



From the  
**EDITOR**

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Grade 11



One of the concerns with being a junior or senior in high school is college strategy. Everyone's talking about it; getting into college. Here is some information provided by the U.S. News & World Report that has been helpful to me and my parents. I hope it will be helpful to you also.



**SEPTEMBER:**

**Juniors:** Get serious about your school work if you haven't already. Junior year grades are extremely important.

- Be sure to register for the PSAT or PLAN.

**Seniors:** Plan to work really hard this semester. These grades will be on your transcript.

- If it is necessary, register to take the SAT I or ACT. If SAT IIs are required by the colleges you are applying to, sign up for those also.
- Review your final list of colleges with a counselor and start gathering applications.
- Once you've received the application forms, get a head start on the essays.

**OCTOBER:**

**Juniors:** Take the PSAT to practice for SAT I and to qualify for aid from the National Merit Scholarship Corp.

- Talk to your parents about any limits, geographically or financially, that they may set on where you attend college. It could affect your decision on where to apply.

**Seniors:** Talk with your counselor about college application deadlines.

- If you want to take the SAT I or ACT test again, sign up now. The December tests may be your last chance to retake them.
- Mail early-action or early-decision applications. Request that your transcripts and test results be sent to colleges.
- Continue to research scholarships.

**GETTING INTO COLLEGE**

*For juniors and seniors getting into college is a top priority. The first step to getting into college is your application. Here are some tips to help you through the application process.*

**1. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS:** One of the number one mistakes students make is not paying attention to the instructions. It is important to show the college that you are taking your application seriously. Try to make the application memorable for what is in it, not for what is missing, incomplete or incorrectly filled out.

**2. TURN NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES:** If there is something in your application that you are worried about, like a C in English, or a semester with very little extracurricular activity, explain it, and take this opportunity to show how you dealt with the difficulty.

**3. DON'T LOSE SLEEP OVER A "B" OR TWO:** The saying that it is better to get a B in a hard class than an A in an easy class is completely true. Colleges want students to learn, and this also shows you challenged yourself by taking the most difficult class available to you.

**4. BE ACTIVE BUT NOT OVER ACTIVE:** Brag sheets are often overlooked by many students, and that is not good. You need to tell the college what they need to know in order for them to appreciate how excellent you are. A common mistake though can be giving too much information or being redundant.

**5. ESSAYS CAN'T WORK MIRACLES:** The essay is where you give context to the rest of your information. The essay is not going to

make up for low test scores, but it could be a deciding factor if the school is unsure of you. Use the essay to set yourself apart from the other applicants.

**6. APPLY EARLY DECISION ONLY IF YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY SURE:** Early decision benefits the school more than it benefits the students. Schools love early decision because it helps give them a higher "yield", which is the number of students who accept their enrollment offer. If financial aid is a factor for you, skip early decision so that you are not locked into one offer. But if you are absolutely set on a school, it gives you a minor edge because you are competing in a small pool.



**KEY DATES** (Specific time frames can vary with some schools, so make sure to check the application or the school's website)

**November 2005:**

Early Decision applications due

**December 2005:**

Notification for Early Decision

**January 2006:**

Deadline for regular applications

**April 2006:**

Notification for regular applications

*Also begin to assemble documents for financial aid applications.*

- Try to visit schools you still haven't been able to check out.

**NOVEMBER:**

**Juniors:** Talk with your parents about how you will be able to finance your college costs and how much they expect you to help pay.

**Seniors:** Finish writing your college essays, and have them proofread by a parent or a teacher.

- Give out recommendation forms and stamped envelopes addressed to the colleges' admissions offices.
- If you applied early decision, notify

*the college about any honors you've received since your application, and have your most recent transcript sent in also.*

**DECEMBER:**

**Juniors:** Review your PSAT results with your counselor and decide whether you'd benefit from a SAT prep course or test-prep software. You can also improve your scores by practicing on previously administered exams.

**Seniors:** Mail applications, or turn them in at school.

Look forward to the continuation of this calendar in December.

*The debate on*  
**CELL PHONES?**



Your school is obsessed with it. So are your parents, and your lawmakers. In fact, it seems like all of the U.S. adult population is captivated and possibly a little alarmed by young adults with cell phones pressed to their ears.

Studies have shown that 25 million people under the age of 18 have cell phones. Yet adults and young people have completely different uses for them. The divide between the two groups is getting larger, especially as teachers and lawmakers begin to modify your cell phone rights.



Many high school students have turned their cell phone into a necessity. With a cell phone you have a direct link to the person you want to talk to. There is no awkward conversation with your friend's parents, since you can talk directly to your friend. Also in school you can use your cell phone to pass notes. Text messaging has become a cultural phenomenon. In class you no longer have to pass notes, you can just text it. When you are in a quiet area you can still communicate without being disruptive. The drawback is that it has made it so much easier to cheat. Students can text message each other questions and answers to tests and it is harder for teachers to catch them. With this taken into consideration, it is no wonder why many schools across America have banned cell phones. Even right here in Las Vegas, the schools are doing it. In many schools if a teacher sees you with your phone out, it can be taken away. Now, is this fair to the students? It is a two way street. Your privacy has been taken away to a certain extent. Now, to call your parents you have to go up to the office, a public student area, to make calls where anyone can hear your conversation. On the other hand, you have to understand that schools are mainly doing it to prevent cheating. Does this really do anything? Phones can easily switch to silent and students can still sneak their phones into class. It makes you wonder if this is a sufficient method for solving the problem.