

## Tips for High School Seniors – Podcast Transcript

### Opening:

Hi, I'm Holli Kalaleh for the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, also called OSAC for short.

Today, I am going to talk about some helpful tips for high school seniors as they prepare for post-secondary education.

### Body:

Throughout your senior year, be sure to take the most challenging classes you can while continuing to participate in extracurricular activities and volunteer in your community.

As the school year begins, get organized. Use a calendar to track important deadlines, such as early admissions, scholarships, or other financial aid timelines.

The fall of your senior year is the time to finalize the list of colleges and universities that meet your needs. Focus on identifying the criteria that is most important to you, such as academic programs and majors offered, the size of the school, its location, campus life, and cost.

Sign up to take, or re-take the SAT or ACT. It's a good idea to purchase a study guide or to take a test prep course before the actual test date. You *can* improve your test scores by preparing for these tests – and better scores can affect scholarship opportunities.

In September, then every subsequent month, search for scholarship opportunities. Be sure to ask your parents about their work association and community affiliations to see if they offer any scholarships in addition to looking for local, state, and national scholarships. Be sure to check with your school counselor and your school's ASPIRE coordinator about additional scholarship opportunities. Be sure to take note on your calendar of each scholarship's deadline.

Fall is also the time to write your personal statements and prepare students resumes that may be needed for college applications.

Pay attention to early admission deadlines. By October or November, submit your college applications for early decision notification.

Attend presentations that help you plan for your college finances. These are offered at schools, libraries, and college campuses.

Prepare to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid – commonly called the FAFSA. You can apply beginning on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October each year and it is important to apply early. Call 1-800-4-FED-AID for an application or go online to [www.FAFSA.ED.GOV](http://www.FAFSA.ED.GOV)

In October, be sure to complete and submit the FAFSA as soon as you can. It can be submitted any time after October 1<sup>st</sup>, but by getting it in early and filing it correctly you'll avoid delays in funding decisions. You and your guardians will need the previous year's income tax information to complete the form, but it is *not* necessary to file taxes prior to submitting the FAFSA. Also, it is okay to estimate your income tax information when completing the FAFSA because you can go back to correct the information after it has been submitted.

About a month after you've submitted your FAFSA, make sure that you've received your Student Aid Report. If you don't receive one, contact the FAFSA customer service through their "Contact US" page on the FAFSA website.

Through the winter and spring of your senior year finalize any essays needed for scholarships. Be sure to have a teacher, mentor, or guardian read the essays, asking them to check for spelling and grammar mistakes and flag any content that isn't appropriate for the essay.

Remember to check your calendar frequently and send in your applications on time. Many schools have winter deadlines and many scholarships have spring deadlines.

When you begin to receive admissions notifications, compare financial aid packages. You'll want to look for the *best* packages offered to you for the schools that *best* meet your criteria, rather than just looking at what schools offer you the *most* in financial aid.

Once you've weighed your various options, finalize your school choice and notify the admissions office in writing. You should also notify the schools you decide to decline.

Sign and return financial aid forms to the college you plan to attend and be sure to send your final transcript to your chosen school.

Once you've submitted all the paperwork to the school that you'd like to attend, plan another visit of the school and to participate in any orientation sessions the school may have for incoming freshmen. If you are going to school away from home, start making decisions about housing arrangements and meal plans, and submit all the required paperwork to enroll in those programs.

### Conclusion:

Remember, your senior year is a busy and exciting time. If you stay organized and focused on reaching your goals, it will be an enjoyable and successful year.

Closing:

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this important topic. For more podcast topics, please visit our website at [www.OregonStudentAid.gov](http://www.OregonStudentAid.gov). From all of us here at the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, this is Holli Kalaleh. We look forward to helping you again soon.