

College Preparation Checklist

It is never too early to begin preparing for college. Your high school years are filled with opportunities, and the choices you make will shape your future.

If you are able, challenge yourself with advanced or honors courses (if offered), explore electives, volunteer, get a job, join a club, play a sport or an instrument.

Make the most of your time—and most importantly, enjoy the journey!

Each Year

- Set goals for the year.
- Maintain good attendance, grades, and citizenship.
- Develop & hone your time management skills. Commit to at least one extracurricular activity or job each year (and begin a savings account if you work for pay).
- Connect with your school counselor early and often about your plans for the future, top colleges, and classes you want to take.
- Keep track of your activities and accomplishments.
- Take time to discover who you are and what you want in life.

9th Grade

- Check out RaiseMe (www.raise.me). It's a great online resource that will allow you to check out colleges, track your achievements, and even earn micro scholarships.
- Document your successes by collecting samples of excellent school work, copies of report cards, special awards, letters of recommendation, etc. Online tools like MyCoalition Locker will allow you to upload materials and store your high school records in the cloud.
- Think about your future plans — what do you want to do after high school?
- Look into summer academic programs that might be of interest to you.

- Create an email address, or use the one provided to you by your high school. Use this address for your college search correspondence—remember to check it often to learn about special events and opportunities!

10th Grade

- Meet with your school counselor to discuss a list of colleges and academic programs you'd like to explore, and discuss fit, next steps, etc.
- Go online! Look at each school's resources, request more information, follow them on social media. You'll begin receiving texts, emails, and letters from your favorite schools. Read these — they're packed with good information.

- Prepare for standardized testing — the ACT, SAT, and Advanced Placement (AP) exams. When will you take them? What do you need to do to prepare? Does your school offer the Pre-ACT/PSAT?
- Attend college fairs or college nights at your school.

11th Grade

- Explore your top schools, and refine your list. Decide what you want out of a college, and explore what each has to offer in terms of academics, faculty, research, clubs and organizations, academic and career advising, and support.
- Begin thinking about who you might ask to write letters of recommendation in the fall of your senior year.
- Take the Duolingo English Test, IELTS, or TOEFL if English is not your first language.
- Visit colleges during spring/summer break. Check out each school's website for information about visit opportunities and how to schedule.

12th Grade

- Take the SAT and/or ACT again to improve your score if necessary.
- Finalize your top schools:
 - Be sure to have a viewbook, and financing and scholarship information from each.
 - Understand the application requirements including deadlines, decision plans, fees, test scores, teacher recommendations, transcripts, and essays.
 - Reach out to each school if you have questions. If possible, learn who your admissions representative is and introduce yourself virtually or in person.
 - Visit if you haven't already and if you are able, or see if they have a virtual tour online.
- Apply! Start applications well before the deadline. Give yourself and others plenty of time to complete the process: write essays, gather supplemental materials, ask teachers to write recommendations, research and apply for financial aid and scholarships.
- Keep an eye out for admission decisions based on each school's deadlines and the decision plan you selected.
- Plan for your first-year at college! Learn more about orientation, summer academic programs, or other information that will help you transition to the lucky college you choose.