



## Key Steps In the College Process

### Request Teacher Recommendations

- Request 2 teachers write a recommendation for your college applications
- Guidance counselor should automatically write a rec
- Not all schools will require them
- Notify teachers of due date/deadline

### Standardized Testing

- Most schools have gone test optional this year
- If testing is available, they should take it and see if they have a strong score
- ONLY send a score if it is above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile of last year's Freshman class
- Do not include your test scores on the Common Application or Coalition Application unless you're planning to submit for all schools
- Some schools accept self reported scores. Other schools will want scores sent from the test organization itself.

### Meet with school counselor

- Understand the process for applying (how to get transcripts sent, etc.)

### Build A List

- Understand the students deciding factors
- Understand how well the student fits academically
- Create a list that contains some schools that should be safeties, targets and reaches
- Resources:
  - Custom College Plan (<https://steinbrecherconsulting.customcollegeplan.com/>)  
username: [college@futurefive.org](mailto:college@futurefive.org) password: collegeprep
  - [www.collegeexpress.com](http://www.collegeexpress.com)
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
  - Your school's Naviance, if available
- Don't eliminate schools because you think they will be too expensive. Parents should complete the net price calculator to get a sense of the aid that may be provided.
- Explore the applications that your schools accept (Common Application, School Specific Application, Coalition Application)



## Application Type

- Schools offer various application types and dates.
- Early Decision is a binding application where you learn about your acceptance/denial early, typically before Christmas. If you apply to a college Early Decision, then you are committing to attend if you are admitted, regardless of financial aid. You agree to withdraw all other applications. The deadline for this is typically between 10/15 and 11/15. You can only apply to ONE school early decision.
- Early Action is a nonbinding application where you learn about your acceptance/denial early, typically before Christmas. If you apply to a college Early Action, then you are NOT committing to attend. You can apply to as many schools as you wish to under the Early Action plan
- Restricted Early Action means you can only apply to one school early action; however, you are not committed to attend if accepted.
- Rolling Admissions means that applications are considered on a first come first serve basis. They do not wait until the application deadline to begin reading apps. Under this plan, it is beneficial to submit your application as early as possible. Rolling Admissions can still be ED/EA or RD.
- Early Decision 2 has the same restrictions as Early Decision, but the dates tend to be later. The application is usually due 1/1 and you will be notified by 2/15.
- Regular Decision applications are usually due 1/1 and you will hear a response by mid March. There is no commitment to attend.
- Should you apply ED/EA/RD? Apply early IF, you are sure of the colleges on your list and you have a solid academic profile through Junior Year. If you need your first semester senior year grades to be considered to strengthen your profile, then wait and apply Regular Decision. Apply ED if financial aid is not an issue AND you're 100% certain of your school choice.

## Complete the Applications

- Create a common application account and complete all sections through the activities list
  - The activities list is very important. Think of it like a resume.
- Make the items you list in your activities section work hard for you. Include any time you dedicate to caring for family members or taking on household responsibilities
- Sections are complete when a green check mark appears next to that item in your dashboard
- Under the education section, you want to include the classes that you will be taking during your Senior year
- Include all honors – honor roll, seal of biliteracy, most dedicated student, etc



### Write a personal statement

- Many schools, especially the more selective ones, require a personal statement. This statement is a maximum of 650 words and needs to tell the admissions committee something about you.
- Draw the reader in quickly.
- Make sure it stays in the student's voice
- Proof read it
- **Essay Do's and Don'ts for Your Students**
  - Don't feel like you need to share all details about a challenging experience, but also don't feel like an essay needs a happy ending. The point of the essay is to provide context so that the Reader learns who your student is and what has brought them to this life stage.
  - Don't feel like your essay needs to be about an extreme, life-changing event. The goal is to share your personal qualities with the Reader, and that can be done with a simple theme such as the first time you rode the bus alone, the smell of your mom's mac and cheese, the feeling you get when your big brother gives you a high five...
  - Do start small -- keep the main story focused on a discrete moment in time or a particular thing, versus a vague overview of your student's life experiences.
  - Do have your student pick a topic that they care about—it will make writing so much easier!
  - Do be genuine. Don't try to guess what an Admissions Reader wants to hear. The essays that come across as most impressive and authentic are the ones that are real.
  - Do have your student read their essay aloud. Does it flow?
  - Do imagine how the Admissions Reader will feel after reading your essay. Your student should ask themselves, "Are you leaving the Reader with an accurate impression of who *you* are and what personal qualities you will bring to campus?"
  - Do revise and proofread!

### Write Supplements

- Many schools, especially the more selective ones, require supplemental essays. These vary by school, but will be available on their applications on August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Both the Common Application and the Coalition Application have included an optional question about how the COVID-19 epidemic impacted you. If you have had significant impact, then you should answer this question. This would include – difficulty completing school-work due to poor WiFi or a lack of a quiet space; loss of household income; illness or death in a close family member. This is not a section to lament that you couldn't play lacrosse.



### **Apply for Financial Aid**

- Financial aid applications become available on 10/1 and should be completed as soon as possible in case any questions or issues arise.
- These forms are usually completed by parents since it is their information that is being requested.
- The FAFSA is required by all schools offering federal aid. The CSS Profile is required by many schools, but not all. You will have to check with each individual school that you are applying to, in order to determine which forms you need to complete.
  - <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
  - <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>

### **Apply for Scholarships**

- Many schools consider you for scholarships based on your application to the college. You will need to research each school that you're applying to in order to see if additional applications are required.
- Be sure to look for departmental scholarships as well as institutional scholarships.
- Outside scholarships are often available. Explore scholarships awarded by organizations within your community or your parents work place.

**Check him out for all questions: [www.collegeessayguy.com](http://www.collegeessayguy.com)**