SENIORS – CLASS OF 2027

College Application Tips



Be responsible for your education & your future.

Be organized – keep a spreadsheet of logins and passwords, deadlines, etc.

Start early – Don't wait until the last minute to submit!

Get help if you need it –utilize the College & Career Center/meet with Mrs. Kalantzis ***ekalantz@psd202.org***

➢ COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

2-year Community College – Joliet Junior College

-Earn an Associate's Degree after 2 years of schooling for a specific career.
-Finish gen-ed requires at JJC for 2 years, then transfer to another college for 2 years to earn a Bachelor's degree.
-Community college requires an application, transcript, English/Math entrance exams (or ACT scores), new student presentation and orientation. Time frame to complete the application process is September – April.

4-year Colleges and Universities--Know your deadlines!

- *Early Action-apply early, find out by mid-January. Most are due November 1st.*
- *Early Decision-apply early, find out early. BINDING-must attend that school!*
- *Regular Decision-apply by deadline and find out in February/March.*
- *Rolling Admission-apply whenever, find out in a few weeks. Open until capacity is reached.*

Step 1: Apply to Colleges using either The Common Application OR the College/University websites. Start this process by mid-September. If you are not sure where to apply yet, then do more research. You should still visit colleges, meet with admissions reps and use the SchooLinks college search tool. ***Use your personal email!***

Step 2: Add schools to SchooLinks to automatically request transcripts. EVERYONE WILL USE SCHOOLINKS TO REQUEST TRANSCRIPTS. This is how your counselor will know where you have applied/send transcripts to. Transcripts will not be uploaded by the district until early mid-September (annually).

- In SchooLinks, select *College* in the side navigation bar, then select *College Applications.*
- Fill out personal details, fee waiver eligibility, and FERPA (we did this in English class).
- If you are using Common Application, then you must link Common App to SchooLinks with the connect button. Once you do this, your schools will be uploaded to SchooLinks.
- If you are applying to the college through the college/university website, select *Add Application* (right side) to manually add a college to your list.
- Once the school is added, you will have answer general questions on how you are applying. You will see a student checklist that includes requirements, such as transcripts and letters of recommendation. You can view your rank/GPA/unofficial transcript in SchooLinks (Student icon>Scores and Performance).

Step 3: Ask for letters of recommendation, if required. Do your colleges require letters of rec? Check Common App list or SchooLinks. If none are required, DON'T ASK. Letters take time to write and process. If at least 1 letter is required, follow these steps:

1. *Ask the teacher in person.*
2. *Complete the SchooLinks brag sheet or create a resume/document to share with the teacher.*
3. *Request the teacher and schools in SchooLinks (College>College Applications).*

If you need a letter from an "other recommender", you will have to invite them through Common App. Give people 3+ weeks in the fall to complete the letter of rec.

Step 4: Prepare your essay/personal statement. Common App will require one, and schools may ask for additional writing prompts. Colleges want to know more about your interests, values, how you write, and how you think. Think of this as a story and not a standard 3-5 paragraph essay. Check out the Sept. essay workshop!

Step 5: Submitting ACT/SAT test scores? Many schools will be test-optional, which means they do not require your test scores. If you fall within their range, then send in. Your transcript will NOT have your test scores on there unless you specifically mark yes. **Your transcript and application will go to ALL schools.** Colleges may take test scores off the transcript or need them directly from the official testing agency ($$).

Step 6: Finish application, pay application fees and submit. Application fees are paid online through Common App or the school's website, depending on how you applied. If you qualify for a fee waiver, then you will enter this on SchooLinks. You will submit your applications individually if they have different deadlines.

OTHER STEPS:

- *Counselor Recommendation*-inform your counselor ASAP if colleges require one.
- *Don't ignore the college emails*—many of these include steps to create your portal and view checklist.
- *SRAR/STARS -Self-reported academic record* may be asked separately from the application (after you submit).

➢ FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is given/borrowed money (grants and loans) from the federal government to pay for a student's post-secondary education. Family's tax information is required. Senior students must re-apply every year for financial aid. Student and parent should complete the FAFSA together. Application will open Oct. 1st.

1. Student and parent both create FAFSA accounts. https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa
2. Start the application for the 2027-2028 school year (your first year in college). Use 2025 tax info.

➢ SCHOLARSHIPS

-Scholarships are offered based on various criteria but do not have to be repaid.
-Starting in December, seniors should check the SchooLinks Scholarship List weekly.
-We also recommend students check specific college websites for scholarships.
-There are also free websites that are dedicated to the national scholarship search. www.scholarships.com , www.studentscholarships.org , and www.collegegreenlight.com . ***Scholarship workshops in Dec/Jan/Feb!*

PNHS Website https://pnhs.psd202.org/o/pnhs/page/college-career

Google Classroom

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