

Student's College Planning Guide

Use this checklist to help prepare you for educational opportunities after high school.

In 7th & 8th Grade

- Begin thinking about the high school classes that will prepare you for college. Take the most difficult classes you can handle.
- Ask your parents, guardians or teachers to help you develop good study habits.
- Practice setting and reaching goals.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Take interest and skills assessments to help you think about possible career options.
- Talk with your school counselor and parents about careers that interest you.
- Create a tentative high school class plan.
- Enroll in a summer enrichment program.

In 9th & 10th Grade

- Take interest and skills assessments to help you explore careers that interest you.
- Talk with your school counselor about college and career options and the education required for those careers.
- Talk with your family about paying for college.
- Talk with friends, teachers, counselors and your parents about college.
- Participate in extracurricular activities.
- Take the PLAN in tenth grade to prepare for the ACT, and to identify areas where you need improvement.
- Review your high school class plan. Take the most difficult classes you can handle. Stay focused on your schoolwork.
- Explore internships and apprenticeships.
- Enroll in a summer enrichment program.
- Sign up for classes that will earn you college credit during your junior year of high school.

In 11th Grade

- Attend college and financial aid fairs.
- Mentor others and have a mentor for yourself.
- Take the PSAT in the fall to prepare for the SAT, and to identify areas where you need improvement.
- Consider possible career options and investigate the education that is needed.
- Request materials from schools that interest you, and visit their Web sites.
- Arrange campus visits to those schools that interest you. Meet with an admissions officer, a financial aid representative, faculty members and college students.
- Participate in extracurricular activities.
- Request admissions and financial aid forms.
- Sign up for classes that will earn you college credit during your senior year of high school.
- Take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring.
- Review your high school class plan. Take the most difficult classes you can handle. Stay focused on your schoolwork. Make sure you are meeting your high school graduation requirements.
- Enroll in a summer enrichment program.
- Get a job to earn and save money for college, or explore your skills through an internship or apprenticeship.
- Research your private scholarship options.

In 12th Grade

- If you haven't already done so, sign up for classes that will earn you college credit during your last year of high school.
- Meet with your school counselor to review your high school class plan. Take the most difficult classes you can handle. Stay focused on your schoolwork.
- Arrange campus visits to those schools that interest you (if you haven't already done so).
- Take or retake the ACT and/or SAT in the fall.
- Select the schools to which you will apply. Make a list of important admissions and financial aid deadlines for each school.
- Attend a financial aid event. Review a copy of *Your Guide to Paying for College*.
- Participate in extracurricular activities.
- Create a resume of your academic, athletic and work activities as well as other achievements. Prepare a portfolio if you're interested in the arts.
- Search and apply for private scholarships.
- Ask for recommendations (if required) from teachers, counselors and others who can comment on your abilities and talents.
- Apply to four to six colleges that interest you. Do not wait until just before the deadline.
- Complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1. You and your parents must complete your taxes before submitting the FAFSA. You can apply at **www.fafsa.ed.gov**.
- Review your Student Aid Report (SAR) for accuracy. If you make corrections, return the form as quickly as possible.
- Have your high school transcript sent to those colleges to which you've applied.
- Choose a college and send in any required forms or deposits (housing, meal plan, etc.). Notify in writing those schools you don't plan to attend.
- Get a summer job to earn money for college.