



Extraordinary Education. Timeless Traditions. Inspired Lives.

Denver JDS College Counseling - Four-Year Road Map

Grade 9 - Freshman Year

During this first year of high school, take time to adjust to the new experience, have fun and make friends. Strive to be the best *you* that you can be.

- Establish strong study skills and good time management. Find a system that works for you, as these skills are key to succeeding in college.
- Get to know your teachers, college counselor, and deans – all members of your support team. Use Tiger Time to meet with teachers if you need additional help.
- Do your best in all your classes. Ninth grade is a foundational year; colleges will see your high school transcript beginning with these grades.
- Get involved and participate in school activities.
- Start thinking about community service that will count towards the 18 hours that are required each year.
- Think about your interests and how they might pertain to your future.
- If you are traveling during breaks or summer, stop by colleges in the area and see what you think.
- Keep a record of all summer and school extracurricular activities and community involvement.
- Consider summer options – do something that you enjoy, that is productive. Read. Maybe find an interesting summer job, an internship, travel, or another meaningful experience. *What you do is not as important as what you get out of the experience.*
- Have a family discussion about college ambitions and expectations – both yours and your parents. Talk about how paying for college is going to work.

Grade 10 - Sophomore Year

With one year of high school under your belt, you're starting to hit your stride. This year, maintain strong study habits, continue to work hard, learn, and do the best you can in your classes every day.

- Pursue the extracurricular activities that you know and enjoy, or try something new. Consider a leadership role — and remember, leadership can take many different forms.
- Take the PSAT in October at DJDS. It's just practice. Review mail or email you receive after taking the test. Keep what's interesting; recycle or delete the rest.

- Select courses that are appropriately challenging. Push yourself, but also know your limits. Consult your teachers, advisor, college counselor, and deans.
- Pay attention to the college counseling bulletin board and watch for pre-college summer programming designed for sophomores.
- Attend a college fair, and in the spring attend the DJDS Jumpstart to College evening information program.
- If you are on a family vacation or trip, visit one or two college campuses to get a feel for how different schools can be from one another. Or plan a day trip to visit an in-state college. We are fortunate to have so many different types of schools in Colorado, including CU, CSU, University of Northern Colorado, Colorado School of Mines, Colorado College, University of Denver, etc. Consider their size, location, campus feel, and programs.
- Continue working on your community service and think about identifying your primary service organization.
- Keep making good use of your summers and be intentional with your plans.
- Take as much rigor with honors or AP classes as is appropriate for you as a learner. Select courses that are appropriately challenging. Push yourself, but also know your limits. Consult your teachers, advisors, college counselor, and deans.

Grade 11 - Junior Year

This is an exciting year: hit the ground running academically. This is the last full year of courses/grades that colleges will see.

Year Round:

- Continue to work hard in the classroom and to pursue your favorite extracurricular activities.
- Continue using Tiger Time to meet individually with teachers as needed; use all of the resources that DJDS offers.
- Consider leadership opportunities, and remember that leadership can take many forms.
- Explore a variety of college options – be open to possibility.
- Assume responsibility for the process, which takes *time, energy, and research*.
- Attend all College Counseling advisory sessions. Take full advantage of DJDS's individualized and focused college counseling program.
- Use non-school days in the fall, spring break, and summer to visit colleges. Schedule ahead of time to make the most of your visit. Follow up with brief emails specifically highlighting why the college is a good fit for you and why you are a good fit for the college.

Fall

- Take the PSAT in October at DJDS. It's practice, and it is also the National Merit Scholarship qualifying test. The top 1% of test takers in Colorado are designated as semi-finalists.
- Attend college representative visits to DJDS for the schools you might be interested in, during lunch or Tiger Time.
- Attend a fall college fair.

Spring

- Attend DJDS's College Information Night mid-second semester.
- Continue to attend College Counseling advisory sessions which cover an array of topics related to the college search including Common App, making the most of college visits, interviews and creating your high school resume/activities list.
- Meet individually with the DJDS college counselor. First, students only, then parents and students.
- Review testing recommendations, which include taking the SAT and/or ACT at least once this semester. Take appropriate SAT Subject Tests (consult with teachers/counselors) and AP tests.
- Think about the teachers you want to ask to write recommendations.
- Build a preliminary list of colleges, with the assistance of the DJDS college counselor.
- Take as much rigor with honors or AP classes as is appropriate for you as a learner.
- Consider taking SAT Subject Tests in June. Many of the most competitive colleges require these tests, and taking them at the end of the school year is advantageous in many subject areas. Consult the admission web pages of some of the colleges you are considering applying to in order to determine their requirements.
- Write a draft college essay in your English class.
- Plan your summer activities to include community service, internships, work, or other meaningful experiences.

Grade 12 - Senior Year

Senior year counts, so keep your grades up! This is the final semester colleges will see, and they expect that you are working hard. Continue to be the best YOU that you can be. Remember that you are being evaluated through many lenses by college admissions officers based on your unique application, and you are not competing with your DJDS classmates.

- Return to school with a few key items:
 1. Preliminary applications
 2. Working draft of a college essay
 3. A college list of schools to which you plan to apply
 4. Updated high school resume/activities list
 5. Know which schools on your list conduct interviews and schedule those
- Meet individually with DJDS college counselor to finalize a smart and balanced college list.
- Talk to two teachers to request that they write recommendations for you.
- Take additional SAT, ACT or SAT Subject tests as needed.
- Attend all College Counseling meetings which cover DJDS procedures for submitting all college applications.
- Attend college representative visits at DJDS for the schools you will be applying to, and college admissions meetings in the community for those not visiting DJDS.
- Apply to college, continuing to fully utilize DJDS's individualized college counseling program to assist during this process.
- Apply for need-based and/or merit-based scholarships.
- Choose a college by May 1st: National Decision Day.
- GRADUATE - Mazel Tov!