

RJ Reynolds High School

Student Services

2026-2027 Senior Timeline for College Admissions

June and July

- Ask teachers who would be willing to write a strong letter of recommendation on your behalf.
- Make a plan to visit/tour colleges in the summer, if visiting during the early fall will not be possible for your family.
- Develop a record of your accomplishments, activities and work experiences. Awards and Activities Resume Document. This information will be part of your college application. [Examples on the webpage.](#)
- Complete RJR Recommendation Form – [Google Doc](#)
- Sign up to receive [RJR Scholarship Newsletters](#).
- Follow us on X [@RJRCollege](#)
- Prepare for standardized tests (SAT/ACT) if you plan to take them in the fall. [Test Dates for 2026-27](#)
- Review individual college application requirements on college websites and/or at and Common Application <https://www.commonapp.org/>, when the application for fall 2026 opens on August 1st.
- **Work on your college essays** – [Common App Essay Prompts](#). You can write your main essay before the application opens.

August through December

Applying to College

- **This is the time you will actually apply to colleges.** Most colleges have a 1st deadline between 9/15 – 12/1.
- If applying to any North Carolina schools, complete the [Residency Determination Service \(RDS\)](#)
- Complete [NC College Connect Form](#) – will open in August. Eligible students on track to graduate will be directly admitted to North Carolina participating colleges and universities where you already meet admissions requirements. You'll receive your NC College Connect letter in mid-September of your senior year with more information about where you've been admitted.
- **Join Senior Remind Group.** Codes on [RJR Website/Student Services/Remind Codes by Grade](#)
- Continue to visit any colleges you have not already seen.
- Use College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) <https://www.cfnc.org/> (same login as RDS) if applying to only the UNC State Schools or <https://www.commonapp.org/> if applying to in-state and out of state schools.
- Complete RJR Recommendation Form – [Google Doc](#), if you have not already.
- Follow up with the teachers you asked to write your letters of recommendation. Give them the following information:
 - Cover Letter, detailing where you are applying to college, deadlines, and letter procedures
 - Awards and Activities document including all academic, community outreach, extracurricular, and/or leadership experience
 - You will need to enter email addresses to request teacher recommendations.
- Make a calendar/grid of deadlines and requirements for schools.
- Work on college applications. Have standardized testing services send scores to your list of colleges. **They cannot be sent from RJR.**
- Finalize college choices to a reasonable number, ideally with one “stretch” school and 4-6 schools where you align with the published admission statistics.
- Attend RJR Senior Parent/Student Night August 25th at 5:30 in the Media Center.

Paying for College

- Make a note of merit-based aid procedures and deadlines and add to your college calendar.
- Complete the net price calculators on school websites (on financial aid pages of university websites).
- Create an account on scholarship search engines – Collegeboard.com; CollegeNET.com; Fastweb.com; and/or Scholarships.com – and investigate outside scholarship/grant opportunities. Do NOT pay for scholarship searches.
- Visit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) website and **create a FSA ID**. FAFSA for the 2027-28 school year is planned to open **October 1, 2026** <https://studentaid.gov/>

August through December - continued

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Staying on Track

- Determine if your school requires the CSS Profile <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>
- Register for one last SAT and/or ACT if you haven't taken one of them yet -- or if you aren't happy with earlier scores -- [Test dates for 2026-27](#)
- Stay focused on grades. Seek help/tutoring from teachers, if you are struggling in classes. Senior year grades count!

January and February

Applying to College

- Missed early deadlines? Look for extended deadlines in January and February. Many regular decision deadlines are Jan 1st.
- Check the email you used in your application(s) for important information.
- Alert all colleges of any change to your senior year schedule.
- If you applied for early decision to a college, expect notification this season.
- Investigate if your colleges/universities of choice need mid-year transcripts and request them.
- Follow instructions to self-upload midyear grades as requested by colleges /universities.

Paying for College

- **The Winston-Salem Foundation One-Stop Scholarship portal opens January 1st, apply at the** (<https://www.wsfoundation.org/scholarships>) for local scholarships.
- If applying for federal financial aid collect the information for the FAFSA 2027-2028 school year. You will need the following documents:
 - Your Social Security number.
 - Your 2025 W-2 forms and other records of money earned.
 - Your driver's license number if you have one
 - Your 2025 Federal Income Tax Return
 - Your current bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
 - Your 2025 untaxed income records (if applicable)
 - A FSA ID to sign electronically
 - **If you are a dependent student**, then you will also need most of the above information for your parents.
- Finalize financial aid applications, at the college/university of choice.
- Remember the FAFSA and CSS Profile deadlines.

March through May

- Compare Financial Aid packages from the colleges/universities to which you applied.
- Make decision about college choice from among the colleges that have accepted you.
- Notify all colleges (that accepted you) of your final decision.
- Submit tuition deposit to your college of choice.
- Watch college's summer deadlines (orientations, housing options, registration, etc.) closely.
- Continue searching and applying for scholarships and grants.
- **Submit** Letters of Awards with completed **Class of 2027 Senior Exit Information** Google Form for recognition at **Class Day date TBD**. Senior Exit Information is also used for sending transcripts to the college you are attending.
- Send thank you notes (if you haven't already) to everyone who helped you this year.

June 14, 2026