# Miller Educational Consulting

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"Creating Options for Your Best College Match"

## **Your College Planning Timeline**

#### Freshman Year

- Build strong academic, language, mathematics and critical thinking skills by taking challenging courses.
- Study hard and get excellent grades.
- Strengthen your vocabulary by increasing your reading.
- Become involved in extra-curricular activities that interest you.
- Browse through college literature or look online to get an idea of what kinds of schools may be of interest to you.

## **Sophomore Year**

- Most juniors will take the PSAT test in the fall, but you may decide to take it as a sophomore (or you may take the PSAT 10 if your school offers it.) The PSAT is a preliminary standardized test that will give you some preparation for the SAT.
- Continue to be involved in activities that interest you. Colleges will look for your commitment and leadership in your activities. Think depth, not breadth.
- Logon to your Naviance account and familiarize yourself with what it offers. Complete the "Do What You Are" personality assessment, if that is available.
- If you have never visited a college campus, do so. You can visit a large public university, mid-sized private university and a smaller liberal arts campus in your state to get an idea of what might appeal to you. If you can't visit in person, there are many online sources for tours.
- Plan now for wise use of your summer. Consider taking a summer course or participating in a special program (e.g., for prospective engineers or journalists or for those interested in theatre or music) at a local college or community college. Consider working or volunteering.

#### **Iunior Year**

- Start thinking about a list of potential colleges to research and visit.
- Attend college fairs, financial aid seminars, or general information sessions to learn as much as you can about the college application process.
- You will take the PSAT at school in October, so if you did well on your earlier PSAT, be sure to do some test prep to prepare. High performance can qualify you for National Merit commendation or scholarships.
- Meet with college representatives who visit your school throughout the year, as well as at the fall and spring college fairs.
- Junior year grades are extremely important in the college admission process, because they are a measure of how well you do in advanced, upper-level courses. Grades also are used to determine scholarships and grants for which you may be eligible. Continue to challenge yourself and keep up your grades.
- If you have not done so, make an appointment to meet with your counselor to review your college search criteria and ideas, as well as discuss ideas for teacher recommendations.

- Visit colleges during your fall or spring break. Request interviews if they are required. If you can't visit in person, there are many online sources for tours.
- All Colorado juniors in public high schools will take the state SAT in April.
- If you do not take this at your school, then register to take the April or June ACT or a different SAT, depending on which test is best for you.
- If the colleges require recommendations, in the spring, ask two appropriate teachers if they would be willing to write on your behalf. Even though letters will not be needed until fall, many of your teachers will receive multiple requests and you want to ensure they will have you on their list. Be sure to thank them!
- Start working on ideas for your main application personal statement essay.
- If you have a list of colleges you are considering, run their Net Price Calculators to make sure that they meet your family's affordability requirements.
- If you are considering schools that accept the Common Application, register for it online and start entering the required information.

### **Senior Year**

- Meet with your counselor to be sure your list includes colleges appropriate to your academic and personal record. Review your transcript and extra-curricular records with your school counselor to ensure their accuracy.
- Be sure to request information from each of the colleges that interest you. As you receive emails, open them and respond, if requested, in a timely manner.
- Make sure you have all applications required for college admission and financial aid. Check on application and financial aid deadlines for the schools to which you plan to apply. They may vary and it is essential to meet all deadlines!
- Plan visits to colleges and set up interviews, if you didn't get to them during the summer or if you want to return to a campus for a second time.
- Continue completing applications to colleges. Be sure to make copies (or save online copies) of all applications before submitting them.
- Your senior grades are extremely important. Don't slow down! Keep up your first quarter grades.
- If you need financial aid, login to the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) on the Web. It is available on October 1. Check to see if the colleges to which you are applying require any other financial aid forms, such as the CSS Profile, which is also available October 1.
- Remember to monitor your applications to be sure that all materials are sent and received on time and that they are complete. Continue to stay on top of things. Missing a deadline or required admissions documentation could jeopardize your chances for admission.
- By May 1, decide on the one college that you will attend and send in your tuition deposit and housing application.to the college. Notify the other colleges that accepted you that you have selected another college.
- BE PROUD! You have completed one of the most challenging and rewarding tasks of your life! Congratulations!

Prepared from information from the National Association of College Admissions Counseling and other sources, as well as Kathryn's observations and experience.