



5 Things Your Students Who are Juniors Should be Doing to Prepare for College

This is the year of lots of standardized tests, including the PSAT and a chance at a National Merit Scholarship. It's also a year for college visits and the final full year of grades that will be included in your students college application.

Of course you want to help your student put their best foot forward and make this their best year ever. Following these five tips will help you give your students a leg up this year and senior year. It will also put them in the best possible position when they go to apply to colleges next year.

1. Prepare for the PSAT

The number one test you should be focusing your student on this fall is the PSAT, the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Make sure they go through practice exams. If they need it, look for a tutor or class for them to feel really prepared. The absolute best thing you can do for them is to make sure they understand a good PSAT score could potentially mean a full ride to their dream college, so they should take the test seriously.

2. Create a preliminary college list

Junior year is a great time to talk with your students about what colleges they might want to apply to next year. Even though the list might change, having options now can give your student some schools to visit to start making connections.

The most important thing to keep in mind when walking your student through creating a college list is to make sure it's balanced. It should have a good mix of safety, match, and reach schools for both acceptance and cost. For example, a good rule of thumb for a safety school is that your child's SAT or ACT score is above the 75th percentile for the school and your family can easily afford it.

3. Grades this year have a big impact

Junior year is usually super busy with harder classes, but it's really important that your students grades don't slip. This will be the last full year of grades on their transcript. They need to be good!

4. Connect with teachers for recommendations

Often teachers from junior year end up being the best teacher recommendations for your child's college application. That's one of the other reasons doing well junior year is so important. Talk with your students about which teachers and classes they like best. Encourage them to ask questions in class and go to office hours. Then at the end of the year, they will be in a great position to ask the teacher for a recommendation for their college applications.

5. Look for outside the classroom experiences

Junior year is a great time for your students to really explore their interests outside of the classroom. Help them look into research and community service opportunities even jobs and internships. A lot of parents and students worry that junior year is too late to start a club or extracurricular activity, but I can tell you from experience that it isn't. I started my biggest resume differentiators my junior year.

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