

FHS 12th Grade College Prep Student Checklist

August

- Make an appointment to visit with your FHS FACE (Financial Aid and College Entrance) Advisor located in the Guidance and Counseling Office – kcoufal@fms.k12.nm.us - (505)-324-0352 x 5235.
- Class Schedule: check your schedule to verify you are in classes you need in order to fulfill high school graduation requirements. Make sure you have chosen challenging classes, yet courses in which you can be successful. Colleges like to see as many solid classes as possible on your transcript, and they do look at senior grades! Consider the coursework many colleges require for admission. Are you in classes that meet the admission requirements for the colleges you want to attend? For example, many colleges require you to have taken 2 years of foreign language. Have you taken them yet?
- First day of classes: It's going to be a great year! Attend class, do your homework and study EVERY DAY. Now is NOT the time to slack off! Talk to your teachers and ask questions, either during or after class. Do your homework and turn it in!
- Make sure that you are involved in extracurricular activities and that you have moved up to leadership positions wherever possible. Many colleges look at this when making admissions decisions!
- Do community service and volunteer work. Many colleges look at this when making admissions decisions!
- Continue updating your portfolio of high school and college information.
- Update your resume and include your extracurricular activities, leadership roles, and community service/volunteer work.
- Continue exploring career options.
- Make sure to take the ACT or SAT tests as soon as possible after you complete the appropriate courses. Make sure to check with the colleges you wish to apply to see which test they require. ACT test dates and registration can be found at: www.actstudent.org. SAT test dates and registration can be found at www.collegeboard.org. Make sure to take advantage of the FREE online test prep at www.number2.com.
- **Student Athletes:** If you plan to play Division I or Division II sports in college, you must complete the initial eligibility form. Go to www.ncaaclearinghouse.net to register.
- Continue saving money for college.

September

- Narrow your list of colleges to 5 - 6. Meet with your FACE Advisor in the Guidance Center about them and, if you've not yet done so, download college applications and financial aid forms from the colleges you have selected. Plan to visit as many of these colleges as possible.
- For the colleges you have selected, create a master list or calendar that includes:
 - Tests you'll take and their fees, dates and registration deadlines
 - College application due dates
 - Financial aid and scholarship application forms and their deadlines (**financial aid and scholarship applications may be due before college applications**)
 - Other materials you'll need (letters of recommendation, transcripts, etc.)
 - Your high school's own transcript processing deadlines.

- If you have not had your ACT or SAT scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying, be sure to send them NOW! For ACT scores can be requested at www.actstudent.org. SAT scores can be requested at www.collegeboard.org.
 - Begin researching scholarship opportunities. Most colleges offer a scholarship through their foundation. ALWAYS apply for this scholarship. Pay attention to deadlines! At some colleges, you will automatically be considered for their college scholarships simply by submitting your admissions application. At many other colleges, you will need to complete a separate scholarship application. Make sure you find out the scholarship application procedures for your specific colleges. You can find out this information by checking the financial aid and scholarship website for each school. Additionally, if you choose to attend a NM state funded college (not private), you may be eligible for the NM Lottery Scholarship IF:
 - You attend the first semester (not including summer) after you graduate from HS
 - You apply to college as a “degree seeking” student
 - You take and complete a minimum of 12 credits
 - You maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5
 - For the most current and extensive information on the New Mexico Lottery Scholarship, visit <http://www.nmlottery.com/legislative-lottery-scholarships.aspx>
- Other scholarship sites to start with include:
- www.Studetaid.ed.gov
 - www.fastweb.com
 - www.scholarships.com
 - www.collegescholarships.org
 - www.brokescholar.com
- **Student Athletes:** If you plan to play Division I or Division II sports in college, you must complete the initial eligibility form. Go to www.ncaaclearinghouse.net to register.

October

- Finalize your college choices.
- **Prepare Early Decision, Early Action or rolling admissions applications as soon as possible.** To be sure you are on the right track for early decision/early action, applications and all corresponding paperwork (transcripts, letters of recommendation, essay, etc.) should be submitted by the end of October. Most colleges that use the early decision and early action admissions have a Nov. 15th deadline. Make sure you check these specific deadlines at the colleges to which you are applying.
 - **Early Decision:** Binding – If accepted, you MUST attend. You cannot apply to any other colleges.
 - **Early Action:** Non-binding – Optional to attend if accepted. You can apply to more than one college.
 - You should understand the difference between early decision, early action, and regular admission before sending in your applications. For information, go to: www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/the-application/104.html
- Ask a guidance counselor and/or teacher for letters of **recommendation** if you need them. If asking for a letter, give each teacher or counselor a resume and/or outline of your academic record and extracurricular activities. For each recommendation, provide a stamped, addressed envelope and any college forms required. **Make sure to give them at least two weeks notice to write your recommendation letter!** If letters of recommendation are sent along with application materials, make sure the letter is in a sealed envelope with the signature of the recommender across the seal. Always express your appreciation to the recommenders.

- If you're submitting essays, write first drafts and ask your teacher and FACE Advisor to review them. Many colleges will require you to submit at least one essay or personal statement. Read the requirements for each college carefully! You will usually submit the essay with the application form. Even if a college does not require an essay for admission, it is a good idea to submit one. Many colleges will use them to make scholarship decisions. It is also your opportunity to make your application unique and stand out above the other applicants. If you're applying for Early Decision, finish the essays for that application now.
- If you have not had your ACT/SAT scores sent to the college to which you are applying, DO SO NOW!
- Continue to research and choose scholarships to apply for; get scholarship applications ready to submit by their deadlines! Most scholarship deadlines do not extend beyond March 1st. Have you completed all the necessary information and submitted your scholarship application?
- **Student Athletes:** If you plan to play Division I or Division II sports in college, you must complete the initial eligibility form. Go to www.ncaaclearinghouse.net to register.
- **Register with Selective Service if you are a male who will be 18 at the time you complete the FAFSA.** You won't be eligible for federal and state aid unless you do. Register at the post office or through the FAFSA form. Call Selective Service at 888-655-1825 for more information.

November

- Nov. 1-15: For Early Decision admissions, colleges may require test scores and applications between these dates. Check with your college to determine final dates.
- For regular admission, complete your college application by Thanksgiving. Note: depending on the application deadlines, you want to complete all your college applications this fall. Make sure you send in all parts of the application together. Most colleges will allow you to apply online. If you apply online, make sure you submit all the supplemental documents (transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc.) together. Even if you are not applying for early decision/early action, apply as early as you can – it will increase your odds of getting in and obtaining institutional scholarships.
- Have your official transcript sent. The transcript is usually the final step in the application process. Check with the FHS Registrar and complete the transcript request form. The FHS Registrar will send your official transcript to the colleges of your choice. It is always a good idea to complete this process **at least two weeks before** colleges require them. FHS allows graduating seniors to request as many official transcripts as needed at no charge (for up to 1 year). Thereafter, there is a \$2.00 charge per request.
- Continue to research and choose scholarships to apply for; get scholarship applications ready to submit by their deadlines! Most scholarship deadlines do not extend beyond March 1st. Have you completed all the necessary information and submitted your scholarship application?
- If you plan to complete the FAFSA online, request a PIN by going to <http://www.pin.ed.gov>. Both you AND your parent will need to request a PIN.

December

- As you finish and send your applications and essays, be sure to keep copies.
- **Parents should start collecting information to complete their taxes. You will need to complete the FAFSA next month.** Complete a pre-application FAFSA application

worksheet at www.fasfa.ed.gov.

- Toward the end of December/early January, Early Decision/Early Action students should receive an admissions decision from the college(s) you applied to. Contact the institution if you have not yet received the information.
- Continue to research and choose scholarships to apply for; get scholarship applications ready to submit by their deadlines! Most scholarship deadlines do not extend beyond March 1st. Have you completed all the necessary information and submitted your scholarship application?

January

- If you apply to colleges online, be sure to have your high school Registrar send an official transcript: It will be sent direction from the High School to the specified college.
- **Starting January 1, complete the FAFSA online (www.fafsa.ed.gov). The earlier you do this, the better. Government financial aid is first come, first served!**
- If you haven't already, fill out the paperwork to see if you qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. Even if you don't eat lunch in the cafeteria, being enrolled in this program qualifies you for reduced summer school tuition and waivers for ACT, SAT and some college application fees.
- Some colleges may want to see your 1st semester grades. Find out from your college, and if necessary, request official transcripts from the Registrar when first semester grades are posted.
- Continue to research and choose scholarships to apply for; get scholarship applications ready to submit by their deadlines! Most scholarship deadlines do not extend beyond March 1st. Have you completed all the necessary information and submitted your scholarship application?

February

- No senioritis, please! Accepting colleges *do* look at second-semester senior grades!
- Sign up for any AP exams you may be taking this May. Talk with your guidance counselor/AP coordinator about details and payment.
- Contact colleges to make sure they have received all of your information.
- Continue to research and choose scholarships to apply for; get scholarship applications ready to submit by their deadlines! Most scholarship deadlines do not extend beyond March 1st. Have you completed all the necessary information and submitted your scholarship application?

March

- By now you should have received admissions decisions from colleges, depending on when you submitted your applications. If you have not heard from a particular college you may contact the admissions office and check on the status of your application. Once you receive your acceptance letter(s), make sure you follow the directions carefully! Most schools will provide you with a student ID number. This number often allows you to login to your online account at that particular college. You will have an account even if you have not accepted their offer. You can use this online account to manage your obligations (view pending financial aid, housing assignments, lunch plans, etc).

- If you have been put on a waiting list by a college of choice, you may want to consider calling the admissions office to see how you may strengthen your application.
- Keep active in school. If you are wait-listed, the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and the time you learned of its decision.
- Review your SAR (student aid report). Once you have submitted your FAFSA, you will receive your SAR from the US Department of Education. If there is information that is incorrect, go to: www.fafsa.ed.gov to make corrections and resubmit your FAFSA. After the corrections have been processed, you will receive another SAR. If all of the information you entered is correct, then you just have to wait to hear from the Financial Aid office of the colleges you listed on your FAFSA. If you do not hear from the institution, be proactive and contact their financial aid office....ask questions!

April

- You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid award letters/offers by mid-April. Review all award letters/offers and compare to see which school is going to be the best deal for you. Pay attention to the deadline on the award/acceptance letter. Many schools require you to “accept” their offer by a specified date (typically May 1), or the offer expires.
- If you’ve not done so yet, visit your final college choices before accepting.
- **As soon as you decide/accept, notify your FACE Advisor of your choice.**

May

- May 1: Colleges cannot require a deposit or commitment to attend before May 1. By that postmarked date, you must inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid.
- Send your deposit to one college only.
- Wait-listed by a college? If you know you want to enroll in this specific college (if accepted), tell the Admissions Director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application.
- Work with your FACE Advisor to resolve any admissions or financial aid problems.
- Request your Registrar to send a final transcript showing your semester grades AND a graduation date to be sent to the college you will be attending. Some scholarships may also require a final transcript!
- Have a great summer and good luck in your future! You can do great things!

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