristics differ	21
	Differing college emphases	23
March:	Choose a college - do’s and don’ts of selection	
	How to pick those colleges that best suit your needs	24
	How <i>not</i> to pick a college	26
	How to research and narrow down specific choices	27
April:	College quality	
	How to judge a college’s quality	29
	How <i>not</i> to judge college quality	31
	How to assess a college’s character	31
May:	Use visits and interviews to compare colleges	
	Using college visits and interviews	32
	How to make use of nearby college campuses	33
	Questions parents should ask when visiting a college	34
June:	Wind up the decision process	
	College comparison chart	35
	How to wind up the decision process and end your junior year	36
	Typical questions when choosing a college	38
Ongoing activities throughout the junior year:		
	A Junior “to do list”	41
	How to take the SAT exams - A monthly procedure for Juniors	42
	Asking better questions about college planning	43
	How to make better college choices!	44
	In closing	47