

4 Things You Should Be Doing Your Junior Year of High School

Applying to college is a complex process; choosing a college that will allow you to thrive and putting together an outstanding application takes time. This multi-faceted process involves several components, which can feel overwhelming at times. One of your best tools for staying calm and prepared is organization, including a thorough timeline along with the guidance of your SBHS academic counselor. The following tips will help you to prepare for the second semester of your junior year:

1. Academics

First and foremost, keep up your grades. Your transcript is one of the most important parts of your college application. Study hard, contribute to class, ask for help when you need it, and make sure you understand the teacher's expectations. When selecting your senior year courses, take the most rigorous courses that you can reasonably do well in. Your first semester senior year classes will be listed on your application, and colleges really want to see that you are challenging yourself and growing as a student during high school. Keep in mind that you may ask a few of your junior teachers to write letters of recommendation for you....be kind.

2. Tests

This year, after the PSAT, you will begin taking the SAT and/or ACT. Some students take them as early as January; others wait until March or May. Give yourself enough time to retake the test before your applications are due when selecting a date. Pace yourself and study consistently for these exams, including taking full-length, timed practice tests to build up your stamina. The College Board website offers free practice exams for both SAT and SAT II Subject Tests.

3. Extracurricular Activities

This is a great time to begin working on your accomplishments doc, senior brag sheet, and a document similar to a resume, that outlines how you spend your time outside of class. Reflect on your strengths and consider how you can use the upcoming summer to build on them. Arrange for courses, jobs, internships, volunteering and other activities for the summer starting now.

4. College Research

Set up a meeting with your academic counselor to review your list of college interests, keeping an open mind and utilizing the resources at your counselor's disposal. Plan some college visits to your top choices over Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Christmas and spring break. Attend college fairs and information sessions for these schools as well, and get business cards for admissions officers to follow up with later. SBHS will host a college fair, November 2nd this year, and NAAC will hold a large college fair at Seaside Park, Ventura in the Spring. Look for announcements.