

# THE COMPLETE COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

College planning begins before senior year! We have developed this high school timeline to help your family stay on track and feel well-prepared for the college application process.

## 9TH GRADE

### FALL

#### CREATE A 4-YEAR PLAN

Map out all of your classes from 9th through 12th grade to see your course progression in each subject across all 4 years. Include core classes each year—even if you surpass your school's graduation requirements!

#### EXPLORE YOUR INTERESTS

Seek out extracurricular experiences that relate to your interests. Join clubs & teams, pick up a new hobby, or learn a new skill. There's no "right" way to pursue your interests or "right" interests to pursue, so get creative and follow your heart!

## 9TH GRADE

### SPRING

#### START YOUR STUDENT RESUME

Keep a record of your extracurricular involvement. Include your time commitment & your role. Update this resume each year to have a head start on the Activity List in your college application.

#### BUILD STRONG STUDY SKILLS

Set a strong foundation for high school by staying organized, developing strong study skills & learning how to manage your time. Study hard and finish the year strong! Freshman grades will appear on your college applications.

#### HAVE A FAMILY CONVERSATION ABOUT FINANCIAL FIT

It's never too soon to talk about paying for college!

**Parents:** discuss financial fit with your student so they know your family's budget before they begin their college search.

Questions about paying for college?  
We can help!

# 10TH GRADE

## FALL

### REASSESS YOUR 4-YEAR PLAN

Review your progress from 9th grade and make any necessary changes to your 4-year plan. Reflect on your favorite subjects so far, and set academic goals for each of your classes.

### TAKE PERSONALITY & APTITUDE ASSESSMENTS

Explore your strengths and natural abilities! **Our students take two assessments and reflect on their results with their college planning consultant to discover potential majors and careers.**

Work with a consultant to  
discover your potential!

### CONSIDER TAKING THE PSAT/PreACT

PSAT and PreACT scores are not used in college admissions, but taking either of these tests in 10th grade can give students a baseline score and exposure to a standardized testing environment.

# 10TH GRADE

## SPRING

### VISIT LOCAL COLLEGES

Learn about different types of colleges by visiting schools near you, and begin determining what factors make up your best college fit. Think about academic, social, and financial fit.

### EXPLORE POTENTIAL MAJORS

It's time to begin your research into college majors. For subjects you're interested in, look up departmental pages on a college's website. See what classes those students take and what they do outside of the classroom.

Do you want to get more experience in a certain subject area to see if it's right for you? Consider an extracurricular or a summer opportunity related to your interest.

### SIGN UP FOR ADVANCED COURSES

Your curriculum should get more difficult each year. When registering for classes, think about taking the advanced options your school offers in courses that interest you or relate to your potential major. Challenge yourself, but don't overload yourself! Set a pace you can maintain in senior year.

# 11TH GRADE

## FALL

### REASSESS YOUR 4-YEAR PLAN

Review your progress from 10th grade and make any necessary changes to your 4-year plan. Make sure your college goals are aligned with the rest of the classes you will take. If they aren't, meet with your school counselor to learn your options.

### TAKE THE PSAT

Taking the PSAT in the fall of 11th grade gives you more experience with standardized testing and can also qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship.

### DETERMINE YOUR COLLEGE FIT

You need to know what makes a good college fit for YOU when building your college list. Decide what your must-haves are, as well as your deal breakers. Make a list of what matters to you—not your friends or the media. This will help you build a college list full of schools where you will thrive.

**Our students KNOW their best college fit!**  
**Learn yours!**

# 11TH GRADE

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## SPRING

### TAKE THE SAT AND/OR ACT

Begin standardized testing if you haven't already. Colleges do not have a preference for either test, so take some practice assessments to determine which aligns with your strengths. Consider test prep to improve your scores.

### RESEARCH AND VISIT COLLEGES

Tour colleges in person or research them virtually. Use your college fit criteria to decide if you will apply to each college. Not every college will be a good fit for you, and that's okay!

### PLAN FOR A STRONG SENIOR YEAR

Your senior schedule should be your most challenging! Try to meet or exceed the number of advanced classes in your junior year schedule. This will help prepare you for college classes, and you may earn college credit! Even if you've met your school's graduation requirements, plan to take all of your core subjects during senior year.

# 11TH GRADE

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## SPRING, continued

### ASK FOR RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

Before the end of the school year, ask two teachers to write strong letters of recommendation to accompany your college applications. Ideally, your recommenders taught you during junior year. Ask at least one teacher who taught a core subject in case a college on your list requires it.

### BEGIN THE COMMON APPLICATION

You can work on the Common Application before it opens on August 1st of your senior year!

**Our students start their applications in the spring of junior year. We host Common Application workshops so our students feel ready and confident to tackle their applications!**

## SUMMER

### FINALIZE YOUR COLLEGE LIST

Reflect on your college research and decide where you will apply. Plan for 5-10 schools on average. Make sure your college list is balanced in terms of selectivity. It's okay to have some reaches, but make sure there are enough schools where you have a high chance of acceptance!

Is your college list balanced?  
We specialize in college list building!

### WRITE YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY

Your personal statement is your opportunity to include your voice and personality with the rest of your college application. Write your essay over the summer when you can devote your full attention to it without the distraction of school homework.

**Our students attend an essay workshop that helps them prepare to begin their personal statement. Then, they work with their consultant to brainstorm topics and create thoughtful essays that authentically reflect them.**

Are you looking for essay support?  
Schedule a consultation!

# 12TH GRADE

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## FALL

### **AUGUST 1: COMMON APP OPENS**

You can now access college application sections and submit finished applications.

### **MEET WITH YOUR COUNSELOR**

If you haven't already, meet with your school counselor to go over your college goals and application plans.

### **FOLLOW UP WITH RECOMMENDERS**

Check in with the teachers writing your recommendation letters to ensure they have everything they need, including your application deadlines. Approach any "other recommenders" like coaches, bosses, or mentors with plenty of advanced notice.

### **FINISH STANDARDIZED TESTING**

Fall may be your last opportunity to take the SAT/ACT before early deadlines or scholarship deadlines. Look up the policy at each college on your list.

## FALL, continued

### SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATIONS BEFORE THE DEADLINE

Whether you're applying Early Decision, Early Action, or Regular Decision, give yourself plenty of time to do your best work! Plan to finish and submit your application 1 week before the deadline so you don't feel extra pressure.

**Our students begin early and finish early! We customize an ideal timeline for each student to lessen the stress of deadlines in the application process.**

**Which deadline is right for you?**  
**We can help you decide!**

### FILL OUT FINANCIAL AID DOCUMENTS

Financial aid forms like the FAFSA and CSS Profile open in October. Each college has its own financial aid timeline, so fill out these forms early so you don't miss any deadlines!

*(Note: the FAFSA opening date is temporarily changing to December 2023.)*

# 12TH GRADE

## SPRING

### APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Once your college applications have been submitted, follow each college's policy for applying for institutional scholarships. You can also use this time to apply to outside scholarships, but confirm each college's policy for accepting outside scholarships. It could impact your financial aid package!

[Learn more about scholarships through our Scholarship 101 series!](#)

### CHECK YOUR EMAIL & PORTALS

Colleges will reach out by email if they need to communicate with you! They may also post updates in your admissions portal, which you will set up after applying. If a college requests information from you, respond promptly!

Even if you've been admitted, keep checking your email and portals. Colleges will send updates like how to apply for housing or information about freshman orientation. You don't want to miss these important communications!

## SPRING, continued

### COMPARE YOUR ACCEPTANCES

Once you have all of your acceptances and financial aid packages, sit down and look over your options. Remember why you applied to each school in the first place and consider which school is your best academic, social, and financial fit.

### MAY 1: DECISION DAY

It's finally here! Make sure you have accepted your acceptance and submitted an enrollment deposit to the college of your choice. Even if you are still on another school's waitlist, you need to reserve your spot at a college you would be excited to attend.

### FINISH SENIOR YEAR STRONG

You will need to submit your final transcript to the college you are attending to show you are still in good academic standing. Some of your coursework or exam scores may also be eligible for college credit, so keep up your hard work! No Senioritis!



**WE SUPPORT FAMILIES WITH**

**COLLEGE APPLICATION SUPPORT**

**ESSAY WORKSHOPS & GUIDANCE**

**BALANCED COLLEGE LIST BUILDING**

**FINANCIAL AID ESTIMATES**

**HIGH SCHOOL COURSE PLANNING**

**INTENTIONAL GOAL SETTING**

**PERSONALITY & APTITUDE ASSESSMENTS**

**& MORE!**

**WANT TO LEARN HOW WE  
CAN HELP YOUR FAMILY?**

**SCHEDULE A  
CONSULTATION**