



ROAD TO COLLEGE

SEP 14, 2025

Newsletter

Dear Students & Families,

This week, we're focusing on **college application requirements** and how students can stand out with a **passion project**. Remember, colleges look for more than just grades, they want to see initiative, responsibility, and commitment to something meaningful. If you wish to apply to an Ivy League or top college you need a passion project!



TO DO LIST

Aim for straight A's. GPA starts now and top colleges want to see consistent academic strength. Pay attention to HW deadlines.

Choose 1–2 clubs/sports to commit to deeply (**quality over quantity**).

Brainstorm passion project ideas

Talk to your counselor about the application process. Ask about if you can get application fee waivers.

Talk to your teachers about the letters of recommendation.



REMINDERS and DEADLINES

SAT: Oct. 4, 2025.

Registration deadline: Sept. 19, 2025

Early Action & Early Decision deadlines begin as soon as Nov 1. Draft essays early. Start drafting your Common App essay



College Prep Tip: After submitting, colleges create a student portal where you can track your application status, see if documents are missing, and view updates. *Students must check these portals regularly.*

College Application Requirements

Students are responsible for:

- College Applications – Complete and submit via Common App, Coalition, ApplyTexas, or institutional portals.
- Application Fees – Pay or request a fee waiver if eligible.
- Standardized Test Scores – Send SAT/ACT scores (if required) directly through the College Board or ACT website.
- AP/IB Exam Scores – Order official score reports from College Board/IB if the college requires them.
- Financial Aid Applications – Complete the FAFSA, CSS Profile (if required), and/or institutional aid forms.
- Supplemental Essays – Check each college's requirements; some may need short answers or program-specific essays.
- Application Portals – After submitting, log in regularly to track status, confirm documents were received, and see if anything is missing.

Students are fully responsible for their own applications and sending external test scores.

School counselors are responsible for:

- School Profile – Overview of the high school's curriculum, grading, and opportunities.
- Transcript – Official high school transcript with GPA and coursework.
- Counselor Recommendation Letter – A letter highlighting student's academic strengths, contributions, and character.
- Other School Reports – Mid-year and final reports, if required.

Teacher Recommendation Letters

Many colleges require 1–2 teacher recommendations, usually from junior or senior year academic teachers.

Students should:

- Ask teachers *early* (ideally by September/October).
- Be respectful and give plenty of notice.
- Provide a "brag sheet" or resume to help teachers write stronger letters.
- Check with their counseling office for the exact process (some schools use Naviance, Scoir, or direct uploads).

Students must confirm how recommendation letters are requested and submitted at their school. The college application is a **team effort**, but **students are in charge of driving the process**. Always know which documents are your responsibility and which are sent by your school. And remember colleges won't chase you for missing items.

Passion Projects

Colleges love to see students take initiative outside the classroom. A **passion project** shows leadership, creativity, and dedication to something that matters to you.

Examples of Passion Projects:

- Launch a tutoring program
- Create a blog, podcast, or YouTube channel on a topic you love
- Start a STEM tutoring club for middle school students
- Conduct independent research
- Write a book, creating an app, or starting a nonprofit initiative
- Build a peer mentorship program connecting upperclassmen with freshmen
- Build a simple app or website that solves a real problem (school event planner, study tracker)
- Create a coding club at your school and lead workshops
- Start a film project or documentary about a local issue
- Partner with an international nonprofit for a project (ex: pen-pal program, fundraising for global causes)
- Launch a social media campaign raising awareness for an issue you care about
- Translate educational resources into another language for immigrant communities
- Create a blog covering global issues (climate, education, technology, etc.)

Passion project requires passion, self-discipline, organization skills, communication skills, and more. You will learn and improve these areas while working in your passion project.

A passion project demonstrates *self-motivation* and *impact*. It helps your application stand out and gives you unique stories for essays and interviews. Top colleges would like to see a strong interest, action, and impact for the applied major.

Resource of the Week

- [College Board: How to Send SAT & AP Scores](#)
- [FAFSA Information](#)
- [How to Build a Passion Project](#)
- [MIT Solve](#)
- [Do Something](#)