

Sophomores and Junior year Tips

1. Make sure when you schedule for your classes you continue to strive for the highest level classes you can complete well. Colleges put a large emphasis on your difficulty of schedule. They want to see that you are pushing yourself by taking the highest level classes your school provides.

2. Get involved and I don't just mean at school. While it is great to have many school activities (sports, clubs, etc.) it is AMAZING to have community involvement in the eyes of colleges and scholarship committees. Churches, 4-H, hospitals, nursing homes, United Way, counseling centers, pet shelters are all great places to volunteer. Pick something that you are interested in and may connect to a future career. If you need ideas, see me!

3. Get that GPA up, up, up!! Many colleges and scholarships have a minimum GPA requirement and you don't want to get cut off! It takes time to increase your GPA; it cannot be done in one year, so work on it continuously. Acceptance to BGSU requires a 2.5 GPA, Toledo is a 2.0, OSU Columbus you need at least a 3.0.

4. Look for leadership opportunities. Come see me if you want some ideas. Try for officer positions, but don't stress if not elected. There are many leadership camps and conferences you can attend if you are willing to over the summer.

5. Take the ACT in April if you feel ok in your Algebra II skills. If not, wait until junior year. All students planning on attending college should take the ACT by December of their junior year. They will then also take the ACT at the school in February of their junior year. I would then recommend them to take it again in June. That gives them 3 chances which has been proven to be the best way to get your highest score.

Senior Year Timeline

August/September

1. Meet with me individually if you are worried about graduating. Get a copy of your transcript and check to see if you will have the right credits to graduate on time.
2. Create an activity list – ask Mrs. Recker for an example to follow.
3. Ask at least 2 teachers and one community member to write you a recommendation letter for scholarships and college acceptance. Have them print the letter off on a letterhead paper, if possible. Ask for several copies of each letter so you can use it for multiple scholarships and colleges. Give the recommenders your activity list so they have a better understanding of all that you do.
4. Think about taking the ACT at least once more. Depending on your college choice, you can take the ACT in September, October, December or possibly even February. See me about when would be the best time to take it.
5. Visit colleges you are interested in. Do this in September, October and November! You get two college visit days this year.

October

6. Submit all your college applications by Halloween! This ensures you meet all deadlines. Some schools start housing applications before Thanksgiving and it is a first-come first-served method. So, if you want a choice in your on-campus housing apply EARLY.
7. File your FAFSA. You must have applied to and been accepted by at least one college in order to complete your FAFSA. FAFSA opens up on Oct. 1st each year. DO NOT COMPLETE THE FAFSA PRIOR TO OCT. 1st! After Oct. 1st, go in as soon as possible to complete this. Again, it is a first come first served program. People who fill out the FAFSA early get the most money! Be on the lookout for a FAFSA night in October and come to hear all the details and get your questions answered.

November/December

8. Apply for scholarships at the colleges you've been accepted to. After you apply, call a financial aid advisor at the college and ask about other possible scholarships and how to apply. Check for deadlines.
9. If you are not planning on attending college after graduation, meet with Mrs. Recker and formulate a career plan.

10. The Jostens representative comes to the school to present information about caps and gowns for graduation. Any questions regarding Jostens orders should not be directed to the guidance office, but instead the senior class advisor.

January

1. 95% of all scholarships open up between January and April. I set up a Google Classroom for all seniors and post all the scholarships that I receive into that so students can type directly on the application. Remind your student to continue to check that page on a weekly basis to ensure they see all the possible scholarships. Students can also come down and see me whenever they are available.
2. Apply for all scholarships you are eligible. Just because you have an average GPA or ACT does not mean you won't win. Many scholarships are based on essays, speeches, or community involvement. Research online yourself and find scholarships that apply to you. A good website is fastweb.com

February/March

3. Verify with Mrs. Recker that you are still on track to graduate – look at grades for college admittance, credit recovery, CCP etc.
4. Evaluate financial aid award letters from the colleges you have been accepted to in order to narrow down your choices.
5. Retake the ACT in February or April if you need to raise your score to be eligible for scholarships at your intended college.

April

1. Inform the college you intend to attend of your enrollment. Inform the other colleges you applied to that you will not be attending.
2. Continue to apply to scholarships. Many during this time are local scholarships so you have a higher chance of winning.
3. Plan to attend the Senior Awards.
4. Make sure all your graduation items and information are given to your senior class advisor.
5. Avoid Senioritis!! Once you graduate I have to send out your final transcript to the school you have decided to attend. If schools see you have slacked off in your last semester they may take away your acceptance or your scholarships!
6. Let Mrs. Recker know which college you have chosen.
7. If you have taken CCP courses, you will need to request a transcript from the college you took the CCP classes with to be sent to the college you are planning to attend in the fall. This is always done online on the college's website.

Career Planning

Today, there are many different career paths to choose. Often it is difficult to decide the right path. Some careers require 4-10 years of schooling. Others may require a 9 month certificate of training. Whether a person chooses to invest 10 years into a professional degree or 9 months for a certificate of training, what is highly important and more and more evident is the fact that some kind of schooling will be needed after high school.

To assist you in your career planning the guidance office will be offering a number of activities to help you gain experience and knowledge. These are provided to give you more resources for independent research and as a time to ask questions:

- College representative will conduct school visits. We have representatives come from all over Ohio and Indiana to meet with students interested in their schools. You can get admissions criteria and ask questions about their housing, financial aid, student services, and student life.
- Apprenticeship opportunities can be explored in individual meetings with the counselor. There are apprenticeship programs nearby that students can discuss with the counselor and apply for during their senior year.
- Military branches will occasionally be set up during lunch to talk to any one interested and answer questions. They may also come in for a classroom visit to give more details.

Ohiomeansjobs.com is a great website that can assist you in pinpointing a career with interest inventories and career information. If you would like assistance in using the website please set up a time to meet with the counselor.

I encourage parents and students to work closely and involve the counselor in their career planning. Planning for a career today is much more intensive than in decades past. Many careers have specific classes, programs, or requirements that students must complete before getting a job. When making a career choice, early planning and researching can make a large impact.

Choosing a College

Websites – You can find information about colleges on their websites. Most college websites have video clips, list majors and course offerings, have financial information, and have online applications. Many colleges offer a way for you to get on email lists to be notified of deadlines and special visit days. Literally, everything you may need to know about a college can be found online. A good website to use to compare colleges is www.bigfuture.collegboard.org.

School Visits – sign up to meet with the representatives from the colleges you are interested in to get a better sense of the faculty and programs offered. Ask about scholarships and financial aid to see if the college is a right fit academically, socially, and financially.

College visit days – students get 2 excused college visit days – Use them! Try to visit your college in September, October or November. Pick a school day so you can see how campus is when students are in session. Sit in on a class to see the faculty and notice how students behave in classes. Try setting a time to meet a faculty member from the department you are thinking of majoring in to get inside tips and information. College visit day forms need to get picked up from the guidance office at least 4 days prior to the visit.

Many colleges have specific Fall Visit Days for incoming freshmen. This could be a way to meet with other seniors who are thinking of attending. These days are pre-planned and already have time allotted for you to meet with admissions, financial aid, academic advisors and professors. You should register for these visit days at least 2 weeks in advance.

The Application Process

Colleges all have different deadlines. Some have early decision deadlines and then regular deadlines. Some have priority deadlines, but will continue to accept applications until their housing fills up. Make sure that you know the deadlines for all colleges you are planning to apply. However, an easy rule of thumb is to get all your applications in by Halloween! Juniors – realize then that colleges are deciding on your acceptance based on 3 years of high school – not your senior year. I tell students to apply by Halloween for several reasons:

- 1) If you apply by then you know you haven't missed any deadlines
- 2) Some colleges start their housing selections as early as October. You can't choose your living selections until you are accepted.
- 3) Once you are accepted you will be notified and eligible for college specific scholarships. These also have deadlines determined by the college and, so, vary. Most scholarship money for colleges and universities are allocated between December and February.

Application suggestions – Most seniors won't know exactly which college they want to attend by the Fall. I suggest you apply to several schools:

- Your “dream school.” You really want to go there, but not sure if you will get accepted or be able to afford it.
- One you would be happy to attend and think can afford
- A back up college where you know you will be accepted and could possibly live at home to save money OR a 2 year school where you can save money and start your college requirements and then transfer to a 4 year college later.

Once accepted, you can make your final decision after reviewing what each college has to offer. **You will need to apply to colleges, take the ACT, apply for scholarships, and keep up with your senior year classes ALL AT THE SAME TIME!! Do not wait – by doing so you may not get accepted, lose out on campus housing, or miss out on large amounts of money!**

Methods of Applying

- 1) Paper and pen applications – No longer exist! I receive zero paper applications from colleges. ALL require students to apply online.
- 2) Online Applications – This way is cheaper and quicker and thus you will get a decision of acceptance back quicker.

Required Release of Information Forms

When completing an application it will ask you to send official transcripts. Transcripts are only official if signed by the counselor or principal and sent from the school. Legally, I cannot send out your information without your consent. Some colleges have a form for you to print out and sign. Some colleges will have you put down my email – which then sends an email to me, telling me to check your application for correctness, upload a transcript, and then verify. Either way, this must be done for the application to be completed!

College Entrance Requirements

- 1) Competitive GPAs

There are 3 GPAs in the school system. The current quarter GPA shows the GPA for your current quarter grades. The current year GPA shows you your GPA for that current school year. The cumulative GPA reflects your GPA from 9th grade to present - your entire high school career. Current year and Cumulative GPAs are only calculated at the end of each semester.

The Cumulative GPA is the GPA used for college admissions, scholarships and awards. Even though when applying for colleges and scholarships your transcripts are only reflecting your 9th – 11th or first half of 12th grade, you still need to keep your GPA up through your entire senior year. Colleges request your final transcript after you graduate and may take away admission or scholarships if they notice a large decline in your grades.

- 2) ACT and/or SAT scores

ACT – this is a standardized ACHIEVEMENT TEST. What this means is that it tests what you have learned or achieved throughout high school. It tests students on English, Reading, Math, Science, and Writing (optional) skills. Writing is optional

and all public universities have recently agreed to not look at it AT ALL. You only need to take this if you are planning to attend a private university. ACT tests are taken on Saturday mornings and offered at Ottawa – Glandorf high school. It is a 4 hour test. Students must register online at www.actstudent.org. If students need help registering please come down to the guidance office for assistance.

In general, a composite score of 21 or higher will gain student admittance to most public colleges and universities, while most private colleges may require a composite score of 24 or higher. Ohio State Columbus has high standards and students should shoot for a 27 ACT or higher. Also, many scholarship opportunities are available to students with scores of 27 or higher. However, every college and university is different, so check online for individual requirements.

All students planning on attending a 4 year college should take the ACT at least once their Junior year on a Saturday morning. They will also take it once at the school in February. Students should then take it one more time after this.

Research has shown that students often receive their highest score on the second or third try. Therefore, taking it once most likely does not show your highest potential.

ACT always test in February, April, June, July, September, October, and December

To prepare for the ACT you may go online. Some websites include: www.act.org and www.number2.com. I can also give you local resources.

SAT – this is a standardized test that measures academic APTITUDE in terms of verbal and numerical reasoning. Ohio state schools do not require SAT. Some East Coast, Ivy League, and Private colleges do. Check with the schools you are applying to. It may be a good idea to take both ACT and SAT at least once to see which you score higher. Most colleges will only take the highest score for either test. So it is in your best interest to try both.

Registration, test prep and test locations and dates can be found online at www.collegboard.com.

3) Volunteer Work / School Activities

I cannot stress enough the importance of volunteering!!! Scholarships really look at this information. This is a great way to equal out lower test scores or GPAs and really helps you stand apart from all the other applicants. Please see me for ideas and locations to volunteer.

4) Application Essays

If your application requests a college essay, do not type it up there on the spot in the online application. First write a rough draft, print it out and have an English teacher or counselor read through it. Try to be engaging and write about something that most students your age may not have experienced or learned (something that makes you stand out!) After you have revised your essay, copy and paste or attach it to your application. Always save your essays. You may be able to use them for scholarships later.

5) Teacher/Counselor Recommendations

You should ask for recommendations letters the first month of school! Get out your activity list and provide your recommenders with this. Make sure to ask at least one school personnel and one community member (employer, church leader, 4-H advisor, Girls Scout leader, etc.) If asked, waive your right to see the recommendation. This adds strength and confidence to the recommendation. Ask recommenders to print the letter on a letterhead, if possible, and print out several copies so you can use it for multiple scholarships or college applications.

Financial Aid

There are 3 ways to obtain financial aid:

- 1) The financial aid office at the college
- 2) Federal and State programs based on need
- 3) National, State and local scholarships

As information becomes available it will be passed on to you through announcements and your Government or English classes. If you have any questions you can always come down to see me in the guidance office.

FAFSA is a very important form! This is the form by which you apply for federal and state financial aid. It is also the form colleges use to determine the financial aid package you receive. You **MUST** fill this out to receive financial aid. Most colleges have a deadline for when you need to complete this. Make sure you know this deadline for the college you plan to attend.

The earliest you can submit your FAFSA is on October 1st. It is recommended you have it submitted as soon as possible. Financial aid is distributed from a source of money set aside. Once this money is used, no more will be distributed. Therefore, you have a better chance at getting more financial aid, the earlier you submit it. You can submit your FAFSA online at <http://fafsa.ed.gov>. You will use your completed prior year's taxes for this form.

Financial Aid Workshop for FAFSA

Every year Ottawa-Glandorf High School has a financial aid workshop open for both Ottawa and Leipsic senior parents. This workshop is usually held in October. The exact date and time will be put on announcements and told to senior students. I encourage all parents of senior students to attend this workshop and fill out the FAFSA regardless of income.

Scholarships

There are so many different types of scholarships – too numerous to count. I recommend all seniors to apply. You do not have to be in the top 10% of your class or have high test scores. Many scholarships are essay based. There are many scholarships that don't get claimed because students do not feel it is worth their time to write an essay for \$500. I encourage students to apply to as many as possible! Scholarship information is posted on the guidance Google Classroom as soon as I receive them.

It is up to students to fill out scholarship applications, put together all required components, and turn it into the counselor before the deadline!

Military information

The military has some excellent programs available that will pay for your college and/or receive specialized training. Recruiters from all branches are available to explain their programs at school during lunch visits, at their branch offices, and/or scheduling a visit to come to your home. You may make arrangements to meet with a recruiter through the guidance office or on your own.

ROTC

The Army, Navy and Air Force each offer Reserve Officer Training Corps associated with most large colleges. Successful applicants receive full tuition and other benefits while in the program. Candidates start college immediately after high school majoring in whatever field they wish. They are in-eligible to be called into active duty while attending college. Upon graduation, candidates enter active duty at the officer position with many options to choose from. If interested, you must meet requirements and enroll in the program by December of your senior year.

The National Guard

The National Guard offers 100% tuition paid for as well but candidates remain on active duty during college and may be called to serve at any time.

Contact information for recruiters is as follows:

Army – U.S. Army Recruiting, 401 W. North St. #111 Lima, 45801, 419-227-2007

Navy –Recruiting Station, 2033 Tiffin Ave. Findlay, 45840, 419-423-2027

Recruiting Station, 401 W. North St. #110 Lima, 45801 419-228-4666

Air Force – Recruiter Station, 401 W. North St. #115 Lima, 45801, 419-224-0388

Marines – Recruiting Station, 2033 Tiffin Ave. Findlay, 45840, 419-423-2816

Army National Guard- SGT Ryen Carter, 614-376-5177, ryen.m.carter.mil@mail.mil

ROTC – contact the university you are interested in for details