

Plan for the Perfect Arts College

The College Planning Guide & Timeline
for High School Students of the Arts



College Consulting for Performing Arts and Visual Arts | artsbridge.com



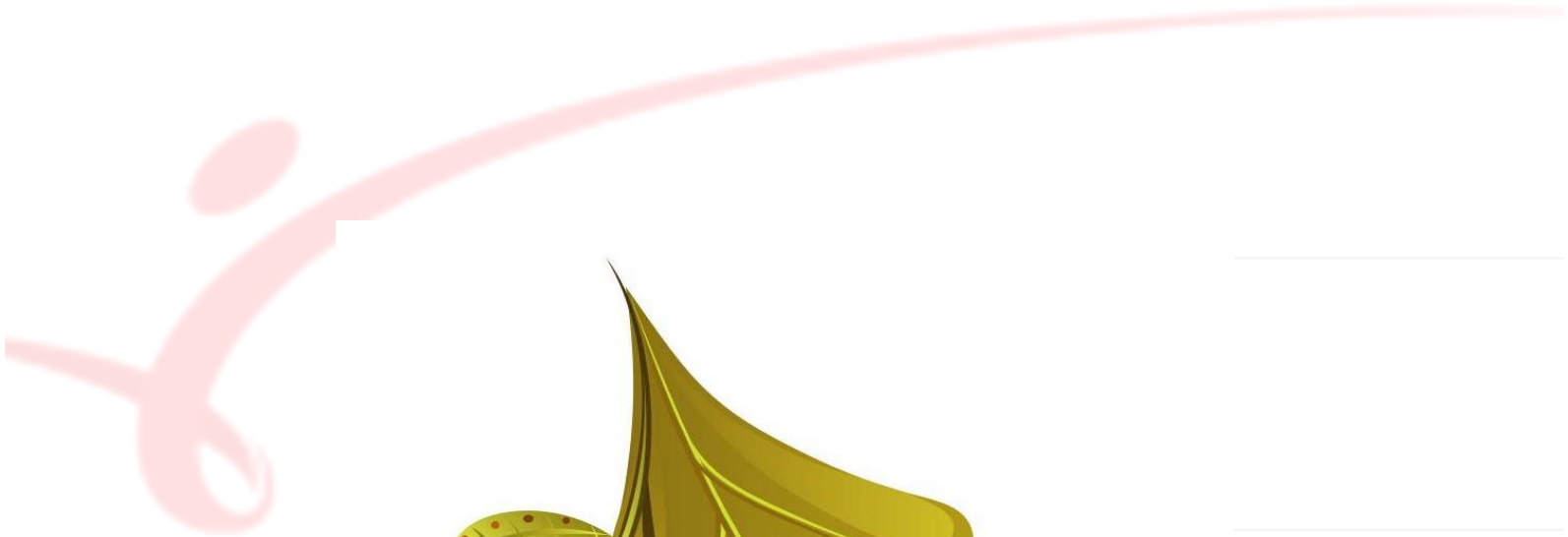
By Halley Shefler & Howard Friedman

ArtsBridge is a unique college consulting service specifically designed for students in the performing and visual arts. Former Deans of Admissions and college arts professionals personally advise students with artistic and academics assessments, one-on-one guidance sessions, customized arts college recommendations and advocacy, essay guidance and editing, student branding, and audition workshops and evaluations. Halley Shefler is Founder & President of ArtsBridge, and Howard Friedman is Creative Director & Copywriter.

Learn more at artsbridge.com.

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College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

September

Student & Parent Planning Guide

Welcome back to school! It's a new year with new challenges — academically, socially, and artistically. To help you adjust and adapt, examine future goals so that courses can be chosen to complement those goals and serve as good prerequisites for college. Explore all of your skills in the arts, and plan for extracurricular activities as well, allowing flexibility for new or growing interests. Taking control of all your options in high school can help build the confidence you need for success!

September Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshmen Arts Students — Get to know your guidance

counselor. And let them get to know you and your interests. Your counselor is ready and more than willing to help you make sense of your college and career options. Your grades appear on official transcripts starting this year, so take your work seriously and explore your interests. As soon as you can, set up a meeting to talk about your plans for high school and the future.

Freshmen Parents — Offer support and guidance. The initial weeks of high school can be a difficult adjustment. Keep an open dialogue about how classes are going. Make sure that your student has connected with the guidance counselor, and you should do the same. If your child has particularly strong academic interests, encourage them, but don't lose focus on strengthening areas of weakness that can't be ignored, such as English or algebra. If your child is struggling, now is the time to get a handle on it. Or, if the work seems too easy, talk to the school about placing your child in a more advanced classroom setting.

September Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Stay on course and adjust. Work with your guidance counselor to make sure you're enrolled in the courses you need to prepare you for college. Keep on track with your classes and if adjustments are needed, make them. Move on to the next appropriate level of classes in the core subjects — English, math, science, history, and foreign language.

Sophomore Parents — Encourage preliminary testing. Make sure your child gets in touch with the school guidance counselor about taking the PSAT/NMSQT. Although the "real" PSAT/NMSQT is taken in October of junior year, this is a great way for your child to get familiar with the test. Students considering taking the ACT should ask about the PLAN schedule. The PLAN helps immensely in predicting your child's performance on the ACT. Both tests will help your child prepare for the "big tests" next year.

September Timeline for Juniors:

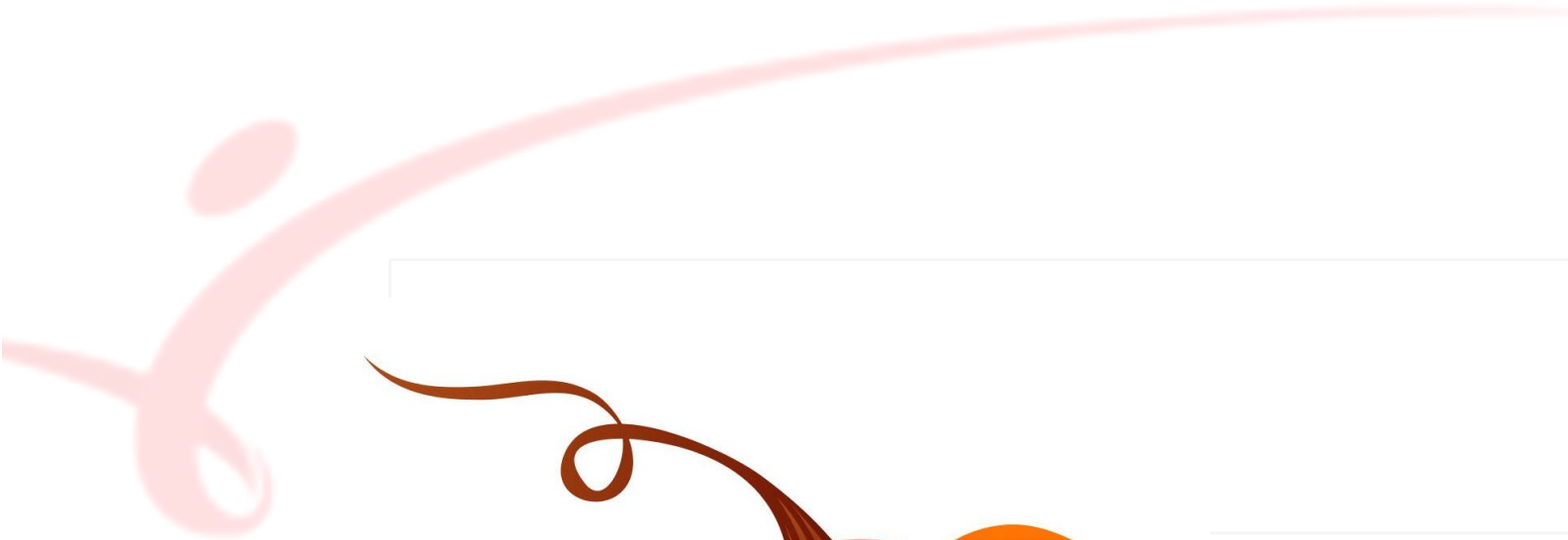
Junior Arts Students — Evaluate education options and artistic skills. This is a good time to begin to set a more specific path toward college goals. Do you want to pursue the arts as a major or possibly a minor? If so, you should consider meeting with a professional for an [artistic evaluation](#). By knowing your strengths and weaknesses, you can focus on enhancing and elevating your skills to increase your chance to get into the best program. Also, register for the PSAT. It qualifies you for the National Merit Scholarship program, which means you could earn money for college. In addition, it's great practice for the SAT.

Junior Parents — Set the bar. Make sure your child registers for the October PSAT. This is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship program and a good way to practice for the SAT. **Go to the fair.** Check into college fairs and high school visits from college representatives. Encourage your child to attend and to get familiar with the college resources available at school. **Take note.** If you haven't done so yet, get a Social Security number for your child. And if your arts student is in need of specific [counseling to prepare for college](#), it's available.

September Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Finalize your college list. Use the information you've gathered from college visits, interviews, and your own research to determine the schools to which you will apply. It's okay to apply to colleges that you think will be more difficult to get into. But it's also important to add a few safety schools to your list. Talk to counselors, teachers, and parents about your final choices. Register for and take the ACT, SAT, or SAT Subject Tests as necessary. Be sure you have requested that your test scores and transcripts be sent to the colleges on your list.

Senior Parents — Get your college applicant in gear. Start the year off right by setting aside an evening for dinner out with your college-bound child. Go over the strategy for the school year. Discuss plans and goals and review the list of potential colleges. If necessary, search with your student for a few more schools to make sure you haven't overlooked any. Also discuss plans to attend college fairs and meet with any college representatives who may be coming to the school. Go over which college sites have been visited and which ones haven't. Finalize plans for college visits. Have your student start the application process. Does your child still need to take the ACT or SAT? Find out the dates and have them register! If it all seems overwhelming, reassure your child that you'll be there to support them every step of the way.



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

October

Student & Parent Planning Guide

The school year is still new, so it's a great time to look ahead and plan ahead. Remember that your academic and performing or visual arts choices in high school should serve your longer-term goals as you prepare for college and beyond. Keep in mind that no matter what decisions you've made, or are about to make, you may want to refine your selections as you develop and grow. Stay focused, and at the same time, stay open to exploring new areas at all times!

October Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshman Arts Students — Plan for the next 4 years. Prepare to lay the foundation for your high school career. This is the time to establish your academic and extracurricular credentials and begin to explore options for further education and a career. Your guidance counselor is there to help you make sense of your college and career options. As soon as you can, set up a meeting to talk about your plans for high school and the future. Your counselor can help to make sure you're enrolled in the appropriate college-prep classes.

Freshman Parents — Plant the seeds now. Encourage your child to start exploring career goals so that courses can be chosen to complement those goals and serve as good prerequisites for college. Sit down with your teen and the course listings to agree on an academic plan for the classes your child should take in high school. Lay out preliminary plans for extracurricular activities as well, allowing flexibility for new interests to develop. Naturally, you'll want to consult with the school guidance counselor to help with all of the planning.

October Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Practice with the PSAT. Taking the PSAT as a sophomore will help prepare you for the real thing next year. It also allows you to release your name to colleges so you can start receiving information from them. Also review your courses with your guidance counselor to make sure you're enrolled in the classes you need to prepare you for college.

Sophomore Parents — Take your kid to the fair. It's a good time to start checking out college fairs and possibly meeting with school representatives that come to your area. Encourage your child to get a feel for the college search by attending one fair, and if ready, a session or two with representatives at school. It may also be a good time to start a preliminary list of potential colleges.

October Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Build your list of potential colleges.

Start by identifying the criteria that is most important to you about college such as academic majors, size, location, cost, and/or special programs. Weigh each of the factors according to their importance to you. Then list the schools that fit your criteria, and develop a preliminary ranking of those schools. You should attend college fairs and college nights and speak with college representatives who visit your high school. Search your top college options online, and based on your findings, either expand or narrow your list. Also, if you're in the performing arts, it's a good time to assemble your resume with a headshot. See how the college consultants at ArtsBridge approach [arts specialization](#).

Junior Parents — Stay on schedule. If your child is taking the PSAT, make sure the date is marked on your student's calendar as well as yours. Remind him/her to prepare for the test and to try some practice questions. At the same time, you can help keep this from being a high-pressure situation by planning for a fun treat after the test. **Step on campus.** Schedule a day trip to visit nearby colleges even if it's not where your child will apply. The idea is to explore different types of schools. Start a discussion by asking about the characteristics your student likes or dislikes about those schools.

October Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Get guidance, plan auditions, prep portfolios. Stay on track with admissions requirements by working with your guidance counselor. Let your counselor know where you want transcripts, score reports, and letters sent, and provide any necessary forms much earlier than the actual deadlines so your counselor will have time to send in the forms. Now you can finalize your audition material or portfolio pieces to best reflect your skills.

Senior Parents — Decide on early decision. Review options for early decision and early action to determine if this is the path you and your student want to pursue. Help your child complete the college list by adding application and financial aid due dates. **Take a road trip.** Identify the top colleges on the final list, and visit those schools. Schedule any interviews that can be completed on campus or with college alumni. Also remember to attend college fairs, and gather as much information as possible.



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

November

Student & Parent Planning Guide

Thanksgiving and the holiday season are fast approaching, and the school year is suddenly beginning to fly by. As a student of the visual or performing arts, this is your cue to take these next few weeks to get your projects, assignments, applications, essays, auditions, and portfolios in order. It's a lot to handle, but it doesn't have to feel overwhelming — simply give your full attention to one thing at a time. Enjoy the holiday, and remember to give thanks for all of your educational opportunities!

November Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshmen Arts Students — Get involved. Extracurricular activities are an important part of high school even if some of them are not school sponsored. Make a real effort to get involved with groups, clubs, or teams that interest you. These activities can be fun and they go a long way to help make you a well-rounded student.

Freshmen Parents — Help your child branch out. Freshman year is a great time to explore. Encourage involvement in a variety of activities both in and out of school. Give your child the freedom to seek out his or her comfort level as well as how much time can be dedicated without having a negative impact on schoolwork.

November Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Prepare for the ACT. Ask your guidance counselor about the PLAN assessment program offered by American College Testing. This program helps determine your study habits and academic progress and interests; it will also prepare you for the ACT.

Sophomore Parents — Practice and PLAN. Sophomore year marks the beginning of standardized testing. This year, students can take a practice PSAT/NMSQT — a preparatory step for the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT next year. For students planning on taking the ACT, the PLAN assessment is also administered in their sophomore year. Practice may not make perfect, but it can help!

November Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Formulate a testing plan. Note when you'll be taking important tests like the SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, and AP exams, and mark the dates on your calendar. Leave plenty of time to prepare. **Get help and gain an edge.** There are many types of [consultants](#) and [coaches](#) available to help you plan, study, and get the results you're capable of achieving. You may want to ask your guidance counselor for specific coaching recommendations.

Junior Parents — Take a drive across campus. Schedule a day trip to visit nearby colleges. Fall is a great time to look at schools because classes are in session and you can talk with students and professors. Don't worry if these are places where your child won't apply. The goal is to explore a variety of schools. Talk about the different types of schools with your child as well as which characteristics are appealing and which aren't.

November Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Keep track of deadlines. With all of the forms you'll be filling out this year, you'll need to know when each is due. Mark a calendar with all application deadlines for admission, financial aid, and scholarships. **Ask for recommendations.** Give letter-of-recommendation forms to the teachers you have selected, and discuss your goals and ambitions with them so they'll be better prepared to write about you. **Get applications in order.** As you finish application forms, proofread them, and have your parents do the same. Make sure you and your school's guidance office are sending all required materials, including test scores, recommendations, transcripts, and essays.

Senior Parents — Our reco: check recommendations and applications. Monitor the application process to make sure all details are being addressed. First and foremost, take a look at application essays — your child may be able to overlap topics to reduce the workload. Then make sure that all teacher recommendations have been requested so they can be received before upcoming deadlines. As your child works on applications, offer to proofread and provide constructive criticism. Stay on top of any early application deadlines, and if possible, try to use time over the Thanksgiving break for a campus visit.



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

December

Student & Parent Planning Guide

It's just about time for the winter break and the holidays. Family and friends, who haven't seen us in a while, will ask what we're up to, and that's a good thing because it's the perfect opportunity to ask ourselves the same question. It's a great time to take stock to see if we're on course to reach our academic and arts goals. Some of us may find that we need to take a step back and better define those goals. So take a little time to get on track and have a great holiday!

December Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshman Arts Students — Connect with friends & family.

Winter break is a great chance to get together and spend time with friends and family. These are the people you trust most, so ask to hear about their high school and college experiences and for any advice they can offer related to your interest in the arts. Enjoy the good company and have a great time with any activities you choose to do together.

Freshman Parents — Open the dialogue. Keep up regular conversations with your child about his or her academic progress. Make sure the course levels and the grade levels are appropriate. If not, your student may need help to establish better study habits or create a more conducive study environment. If needed, work together to develop an improvement plan and keep in mind that encouragement is the best motivation.

December Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Read, write, and seek advice.

Continue to develop your reading skills to help you prepare for tests while making you a more well-rounded person. Read lots of recommended books as well as the news to stay on top of current events. You'll need good writing skills no matter what path you pursue, so work on them now. Work with a teacher or another adult who can guide and encourage you to write well. Check in with your guidance counselor for advice and to make sure you're staying on track. Discuss your PSAT scores, and ask about postsecondary enrollment options and Advanced Placement (AP) courses that may be appropriate.

Sophomore Parents — Help plan for improvement.

PSAT/NMSQT scores should be back by now and between you, your child, and the high school guidance counselor, this is a good time to develop strategies for improving weak areas, if needed. It's also a great time to look into summer programs for performing arts students such as [ArtsBridge Summer](#).

December Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Organize your college information.

Set up a filing system, both online and offline, with individual folders for correspondence and printed materials from each college. This will make it much easier to locate the specific information you're looking for when you really need it. And you will! **Sign up for standardized tests.** Find out if the colleges you are interested in require the SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Tests, and register now to take the tests you need in the winter or spring. You can take them again in the fall of senior year if you're not happy with your scores.

Junior Parents — Look ahead and ask questions. Keeping test results in mind, help your child refine the list of colleges. If you or any of your friends or relatives have a college student at home for the winter break, make every effort to ask them questions about their college experiences and encourage your student to do the same. For performing arts students, this is also a great time to look into summer programs such as [ArtsBridge Summer](#).

December Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Follow up on all of your applications.

Verify with your guidance counselor that all forms are in order and that they have been sent out to the appropriate colleges. Check with each school to make sure they have received all your information, including test scores, transcripts, and recommendations. A little double-checking can go a long way, and with all of the time and effort you've put in to get to this point, now is no time to let up on your endeavors in school. Continue to do the work. Colleges do check senior grades.

Senior Parents — Take a close look at the calendar. Be sure to get your federal financial aid forms (FAFSA) either from the guidance office or online, and if any workshops are available, you may want to attend. Remind your child about any January or February application deadlines and have him or her confirm that the teachers and guidance staff are up-to-date with reference forms. You'll also want to make sure that transcripts are being sent to all of the short-list colleges.



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

January

Student & Parent Planning Guide

Happy New Year! Welcome to the monthly guide designed to help students of the arts with simple, step-by-step college preparation tips. As we make our new-year resolutions, it's the perfect time for high school students to re-commit to pursuing the dream of higher education in the performing & visual arts!

January Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshmen Arts Students — Plan for an exciting, new phase.

You've been wondering what high school would be like. Well, if it's not yet what you hoped it would be, make a commitment to take the steps that will get you there. Explore and seek guidance from counselors, [consultants](#), teachers, parents, and students who have been in your shoes. This is your time. Make it great!

Freshmen Parents — Demonstrate commitment. As caring parents, we want the best for our kids, so we offer advice... and a lot of it. That's okay, but if we truly want to get through and make a lasting impact, our actions speak loudest. So in the spirit of making resolutions, let's pay special attention to following through on what we say we're going to do. Because when we don't pay attention, our kids do.

January Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Take on new roles. This is the time to explore new areas and expand your possibilities. Often the instances where we push past our comfort zones offer the greatest rewards. If you've become involved with extracurricular activities, stay involved and work toward leadership positions in the activities you like best. Find out how rewarding community service can be.

Sophomore Parents — Revisit the course schedule. How well is your child fitting in academically? Each student is different, so make sure that your student's classes are an appropriate fit. If grades are slipping, the course levels may be too high or study habits may be poor. Keep the communication lines open with your kid and his or her teachers to properly evaluate the situation.

January Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Be proactive with your activities.

When it comes to extracurricular programs, colleges look for consistency and depth. So take your activities to the next level by taking on leadership roles and positions. **Begin essays.** Simply take the first step. Explore topics of interest. Once you identify a subject that matters to you, the writing will be able to flow more naturally.

Junior Parents — Communicate & evaluate. This can be a make or break year. Classes tend to be tougher than ever, so ask how it's going and listen carefully. Continue to assess your student's academic progress. Does everything appear to be going the way it should? If your child is having difficulty or could simply use advice, now is the time to help provide the support that he or she needs.

January Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Begin auditions. Present portfolios.

You've been developing a passion for your craft so give college programs a glimpse of your capabilities and potential by putting forth your best. It's time to strut your stuff! **Don't forget financial aid forms.** Fill out the FAFSA and if necessary, the PROFILE. Ask your guidance counselor for these forms because no matter what your family's income level is, the FAFSA is your main priority for financial aid purposes because it will determine how much you are expected to pay.

Senior Parents — Double check deadlines. If you and your student have everything you need, file your income taxes and begin filling out financial aid forms, such as the FAFSA. Finish and mail these forms as soon as possible. Pay close attention to make sure you meet the deadlines! Keep in mind that many schools list earlier FAFSA filing dates than may be indicated on the form itself.



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

February

Student & Parent Planning Guide

When the winter term is in full force, spring and summer can feel very far off, but don't be deceived by the time of year. Keep up the pace and prepare for the not-so-distant future. This monthly guide is designed to help students of the arts with simple, step-by-step college preparation tips. The big-picture goal is to help performing and visual arts students [connect with the finest arts education!](#)

February Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshman Arts Students — Be open to new areas. This is the time to explore your interests as well as areas you've never even thought about. All of it can eventually have a large impact on your career and your life. Discuss your skills and interests with your guidance counselor and take advantage of Career Day opportunities at your school.

Freshman Parents — Be open to change. High school is a time for students to explore new arenas and interests. So give them some leeway, and encourage your child to venture out. Watch to see if they're blossoming or if they could use some guidance in pursuing new directions.

February Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Explore career possibilities.

Explore all of your career options. You may or may not be heading for a career in the arts. Either way, speak with your guidance counselor, and do the research to learn about the tasks, education, and training necessary for each occupational area.

Sophomore Parents — Check in on student activities. We all know how valuable extracurricular activities can be. So take a good look to see if they're going well. Make sure they're not having a negative impact on your child's studies. If so, you and your child should consider cutting back on some of the activities.

February Timeline for Juniors:

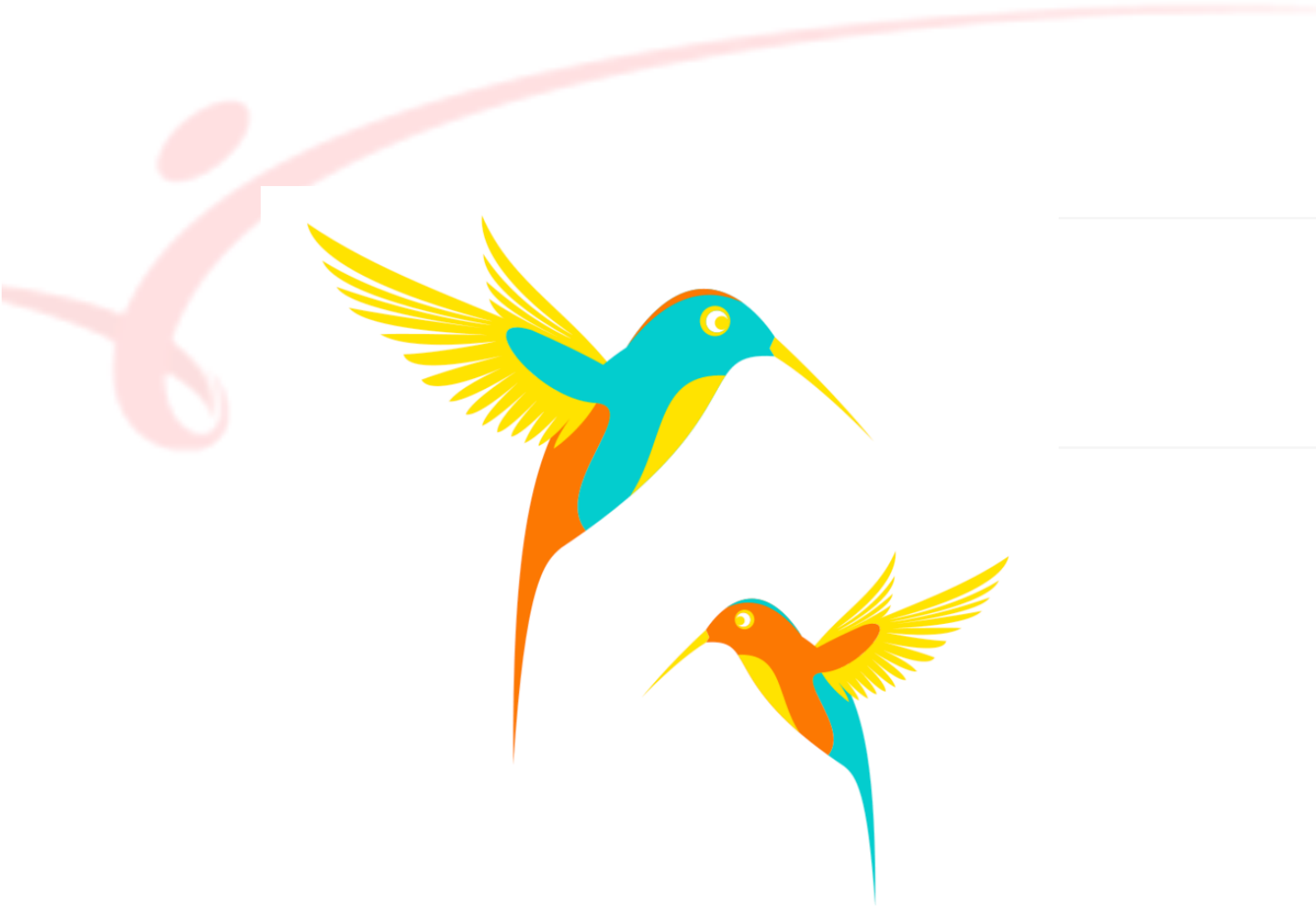
Junior Arts Students — Think summer and plan ahead. This school year is a pivotal one, and so is the upcoming summer. As a student of the arts, you can take advantage of a number of excellent programs to help get your know-how and skills up to college level. So don't wait until summer to figure it out — you'll be too late. Check out [ArtsBridge Summer](#) and scroll down to see the recent Jan 31st blog post on popular summer arts programs.

Junior Parents — Help your student find the right summer arts program. Great summer arts programs help students develop personally and professionally. As you and your child begin to research programs, you should ask how they will influence your children now and in the future. The summer choices for junior year students can have a real impact on college admissions. See [ArtsBridge Summer](#) and scroll down for the recent Jan 31st blog post on popular summer arts programs.

February Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Send mid-year reports and continue to work hard. Ask your counselor to send your mid-year grade reports to all of the colleges to which you applied. Hone your arts skills in preparation for college, and remember that schools will continue to keep track of your grades, so it's important to keep working hard throughout your senior year.

Senior Parents — Finish and follow up applications. Have your child complete all outstanding applications and auditions. Make copies of everything and save them! Unless confirmations have arrived, students should contact colleges by phone or online to check the current status. They should keep track of which people they are speaking with and find out if any materials still need to be sent in.



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

March

Student & Parent Planning Guide

March is a month of transition. While the seasons are changing, students are growing. Our goal is to help foster that growth with easy-to-follow, monthly advice regarding college preparation for students and parents. As winter turns to spring, simple steps can help budding performing and visual arts students blossom.

March Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshmen Arts Students — Start your achievement file. Keep track of academic, extracurricular, and arts awards, community service achievements, and anything else you participate in. It will come in handy when you want to highlight your accomplishments on college applications or your resume.

Freshmen Parents — Support student participation. Help your child begin keeping an activities record that lists participation in activities as well as accomplishments, awards, and leadership positions. Be sure to keep up regular conversations with your child about his or her academic progress.

March Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Check in with your counselor for advice. Meet with your guidance counselor to make sure you're on track and planning ahead. You can also talk about your PSAT scores and ask about postsecondary enrollment options and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Remember to read. Developing reading skills will help prepare you for tests and make you a well-rounded individual, so strengthen your routine for reading.

Sophomore Parents — Consider additional testing. You and your child, along with the school counselor, should discuss SAT Subject Tests and APs, although many students wait until their junior year. The typical test period is May and June.

March Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Organize and begin to narrow college options. To help you easily locate the information you need, set up a filing system with individual folders for college correspondence and printed materials. Make sure you have all of the key data for the colleges that you are considering (entrance requirements, tuition, room and board costs, course offerings, student activities, financial aid, etc.). Then you can begin to compare the schools by the factors that are most relevant to you. This is also a good time to review your resume, and for performing arts students, review your repertoire list as well.

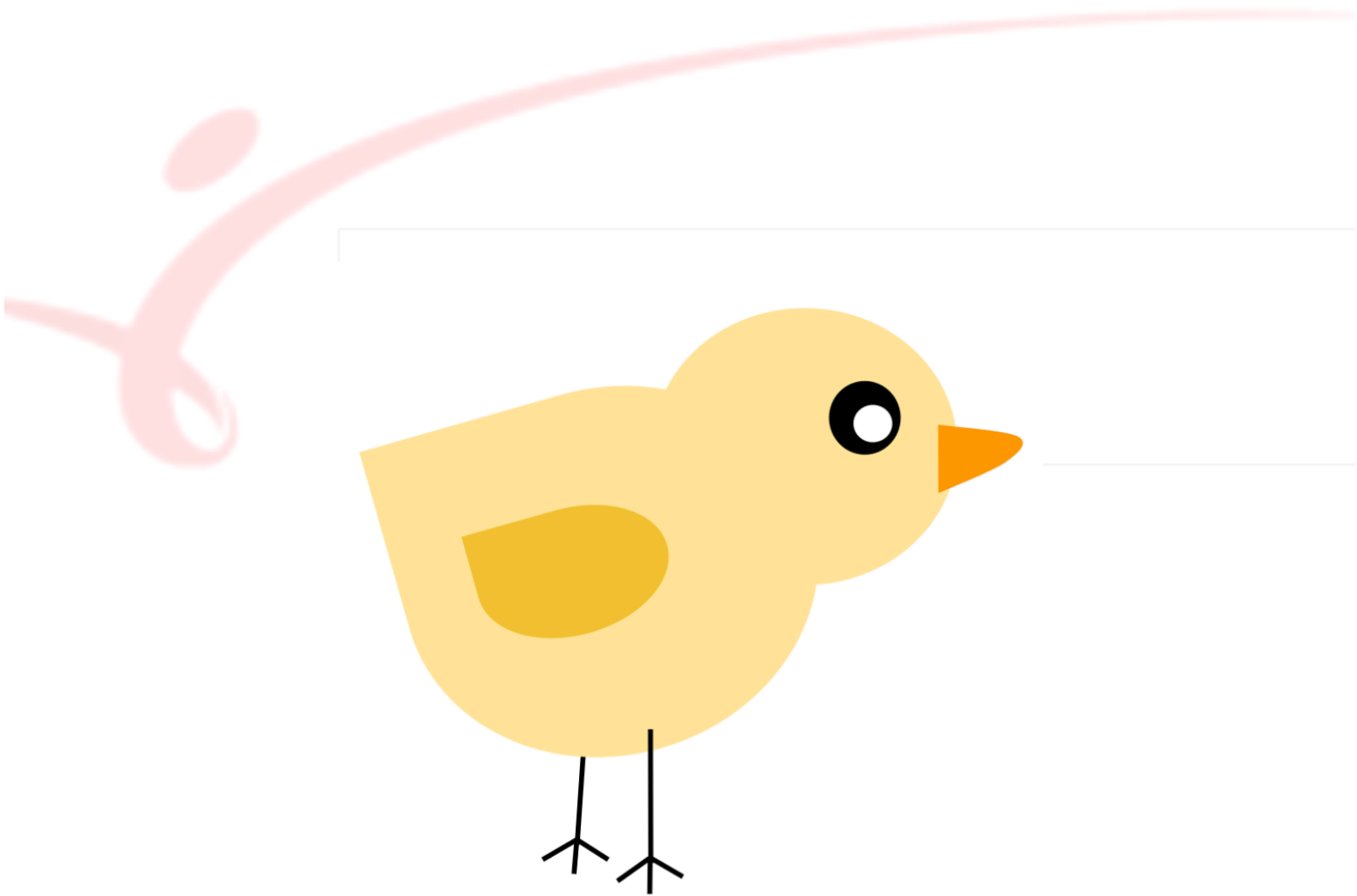
Junior Parents — Help plan and prepare. Spring vacation is a good time to visit colleges, so plan for it. Encourage your son, or daughter, to start a college binder with a list of target schools. He or she should begin to contact colleges to request materials and set aside an area where they can be easily referenced. Also, if you didn't do it last month, check upcoming SAT or ACT registration deadlines for tests your child still needs to take. Make note of the test and registration dates on your calendar.

March Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Watch your mail for college

notifications. You should receive an admissions decision by March or April if you applied under the regular application process, and notifications of financial aid awards should arrive by the end of April. If you're put on a waitlist, examine your options. Being put on a waitlist is not an acceptance or a rejection, so keep your options open in case you don't get in. Check out schools with late or rolling application deadlines.

Senior Parents — Now, all you have to do is wait. It's not always easy to display patience, but high school is almost over, and so is the wait. Some decision letters may be arriving this month and, hopefully, they will bring the news that you and your student have been waiting for!



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

April

Student & Parent Planning Guide

Spring break is over, and we're entering the home stretch of the school year. Much can be accomplished in these final months, so we're here to help guide the college preparation process for students and parents. Every step can be a difference maker for visual and performing arts students in the search for the right schools, scholarships, and financial aid packages.

April Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshman Arts Students — Start learning about college. Yes, it's true that you just started high school, but this is the time to begin thinking about where you want to be after high school. Look at the college information available in your guidance counselor's office. Spend a little time checking out college websites. Use college search tools and view college profiles. You may even want to start a list of colleges that might interest you.

Freshman Parents — Connect your student with a college student. Often, the best way to introduce a high school student to college is by having them hear about it first hand. So if you happen to have a friend, neighbor, or relative who is in college and doing well, it may be a good idea to have them share their experience. It will help get your student thinking about what they need to do to prepare for their own college career.

April Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Get your college search going.

College search tools can help you decide what factors are important to you so can assemble a list of colleges that matches your criteria. Your guidance counselor can recommend search tools, or try online sites like princetonreview.com or collegeboard.org. Start attending college fairs, ask questions, and review the material you get from each type of school so you can begin to compare and contrast.

Sophomore Parents — Get your student thinking about

college. It may seem like a long way off, particularly to students, but the college years will be here before you know it. Plant the higher education seeds now by exposing your child to college fairs and facilitating the beginning of the search. Also keep in mind that summer is around the corner, and you may want to consider a camp or program like [ArtsBridge Summer](#) that helps prepare arts students for college.

April Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Start a search for scholarships. Many types of scholarships are available, so spend some time locating the best ones for you. It's worth the effort. For scholarships from local organizations check with your guidance office, and use online scholarship search tools to select from a wider range. Don't wait to start looking for scholarships. Begin the process now so you know where to apply during your senior year. You'll also want to plan ahead when visiting colleges. Call the admissions office to set up a personal interview, tour, and a meeting with a professor or coach if you're interested.

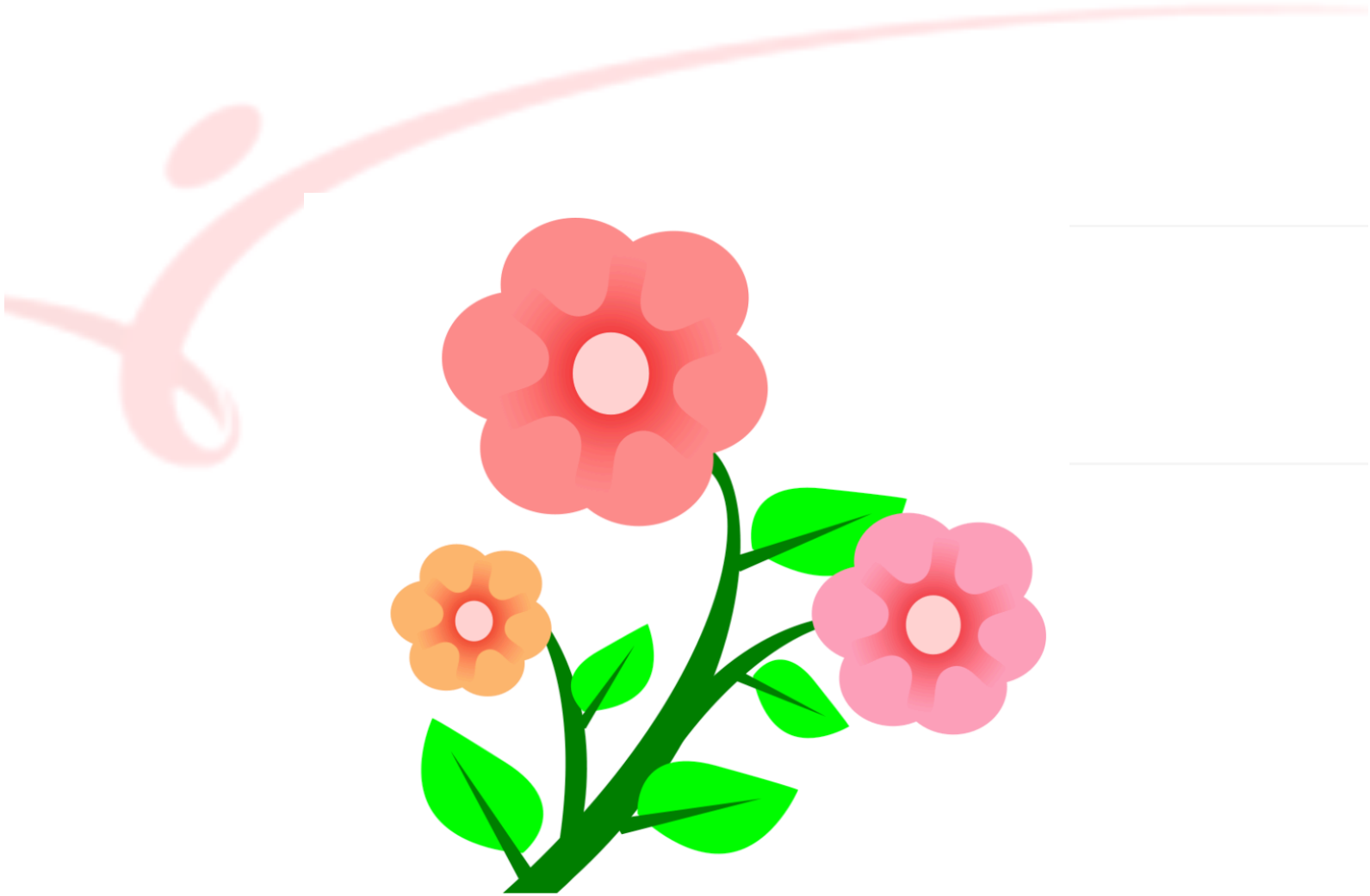
Junior Parents — Talk, plan, and plan some more. Over the next several months careful college planning will be required, so keep the lines of communication open with your student. Plan all of your remaining spring college visits now so your student can see students on campus and really get a sense of college life when visiting. At the same time, don't overlook plans for senior-year classes. Help your child select courses that matter, recognizing that colleges weigh senior classes and grades as heavily as they do for junior year.

April Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Compare financial aid packages.

Financial aid can be a key factor in deciding where you will attend, so be sure to consider each financial aid award carefully. If you have questions, contact the financial aid office of the college to get more information. If you haven't yet received all of your admissions decisions, you can expect to receive them this month if you applied under the regular application process. One college may offer an excellent package, but your heart may be set on another. If that's the case, let the other school know — they may be able to do better.

Senior Parents — Stay supportive either way. If your child is accepted, you likely won't need any advice on how to react positively. However, if a rejection letter arrives, put things in perspective and remind your child that the selection process will be more in their favor with other schools. Being denied is not something to be ashamed of — keep going! Once your student is accepted at another school, compare financial aid offers and contact financial aid offices with any questions.



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

May

Student & Parent Planning Guide

Yes it's true, summer will actually be here next month, and we'll all be planning for the next school year. For high school students of the arts who want to take their craft to the next level in college, a little monthly college prep advice can go a long way. Many performing and visual arts students and parents are following simple steps to help navigate the complexities of the college admissions process.

May Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshmen Arts Students — Begin to get a feel for college

life. Visiting friends or relatives who live on or near a college campus is a great way to get a sense of what college is like. Check out the dorms, go to student center, library, arts building, and walk around the campus. You don't need to worry about where you want to go — just have fun and get a feel for the college environment.

Freshmen Parents — Take a little college road trip. It may seem like a long way off, but college is coming fast. Now is the perfect time to introduce your student to life after high school. You don't have to go too far. Just pick two or three schools that offer a variety of styles and flavors. Take a casual walk through the campus, and let your child take in the student life. Most importantly, be sure to let your child enjoy the process in a fun and relaxed manner.

May Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Line up your summer plans. If you haven't yet planned how you're going to spend your summer, your options are closing quickly so do it now. Find summer work. It will look good to prospective colleges and employers, and earning your own money will look good to you. You may also want to talk to your parents about attending a summer arts program. You'll find some excellent [summer arts programs](#) here — check to see if they still have openings.

Sophomore Parents — Help make the summer break productive. Your child should have a job or participate in constructive activities over the summer. Summer study, career programs, jobs, and volunteer work always rate high with admission officials. While it's getting late for enrollment, there are still some great [summer arts programs](#) available that you may want to consider.

May Timeline for Juniors:

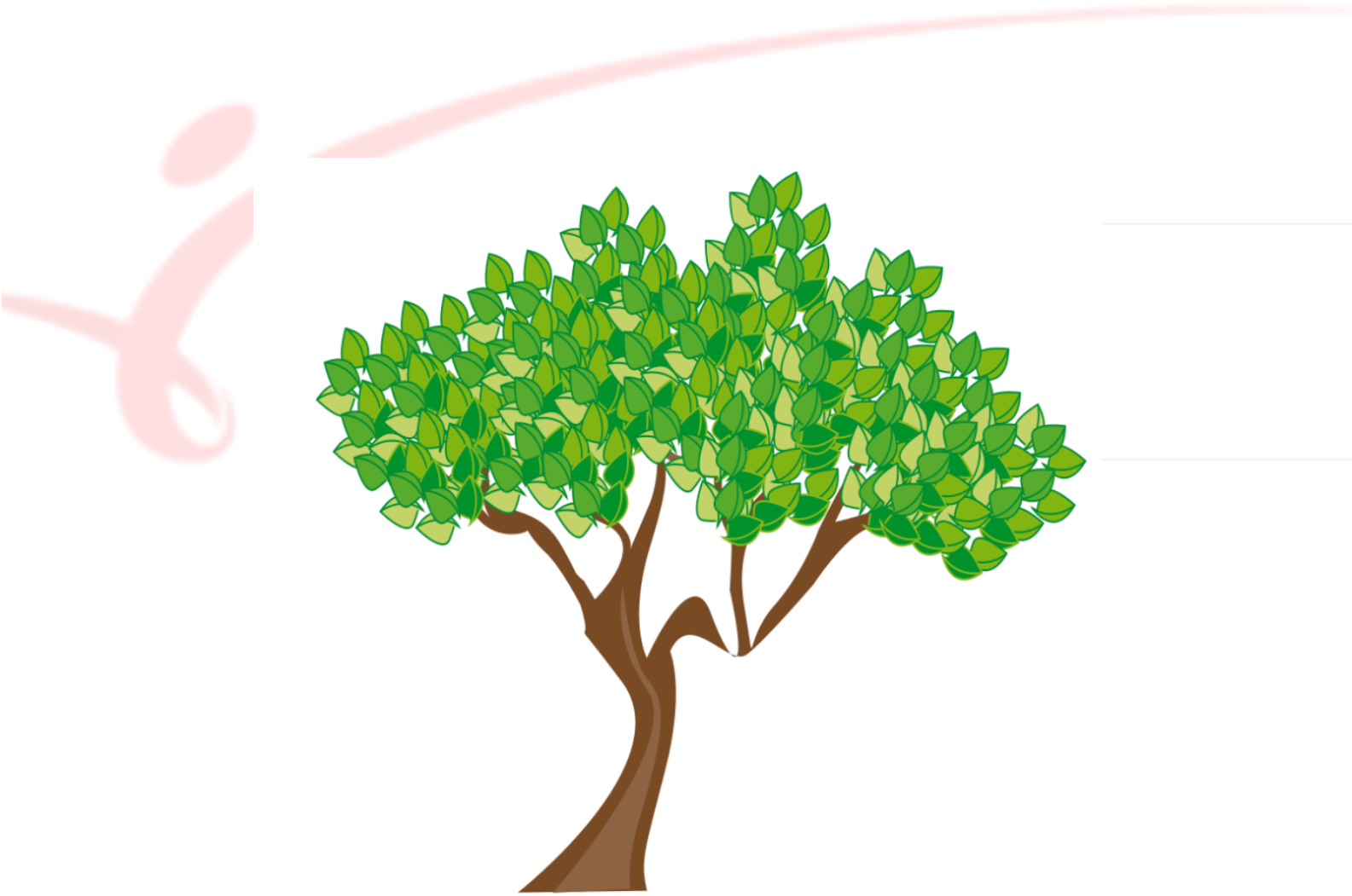
Junior Arts Students — Narrow the college list and make appointments. Take a good look at all of the schools being considered, and based on the attributes that are important to you and your art, identify your top college choices. You'll need to plan ahead, so now is the time to set up appointments to visit each campus. Call the admissions office to arrange a personal interview, tour, and a meeting with a professor if you're interested.

Junior Parents — Prep for tests and explore options. Does your student need to complete the SAT and/or ACT? Make sure all deadlines and test dates are being met. Then it's a good idea to see what you can do to help your child gain an edge. Investigate the possibility of services such as standardized test prep courses, independent college counselors, and private group tour programs.

May Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Finalize your college decision. If you haven't yet notified schools of your intent, do so immediately. Be sure to send your deposit to your chosen school and ask your guidance counselor to send your final transcript to the college in June. **Follow up on financial aid.** Have you received a FAFSA acknowledgement? If you applied for a Pell Grant, you will receive a Student Aid Report statement. Review it, make a copy, and send the original to the college you plan to attend. Apply for loans if needed.

Senior Parents — Check all of the details. See if any AP exams need to be taken, and make sure your student completes them. It's always a good idea to encourage your child to write thank you notes to teachers, guidance counselors, admission counselors, financial aid officers, and others who were helpful in the college-planning process. Stay on top of housing plans, return all forms, and find out the dates for freshman-orientation and course-registration.



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

June

Student & Parent Planning Guide

Didn't the school year just begin? It really does go that quickly, so do what you can to finish strong and begin planning for the coming year. Just remember, as you look ahead to the summer and beyond, enjoy the moment and appreciate all of the hard work that got you to this point. And keep in mind that each small step you take now will payoff in terms of setting the stage for the best possible college experience (and literally setting the stage for performing artists).

June Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshman Arts Students — Make your summer count.

Naturally, the summer break from school is the perfect time for fun and relaxation. But, there are plenty of ways to have fun and build your credentials as well during the summer, such as volunteering, getting a job, or signing up for an arts enrichment program.

Freshman Parents — Make adjustments for the year ahead.

Together, with your student, review and evaluate the comprehensive academic program and activities record started earlier in the school year, make any necessary changes, and update accordingly for the coming year. Encourage your child to continue to explore his or her talents in the arts.

June Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Consider taking SAT Subject

Tests. It is a good idea to take these types of tests while the material is still fresh in mind. So take SAT Subject Tests now in the courses you took this year. **Use the summer wisely.** Finding summer work will look good on your resume to prospective colleges and employers. Of course, anything you can do to enhance your arts skills and/or portfolio, either practice or helpful programs, will go a long way.

Sophomore Parents — Help plan for the coming school year.

Keep an eye on your student's registration for fall classes and activities. Encourage your child to take the most challenging classes possible and to participate in at least one community service activity. Finalize any summer plans, and, just as you may have done last year, devise a summer reading list together that will help the transition into junior year.

June Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Contact your recommendation

writers. Teachers and guidance counselors get many requests to write recommendations for lots of students. Give them a heads up now so they'll have time to prepare before getting tons of requests in the fall. Ask teachers who know you well and who will have positive things to say. Letters of recommendation from a coach, activity leader, or adult who knows you well outside of school are also valuable. **Get your essays going too.** Compose drafts of the essays you'll need for your college applications. Have a teacher read and discuss them with you so you have a good sense of which areas need work.

Junior Parents — Double check one more time. Make sure your child is registered for anything that still needs to be completed. If your student has a test coming up, mark the test and registration dates on the family calendar. **Think scholarships.** Take advantage of the summer break by searching scholarship and financial aid websites with your child, or by checking out library resources.

June Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Complete your college enrollment process. After accepting an offer, you should receive information from the college about items such as course scheduling, housing arrangements, orientation sessions, and specific forms you will need to fill out. Be sure to finish all required paperwork by the deadlines. While you're completing all of these key tasks, don't forget to let your college enthusiasm and excitement show!

Senior Parents — Give yourself a pat on the back. Both you and your child deserve tons of credit! The high school years aren't often easy, and thanks to your efforts, your student is about to turn the page and begin a wonderful new chapter. It may be a good idea to help organize a file to keep track of summer mailings from the college with categories that include orientation, housing, course registration, and finances. You've both come a long way. Congratulations!



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

July

Student & Parent Planning Guide

Summer break is officially here, and it should be fully enjoyed. At the same time, with a few key steps, you can take advantage of the break to help set you up for success in the upcoming semester and well into your college years. For seniors, it's time to catch your breath, have fun, and let the excitement build for the next phase of life. For high school arts students who are in the midst of college preparation, you can accomplish plenty this summer and have a great time doing so.

July Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshmen Arts Students — Summer activities go a long way.

There are a lot of ways to build your credentials and have fun at the same time this summer, such as volunteering, getting a full or part-time job, or signing up for an enrichment program. So don't let the summer go by without making it count.

Freshmen Parents — Read from the reading list. Now that summer is here, make sure your student has a summer reading list that will help with the academic transition to 10th grade. You may want to read what your student is reading to encourage interest and discussion. Finalize any other summer plans that may have been in development.

July Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Get your college search going.

Decide what factors are important to you, and begin to put together a list of colleges to match your search criteria. Plan on attending college fairs and read the material you get from many types of schools to see what aspects appeal to you. **Start to contact colleges of interest.** Request more information about academic requirements and programs or activities that are particularly attractive to you.

Sophomore Parents — Foster your child's interests. Talk about the things your child enjoys doing, what brings happiness, and what doesn't. Help find activities that tie into his or her interests. Summer study, jobs, and volunteer work can help open up new skill sets and areas of interest, plus they rate high with admission officials. As a student of the arts, see if your child can "shadow" someone who works or performs in the area that has the most appeal.

July Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Visit your top colleges choices.

Explore the campuses of a few of your preferred colleges. Take the official tour and speak with the admissions and financial aid staff. If summer classes are in session, see if you can speak with some of the students. **Plan your performance auditions or visual portfolios.** Each school has their own requirements and preferences, so learn as much as you can about them. In addition to getting the advice and perspective of admissions, it can help to hear what students have to say about a particular school or arts program.

Junior Parents — Use the summer to your student's

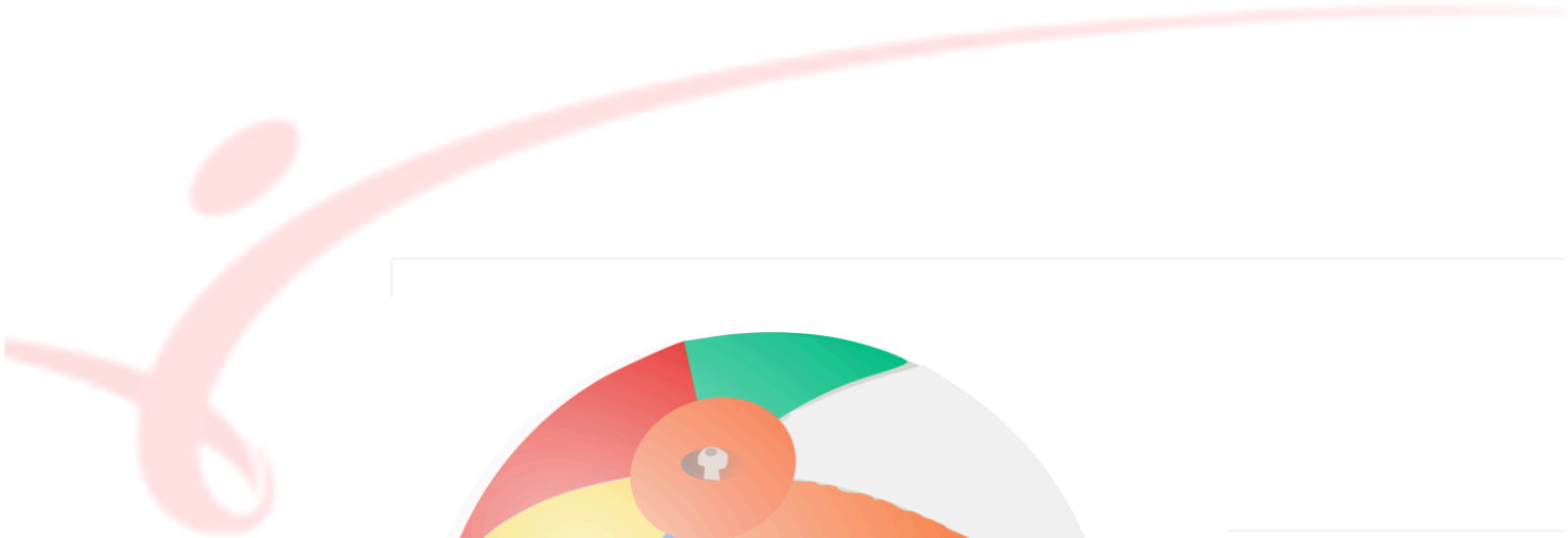
advantage. Don't let the slower pace of the season keep your child from accomplishing key goals. By now, he or she should be accustomed to summer employment or other constructive activities. College admission officers like to know that students are spending their summers wisely. This is also a good time for visiting some college campuses and planning fall visits for others.

July Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — Congratulations! All of your hard work has paid off. You graduated high school, you're all set for college, and you are about to embark on a very exciting and meaningful journey in your life. Appreciate this special time, and take on the next phase with great enthusiasm! Best of luck!

Senior Parents — Take a moment to reflect and celebrate!

The years have gone by quickly, but think about all of the time and effort you have put in to get to this point. If you're feeling a bit emotional, it's only natural. During this transitional period, keep in mind that moving on from high school to college is a special accomplishment. Give yourself and your child well-deserved credit. Even if there were bumps in the road, you've both done a great job to get here!



College Planner & Timeline For The Arts

August

Student & Parent Planning Guide

As we approach the final weeks of summer, anticipation is in the air for the school year ahead. By spending just a little time each month identifying your objectives, planning ahead, and taking action, you'll be impressed by how much you can accomplish over the course of the entire school year. Whether you're about to enter your freshman year in high school or in college, this is an exciting time in your life, so fulfill your goals one step at a time and enjoy the journey!

August Timeline for Freshmen:

Freshman Arts Students — Discuss college savings. Talk to your parents about planning for college expenses. If your family has set up a savings plan for you, continue to add to it whenever possible. If not, there's never a better time to start saving for college than now. You and your parents can use an online financial planning calculator to help assess the current savings situation and plan for the future.

Freshman Parents — Talk about financial participation. Now that your student is in high school, it's important that he or she understand financial roles and responsibilities. Exactly what that role entails is entirely up to you, depending on your personal situation. Whether circumstances call for monetary contributions or simply keeping a tight reign on expenses, now is a good time to clearly communicate the needs and expectations.

August Timeline for Sophomores:

Sophomore Arts Students — Refresh and reconsider. The summer break lets you step back and get some perspective on where you are in school and where you see yourself heading this year in preparation for college. It's a good time to re-evaluate and refocus your academic and art efforts so that you can be sure you're on track to accomplish your goals.

Sophomore Parents — Do some early research with your student. You can find all of the college entrance information you need online, as well as applications to many institutions. Summer is a great time for you and your child to check out some of the sites, plan future visits, and bookmark your favorites.

August Timeline for Juniors:

Junior Arts Students — Start working now on your application essays. Compose rough drafts of the essays you'll need for your college applications. The Common App is a free, online application used by over 400 colleges and universities, so see if it applies to your situation. It's a good idea to have a teacher read and discuss essays with you so you can see which areas need work. Make revisions to your application essays and prepare final drafts. Remember to proofread the final essays. Then proofread them again.

Junior Parents — Help plan for submissions. Keep your child on track with test preparation, if needed. He or she should begin planning and/or assembling any supplemental submissions that will be needed, such as prescreen videos or portfolios. Review and update the list of target schools that you and your child have been developing. Record the pros and cons of each school.

August Timeline for Seniors:

Senior Arts Students — This is your time. You've been preparing for years and now college is almost here. You may be feeling a range of emotions from excited and happy to nervous and fear of the unknown. Just know that it's perfectly natural and most students are going through the same thing. So open yourself up to meeting all types of people and broadening your experiences. Dedicate yourself to your work and your art, and treat this as a special time... because it is!

Senior Parents — Prepare your student and yourself. Books, bedding, clothing, supplies, encouragement, love... you probably have a good sense of what your child will need to begin his or her college freshman year. But many parents forget to anticipate their own emotional state. Separation anxiety is only natural, especially if this is your first time sending a child off to college. Keep in mind there is an adjustment period, so have patience, stay busy, and remember that one of the best gifts you can give your child is a sense of independence.

"In guiding my clients at ArtsBridge over the years, the monthly action steps in this college planner have proven to be the real deal."

— Halley Shefler, Founder and President of ArtsBridge