

# THE PHELPS SCHOOL

FOR A BETTER MAN

## College Counseling - Students' To-Do List

Below are **key actions** in the college search and application process. We will discuss them in grade-level meetings throughout the year. Primary focus begins at the start of junior year.

### Seniors

Hard work pays off as you finalize your college choices. The year will be filled with admission and financial aid applications and essays -- which means key dates and deadlines. Your continued success academically and in co-curricular activities is essential. College admission offices will monitor your progress toward graduation.

### September

- Mark your calendar with registration, admissions, and financial aid **deadlines**.
- Continue to go on **college visits**. Meet with the College Counselor (Ms. Walton) for assistance.
- Collect **letters of recommendation** from your teachers to include with your applications.
- Create separate **folders** for each college that interests you and keep the materials organized.
- Begin writing drafts of your **college essays**.
- Start your **digital portfolio** of outstanding projects that can be part of your applications.
- Focus initially on applications for **early admission**.
- Meet with **college representatives** who visit Phelps. A list will be updated as colleges confirm.
- Look at **virtual tours** of college campuses online.
- **Practice taking the SAT** (via College Board's Khan Academy online resource) and the ACT. See the College Counselor for additional SAT/ACT materials and information - and registration..
- **Attend college fairs** and financial aid information nights. (Transportation details will be provided.)
- Use **Naviance** resources and tools. Username, login information, tutorials will be provided.
- **Check your Phelps email** frequently for updates from Ms. Walton.
- College admissions offices will contact you via email. Use **one email address consistently** in all your communications so that you don't miss important information or updates!

### October

- Take the **SAT** and/or **ACT**.
- Continue working on your **admissions essays**.
- **Attend** college fairs. **Check with College Counseling** on dates and locations.
- Try to connect with faculty, staff, and students at your **top college choices**.
- **Complete** scholarship and financial aid applications. Meet with college counselor to develop plans.
- Sign up for a **PIN** to complete your **FAFSA** online. (Let your parents/guardians know they also need a PIN.)
- Contact colleges' **financial aid offices** to determine which forms they require in addition to FAFSA. (Some colleges have forms for International Students filing for financial aid as well.)
- After **October 1** file the FAFSA at <https://fafsa.ed.gov>. Keep copies of documents and PIN. **FAFSA is FREE**.
- Finalize portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, **evidence of talent** required for specialized majors.

### November

- **Complete all admissions applications** by their deadlines by the end of November.
- As needed, attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- If necessary, **register to retake** the SAT and/or ACT.

- **Request** financial aid forms and applications. Double check the deadlines for submission.
- Follow up to ensure that your **letters of recommendation** have been received.

### December

- **Finalize admission applications.** All applications should now be complete.
- Urge your **parents to file their taxes** as soon as possible after **October 1** - to ease the financial aid process and get you important information sooner in the decision process.
- Continue to **research and apply** for other financial aid, including grants and scholarships.
- Watch for **early admissions notices.** (they tend to arrive in December or January).

### January

- Meet with the **College Counselor** about more helpful tips and resources for admission and financial aid.
- Continue checking email for updates on your searches: applications, financial aid, scholarships, etc.

### February

- **Rank** your top school choices as you get closer to making a decision.
- Be on the lookout for **decision letters.**

### March

- Check with the financial aid offices to ensure your **paperwork is complete.** (Submit tax forms.)
- Narrow your school choices and make any last minute **campus visits** or attend **accepted student days.**

### April

- Make your **final school decision** and **mail deposits,** as required. National deadline to deposit is **May 1.**
- Check with the college you've chosen about **returning financial aid** award letters.
- Notify the schools you have chosen **NOT** to attend.
- Plan for **registration, orientation, and housing,** and mark your calendar with **important dates.**

### May

- Plan to attend any **summer orientation sessions** at the college in which you will enroll.
- Prepare a realistic **student budget.**
- Follow up with College Counselor to ensure that your **final school transcripts** have been forwarded.

### June

- Notify the College Counselor of your college selection and any **scholarships** received.
- Continue to follow up with the **financial aid office** to ensure all paperwork is complete.
- Send **“thank you notes”** to everyone who helped you plan and prepare for college.
- Make **copies** of your financial aid forms, health forms, etc., for your files to aid in resolving future issues.
- **Register** for the Fall semester. Prepare for the new adventures that await you on campus!

**Congratulations! It's time to get ready to start college.**

### Juniors

It's time to explore your career and higher education aspirations. Four-year or two-year colleges, trade schools, military service, and the workforce are all possibilities. YOU will determine what route is best for you. It's time to ask questions about your future, shadow a job, visit colleges. Take an active role in finding your future.

Junior year is the last complete academic year that colleges review, so it's important to **maintain good grades**.

### September

- You will begin weekly classes and counseling sessions to investigate college and career options.
- Students will be set up with a **Naviance login** to help with researching college options.

### October

- The fall **PSAT/NMSQT** will help prepare you for the SAT.

### January through May

- You will take the **ACT** and the **SAT** in **April**, which will place your name on colleges' **mailing lists**.
- Check email for updates from colleges you've contacted. There may be important information about **"Junior Open Houses."**
- Some colleges have **major-specific events**, opportunities to interact with students and faculty in that program.

### Start/continue your college search.

Attend college fairs and college financial aid sessions. Visit college campuses. Continue to research colleges' websites, meet admissions representatives, read applications, books, and college guides.

### Careers

- **Explore** career interest paths.
- Discuss **possible career paths** with the college counselor. Use Naviance.
- Start **creating your resume** and **portfolio**. Your resume should explain about you beyond your transcript. Include:
  - School activities
  - Community service
  - Athletics
  - Awards and Recognition
  - Hobbies
  - Work Experience

### Admissions and Preparation

- Make note of **registration deadlines** and prepare for the upcoming SAT I and SAT II tests and the ACT assessment.
- When **researching colleges**, be sure to note whether they require the SAT I, SAT II test or the ACT assessment. Some colleges will require or recommend one or the other, others accept either. Some schools are also test optional and may require additional materials instead of standardized tests. Your counselor also can provide guidance.
- **Meet with your counselor periodically** to ensure you are on track for college with your course selection. Are the courses you are taking or are scheduled to take in high school meeting college admission requirements? These are the **questions** you should be asking.
- **Read, read, and read** some more!
- Stay active in **extracurricular activities**. While your grades in high school are important, colleges also look at what you do outside the classroom. They like to see that you are involved in sports, student government, community activities, and that you take on leadership roles.

### Paying for school

- Discuss **college finances** with your family. Don't let a college's tuition turn you away. Financial aid and scholarships can be available.
- Attend a **financial aid night** or participate in related webinars.

## **Sophomores & Freshmen**

- Do your best, always, in and out of the classroom.
- **Build strong relationships** with your teachers and advisors and take an active role in classes.
- Search for the colleges you are **interested in** and **attend** several open houses.
- Join/continue **extracurricular activities**.
- Consider attending colleges' summer camps related to your career interests to experience campus atmosphere.