



## College Planning Timeline

### GRADES 8-12

---

#### 7-8th Grade

##### Exploration

- Talk to friends and family about careers and possible school choices.

##### Academic Planning

- Consult with your middle and high school counselors to find out which courses you should take that will qualify you to attend certain colleges and/or enter certain career fields.

##### Financial Planning

- Discuss your financial situation with your parents to see how they can assist you in paying for your education. Work together to establish a savings plan in which you can participate.
- Learn about financial aid from your school counselor.

##### Involvement

- Join and participate in clubs, organizations, volunteering opportunities
- 

#### 9th Grade

##### Academic Planning

- Build a flexible schedule allowing for study time, extracurricular activities, and your other interests. Use a day planner, calendar or electronic organizer to help you get organized.
- Make a four-year schedule of classes that increases your eligibility to attend the college of your choice.

##### Involvement

- Start developing a resume by keeping a scrapbook of your accomplishments including articles about yourself, awards that you have won, and activities in which you have participated.

- Find out about summer jobs and how to gain the skills necessary to obtain one. Look into volunteer opportunities that will expand your experience and skills.

#### **Exploration**

- Take your parents with you to talk to your counselor about your interests, postsecondary possibilities and career information.
  - If you plan to pursue athletics while in college, check out the NCAA requirements.
- 

## **10th Grade**

#### **Exploration**

- Visit your school counselor or college counseling office and explore college catalogs, websites, and other college materials including financial aid information.

#### **Academic Planning**

- Reevaluate your high school course selection to make sure it meets college requirements.
  - Try to complete most of your academic requirements by your junior year.
- 

## **11th Grade**

### ***FALL (August through December)***

#### ***Key Milestone***

- Take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) and/or the PLAN (Preliminary ACT) in October to prepare you for college entrance exams. The PSAT may qualify you for certain scholarships.

#### **Exploration**

- Attend sessions with college representatives who visit your high school. You may find it helpful to visit local college fairs.
- Develop a list of possible postsecondary schools. Your counseling office and/or school library may have books and materials to help you. **The internet will be your friend in this process.**

#### **Financial Planning**

- Talk with an admissions counselor to determine if there are any institutional scholarships for which you could apply.

- Begin researching private sources of financial aid. Many community foundations, civil and fraternal organizations offer scholarships for postsecondary education, but you need to **apply** for them. Also, check online through **fastweb.com** and other scholarship resources.

## **SPRING (January through May)**

### **Key Milestone**

- **Take the SAT/ACT for the first time. Check with your intended college(s) about which test they prefer and what scores you need for admission and scholarship consideration. Begin narrowing your choices for postsecondary schools.**

### **Exploration**

- Schedule campus visits. If the colleges you are interested in offer them, consider an overnight trip that would allow for you to get a feel for what life is like on that particular campus.

### **Financial Planning**

- Now is the time to check with your counselor, libraries, community organizations, and Student Outreach Services for the names and addresses of possible scholarship sources. Send for applications as soon as possible. Keep records of anyone you speak with concerning grants or scholarships.

### **Visual & Performing Arts**

- Start developing portfolios, audition videos, writing samples, or other evidence of talents required for college admission and/or for scholarships.

### **Athletics**

- If you plan to play sports in college, email college coaches at your target schools. Include a schedule of your athletic events for the upcoming year. Register with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse.
- Develop a resume of your sports accomplishments including a highlight video and relevant articles about your successes.

## **SUMMER ENTERING SENIOR YEAR (most important time of college entrance preparation)**

### **Action Items**

- Practice writing online applications without submitting them. Then, ask others to proof your applications, *especially the essay*, for any grammar, content or punctuation errors.
- Read all college mail and send reply cards back to schools of interest.

- Apply for any scholarships that have deadlines in the fall. You may be too busy once school starts.
- 

## 12th Grade

### *FALL (August through December)*

#### **Academic Planning**

- Make sure you continue to meet high school graduation and college admission requirements.

#### **Financial Planning**

- Apply for financial aid by completing and submitting your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after **October 1** as possible. The FAFSA is available online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Ask for assistance through college Financial Aid Offices.
- The information you receive back after the FAFSA is processed is the Student Aid Report (SAR). If any portion of the information on the SAR is incorrect, please correct it and resubmit it to the processing center.
- Submit any additional financial aid forms and documentation that is required by the school of your choice, including if you have been selected for Verification. Some of these forms may be available online, including the FAFSA and some admission applications.

#### **Academic Planning**

##### **Action Items**

- Register for the Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if needed.
- Meet with visiting admissions representatives from the schools that interest you.
- Arrange visits to schools you are considering and schedule admissions interviews, if required.
- Make the final preparation of your portfolios, audition videos, writing samples, or other evidence of talent required for admission and/or for scholarships. Finalize your resume to send with your applications.
- Take or retake the ACT or SAT.
- Keep records of everything you submit.
- Identify at least two of the following to write solid recommendation forms for you: a teacher, an extracurricular advisor, a counselor, a principal, or an employer. Give the recommendation forms to teachers, counselors, etc. at least one month before they are due. Follow up on the progress of these recommendations.

- **Submit your college admissions applications. Watch out for deadlines!**

### **Financial Planning**

- Talk with your parents about what type of budget you'll be on your freshman year.

### **Athletics**

- If seeking athletic scholarships (Division I & II schools only), contact the coaches from the schools you are considering and include a resume of your accomplishments.

## ***SPRING (January through May)***

### **Action Items**

- Call the schools you have applied to and confirm that they have received your admissions applications materials, including letters of recommendation and housing applications.
- Request that your high school send a copy of your transcript to the school where you have applied. Make sure your first semester senior year grades are included on the transcript.
- Notify the school(s) in writing by the proper deadline as to whether you are accepting or declining admission.
- Review your financial aid award letter with your parents and be sure that you understand the terms and conditions that accompany each kind of aid.
- Notify the financial aid office of any outside scholarships or grants that you have accepted since your initial application.
- Be aware of due dates for tuition, fees, room and board, and other expenses. Find out how your financial aid will be disbursed and whether you can defer payments until the funds are available.
- Respond immediately to all correspondence regarding school, scholarships, and financial aid.
- Participate in summer orientation programs for incoming freshman after graduation to ensure you are prepared for entering your first semester and have completed all necessary steps at your college.

### **Pre-College Outreach**

601 Maytum Hall  
716-673-4969