

A College Planning Timeline for 9th & 10th Grade Students

Freshman Year of High School

- *Create a four-year plan. Make sure you know what courses are required by colleges and map out when you will take those courses. Familiarize yourself with honors and AP courses that your school offers and plan to take as many as possible.
- *Start thinking about careers. Even if it changes, it is always good to have a career goal. Take interest and career inventories every year in order to have an idea about what you really are passionate about.
- *Investigate and participate in extracurricular activities. Having many interests is fine, but colleges are equally impressed with real involvement in just one activity. If sports are your thing, research the NCAA requirements for participation. If you wait until your last two years of high school, it may be too late!
- *Utilize your school's guidance department. Counselors can help you get the most out of high school. Parents should be included in these meetings, too.
- *Save for college. It's never too early or too late to start saving for college. Investigate state financial aid programs and 529 plans.
- *Obtain a social security number if you don't already have one. This is often required for applications, testing, scholarships, and other opportunities.

Sophomore Year of High School

- *Continue meeting with the school counselor. Make sure you are enrolling in as many college preparatory classes and their prerequisites as possible.
- *Take the PSAT and the PLAN, the prep exams for the SAT and ACT.
- *Attend college and career fairs. Ask your counselor when and where they are.
- *Continue participation in school and community activities.
- *Tour college campuses. You can do this on football weekends, family vacations, school holidays, etc. Even if you are not interested in a particular school, visiting a campus can still give you a feel for what college life is like.