

College Counseling Timeline from 9th-12th Grade

Freshman Year - In freshman year, students jump into Upper School life both inside and outside the classroom, and college counselors lay the foundation for our four-year counseling relationship.

- Academic success and community involvement are the most important goals for the freshman year. This year sets the stage for future course options and begins the official high school transcript.
- Participation in extracurriculars at school and community is strongly encouraged.
- An optional PSAT is offered to freshmen in the fall.
- College counselors are assigned to students in the winter of freshman year.
- Meet with college counselor in the spring semester to discuss study habits, academic interests, summer opportunities, and sophomore year course registration.
- Students complete at least 15 hours of community service.

Sophomore Year - We ask sophomores what they learned about themselves as freshmen and how they want to use that information to move forward. We identify academic strengths, talk about how to shore up weaknesses, discuss new activities and interests, and work on time management.

- Meet with advisor, college counselor, and teachers to brainstorm ideas and create plan for Personal Challenge project.
- Take the PSAT in October. Sophomores are automatically registered for the practice test.
- Meet with advisor and college counselor in late winter for course registration.
- Talk to college counselor about summer plans (program applications begin in the winter).
- If you'll be traveling over breaks and want to visit a college or two to get a sense of the variety of campuses, talk with your college counselor ahead of time for suggestions.
- Continue to work hard in classes and engage in school and community activities.
- Complete remaining community service hours (30 hrs total by beginning of junior year).

Junior Year - We meet with juniors in groups and individually to make sure they're on top of the key college admissions details that will affect their lives, what they're taking and why, how they use their nonacademic time, and what dreams for their future are beginning to take shape.

September and October

- Learn about colleges by connecting with the over 100 admissions officers who visit SHS.
- All juniors take the PSAT in the fall.

November and December

- Juniors meet regularly with their college counselor. Topics include class progress and grades, Challenge Project status, interests and activities, and college research.
- Most students take their first ACT and SAT between December and March.
- Engage in extracurriculars and look for ways to explore and deepen interests.

January

- Meetings place a more significant focus on college search and fit. College counselors produce evolving college lists based on student research and feedback.
- Small group meetings on Scoir, research, activities, summer programs, and more.
- Plan and apply for summer programs and activities.

February and March

- Students attend virtual information sessions, workshops, and college fairs, as well as in-person visits when possible. College list evolves based on student and family feedback.
- Prospective varsity athletes connect with college coaches. Art students plan a portfolio. Music and theater students plan for auditions.

April and May

- Attend series of required workshops to learn about college essays.
- College list continues to evolve, and families plan summer visits and additional research.

May and June

- Students ask two teachers for letters of recommendation.
- College essay workshop builds off of work done in class meetings. Students learn about writing styles, develop possible topics for college essays, and explore sample essays.

By the end of the summer

- Students have visited or deeply engaged with all of the colleges on their list.
- Students should explore academic or personal interests between junior and senior years through research, summer programs, employment, and other opportunities.
- Students work on personal statement over the summer and can request individual meetings with their college counselor to review preliminary essay drafts.

Senior Year - We are the seniors' constant companions, working with them on their deadlines, applications, scholarships and financial aid, resumes, interviews, and essays.

August

- Students attend Common Application workshop.

September and October

- Students develop informed knowledge and demonstrate interest through meetings with admissions representatives visiting Seven Hills and other college engagement events.
- Work on personal statement, college-specific essays, and application completion.
- Students and counselors to develop a balanced application list.
- Seniors continue to test as-needed through senior year and discuss test-optional applications with college counselor.
- Families are responsible for sending official test scores to colleges through the testing agency websites. College counselors cannot send official test scores for students.
- Families apply for financial aid using FAFSA and CSSProfile starting on October 1.
- Most students apply to several colleges through Early Action and/or Early Decision by early November.

November and December

- Continue work on Regular Decision applications through December. Most college applications are submitted by the end of December or early January.
- Application decisions arrive between mid-December and April, depending on deadlines.

Spring Semester

- Attend admitted student events (in-person or virtual).
- With their families and college counselor, students evaluate their college options.
- Continue to keep up with classes; the college where a student enrolls always requests a copy of the final high school transcript.

May 1

- Submit enrollment deposit by this date.