

# Planning Timelines and Checklists

## Freshman Year

When you first begin high school, graduation may seem like a distant goal. However, in a few short years, you may be applying to college(s) or going into the workforce! The grades you earn in freshman year influence your options in your senior year. You do not want to look back on your freshman year grades and wish you had done better. If you find yourself struggling, seek out help early on by asking your teacher for extra help, seeking out tutoring options, or utilizing other free community resources. Do not wait until you are too far behind to catch up!

Make sure you talk to your counselor about the different diploma tracks and courses available to you. If you are working towards the Academic Honors Diploma or Technical Honors Diploma, make sure you check out the requirements for these diplomas as they have additional requirements beyond the Core 40 diploma. If there is a specific career you are interested in, make sure you are checking to see if CPHS offers any courses that may be beneficial.

When you begin to think about scheduling classes for your sophomore year, keep in mind that colleges look at the classes you choose to take. You should take a rigorous curriculum that includes courses that both interest and challenge you. It is very easy to bring your GPA down, but it is not easy to bring it back up.

Most students change their mind about their career paths at least once or twice during the course of high school, so it's important that you stay knowledgeable about what career you are interested in and which courses would be most beneficial for you to take.

# Freshman Year Checklist

## August

- \_\_\_ Double check your schedule-does it coincide with your post-secondary plans?
- \_\_\_ Sign up for extracurricular activities that interest you

## September

- \_\_\_ Study hard! Freshman semester grades will be included in your final high school GPA.
- \_\_\_ Start a resume.
- \_\_\_ Attend the CPHS College and Career Fair. Pick up information and speak with college, workforce and military representatives to learn about your options.

## October

- \_\_\_ Explore your career and/or college interests. Talk with both your parents and your school counselor so that everyone is on the same page.
- \_\_\_ Take the PSAT

## November

- \_\_\_ If you find a summer program of interest, start the application process next month.

## December - January

- \_\_\_ Study for your final exams!
- \_\_\_ Start off your second semester on the right foot

## February

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Work on your 10th grade schedule with your counselor.
- \_\_\_ Register for any applicable AP tests.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ If you want to play collegiate sports, take the steps necessary to increase your eligibility and to market your athletic abilities.

## March - April

- \_\_\_ Think about job shadowing over spring break!
- \_\_\_ If the organizations and clubs you are involved with hold elections for next year's leadership positions, think about running for office.
- \_\_\_ If you're interested in attending a military academy after high school graduation, request information to learn about their admission requirements.

## May

- \_\_\_ Study for your final exams!
- \_\_\_ Take AP test(s).
- \_\_\_ Go over your schedule one last time to ensure you're preparing for your post-secondary goals.

## June - July

- \_\_\_ Be active this summer: Work a job, volunteer, or attend a college summer program.

## Sophomore Year

In your sophomore year, you should continue to take challenging courses, as well as courses that interest you. If you are not satisfied with your grades from freshman year, it is important to try to improve this year and continue improving in the next two years. Now is not the time to get careless or lazy about your grades. Make sure you work hard to give yourself the best chances for college admissions or employment opportunities.

This year, you will take the PSAT in the fall. In previous years, the state of Indiana has paid for all sophomores to take the PSAT during the school day in October, so take advantage of this opportunity if it is afforded again.

When you begin to think about scheduling classes for your junior year, remember to choose courses that both challenge and interest you. You should generally take as much math, English, science and social studies classes as you can. Continue researching careers that interest you this year, as well, so you can make adjustments to your schedule if necessary. Researching careers can help you decide which classes will be best for you to take. Taking a Career Interest Inventory can help you figure out which careers may be a good match for you, and you can research those careers in Naviance (accessible through your RDS Student Account). You can learn how much education you may need for any given occupation, specialized training, and what a “day in the life” of someone who does that job is like.

Along with college and career goals, you should also keep in mind the diploma you are working towards when planning for junior year. Make sure you are meeting or will meet the requirements for the diploma you want by the end of your high school career when you are scheduling your junior schedule. If you are working towards the Academic Honors Diploma or Technical Honors Diploma, make sure you check out the extra requirements for these diplomas.

# Sophomore Year Checklist

## August

- \_\_\_ Double check your schedule-does it coincide with your post-secondary plans?
- \_\_\_ Update your resume.

## September

- \_\_\_ Focus your extracurricular interests on activities you are passionate about.
- \_\_\_ Take a Career Interest Inventory in Naviance.
- \_\_\_ Attend the CPHS College and Career Fair.

## October

- \_\_\_ Take the PSAT.

## November

- \_\_\_ Research college summer programs. If you find a summer program of interest, look into the application process.

## December - January

- \_\_\_ Review the results of the PSAT to identify areas of academic weakness and strengths.
- \_\_\_ Study for your final exams!
- \_\_\_ Study hard this spring semester!

## February

- \_\_\_ Work on your junior year schedule with your counselor
- \_\_\_ Register to take any applicable AP tests.
- \_\_\_ If you want to play collegiate sports, take the steps necessary to increase your eligibility and to market your athletic abilities.

## March

- \_\_\_ Update your career goals and interests.
- \_\_\_ Think about job shadowing over Spring Break!

## April

- \_\_\_ If you're interested in attending a military academy after high school graduation, continue working on their admission requirements.
- \_\_\_ Continue to study hard!

## May

- \_\_\_ Take AP tests.
- \_\_\_ Study for your final exams!
- \_\_\_ Update your resume.
- \_\_\_ Double check your schedule to ensure it coincides with your post-secondary plans.

## June - July

- \_\_\_ Visit a few college campuses this summer.

## Junior Year

Your junior year will be a challenging one. Make sure you review your courses and activities to give yourself the best chance of getting into your chosen college or ensure you are taking courses that can help in your chosen career path. While your grades from all of four years of high school show up on your transcripts, keep in mind that colleges will also be looking to see what courses you have taken most recently (your junior year grades). You want to make sure your grades are a good representation of the type of student you are.

This year, you will take the PSAT again in the fall, and SAT in the spring. In order to be considered as a National Merit Scholar, you need to take the PSAT in your junior year. Standardized tests for this year include SAT and/or ACT. All juniors at CPHS will take the SAT in the spring during the school day. Students may also choose to retake the SAT or take the ACT on any of the Saturday national test dates. Students register for these additional exams at [www.collegeboard.org/sat](http://www.collegeboard.org/sat) and/or [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). When you are signing up for SAT/ACT, you can request your scores be sent up to 4 colleges for free the first time. Any additional requests will incur a fee, and any test scores you send should be sent directly from College Board and/or ACT. Some juniors may also need to take the ASVAB if they have not yet met a Graduation Pathway, or are simply interested in taking it.

To help yourself do well on the SAT and/or ACT, you may choose to take an outside prep course to help prepare. Utilize free resources offered to prep you for these exams, like those found at [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org). Once you have taken the ACT and/or SAT tests, you will get a score report in the mail that will tell you where your strengths and weaknesses lie. There will be a code on the score report that you can enter onto [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and/or [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) that will give you an idea of areas you can work to improve upon.

College representatives come to visit with any interested students during the school year. Sign up for these visits in Naviance so that you can meet with representatives and ask any pertinent questions you may have about your transcript, your courses, the college, majors, etc. You may want to take things a step further and go on college visits during your junior year so that you can see the campus, dorms, and get a real “feel” for the college. Complete the necessary steps for a pre-arranged absence with the Attendance office if you sign up to visit a campus during the school day. Continue researching schools and careers as your interests change.

You should also keep the diploma you are working towards in mind when selecting your senior schedule. Make sure you are meeting or will meet the requirements for the diploma you want by the end of your high school career. If you are working towards an Academic Honors or Technical Honors Diploma, make sure you check out the extra requirements they require! Common requirements students forget for Academic Honors Diploma? 3.0 GPA, no D's, World Language, Fine Arts credits, AP/Dual Credit requirements. Be sure YOU double and triple check to make sure you have everything you need for your diploma!

Make sure you clean up your social media accounts. Deleting questionable tweets or posts can help save you from a college rejection or issues during the job search process.

# Junior Year Checklist

## August

- Double check your schedule-does it coincide with your post-secondary plans?
- Update your resume.
- Join school clubs and organizations that interest you if you haven't already.

## September

- Start to think about colleges and universities you may want to apply to next fall or careers you may want to pursue.
- Attend the CPHS College and Career Fair.
- Consider college majors you may wish to study.
- Register for PSAT/NMSQT in October.
- Visit with college representatives who come to CPHS.

## October

- Take the PSAT

## November

- Talk to your family about your financial situation and how this pertains to your goals.

## December - January

- Review the results of the PSAT/NMSQT to identify areas of academic weakness and strengths.
- Study for your final exams!
- Do your best this semester - this is the last semester to earn excellent grades before applying to college next fall.
- Update your resume.

## February

- Plan your senior year classes with your counselor.
- Register to take applicable AP tests.

## March

- Start visiting any colleges of interest to you.
- Start thinking about Pre-College Camps and summer opportunities.
- Narrow down your career choices after researching

## April

- Develop a list of colleges that interest you.
- Take the SAT

## May

- Take AP tests.
- Sign up for the College Application Seminar this summer at CPHS.
- If you want to play collegiate sports, take the steps necessary to increase your eligibility and to market your athletic abilities.
- Start to compile a list of people you can ask to write letters of recommendation.
- Study for your final exams!
- Think about lining up a summer job or internship.

## June - July

- Clean-up any questionable personal information you and your friends have posted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. Many colleges and universities review information and photographs posted by student applicants (and their friends) to see the personal side of students.

## Senior Year

Congratulations! You've made it to your senior year! While this is a time for celebrating that you've come this far, remember that you still have one more year to go before you finish your high school career. Don't make the mistake of thinking, "This is my senior year, give me all the easy classes!" You do not want to ruin all of your hard work in the last semester(s) of high school!

Right before your senior year starts, you are officially a senior and can start sending out college applications (usually around August 1)! Keep in mind that there will most likely be an application fee associated with whichever college(s) you are applying to. Application fees can range from \$25 to upwards of \$100 just to apply. Try to narrow down your school choices to a manageable number and save yourself (and/or your family) some money. After your applications are submitted, make sure to request that your high school transcript is sent to each of those colleges through Naviance. Ideally, you want to have all of your applications sent out by November 1 for maximum scholarship and program consideration.

Students may choose to retake the SAT or take the ACT on any of the Saturday national test dates. Students register for these additional exams at [www.collegeboard.org/sat](http://www.collegeboard.org/sat) and/or [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). Your test scores should be sent via College Board and/or ACT. When you are signing up for SAT/ACT, you can request your scores be sent up to 4 colleges for free the first time you take a test. If you have already sent scores to a college, the next time you send your scores, there will be a fee incurred.

Worried about paying for college? Make sure you apply for financial aid through FAFSA in October. The results of the FAFSA will determine your eligibility for grants and low-interest Federal Stafford and/or Parent PLUS loans, provided you meet certain criteria. If you need assistance completing your FAFSA, plan to attend College Goal Sunday in November or February. This is a free event hosted at locations across the state of Indiana where financial aid experts will be on hand to answer your questions. In addition to applying for FAFSA, make sure you apply for local community and national scholarships.

If you are still undecided on where you want to go, college representatives will continue to visit with any interested students at CPHS. Make sure to sign up for these visits in Naviance so that you can meet with the representatives and ask any pertinent questions you may have about your transcript, your courses, the college, majors, etc. You may want to take things a step further and go on college visits during your senior year so that you can see the campus, dorms, and get a real "feel" for the college. Continue researching schools and careers as your interests change.

Make sure you clean up your social media accounts. Deleting questionable tweets or posts can help save you from a college rejection or issues during the job search process.

Last, but not least, while we want you to be serious about your grades and your studies, we also want you to enjoy your high school experience! Go to the prom, cheer on your classmates at an athletic game, join a club, see one of our theatrical performances.. High school is about getting your study habits down and getting good grades to get into college, but it's also about making memories to last a lifetime!

# Senior Year Checklist

## August

- \_\_\_ Double check your schedule-does it coincide with your post-secondary plans?
- \_\_\_ Complete college essay(s).
- \_\_\_ Search and select colleges and universities to apply to this fall.
- \_\_\_ Narrow your college list down and start applying.
- \_\_\_ If you're applying for a job, make sure you double check all requirements for the application.
- \_\_\_ Update your resume.
- \_\_\_ Student athletes should make sure they are discussing their plans with their coach(es) and school counselor.

## September

- \_\_\_ Plan to attend the CPHS College and Career Fair.
- \_\_\_ Continue applying to colleges and/or any jobs you are interested in.
- \_\_\_ Check out scholarships in Naviance - Apply!
- \_\_\_ Finalize your list of teachers, counselors, coaches, employers, or other adults you will ask for letters of recommendation.
- \_\_\_ Complete your resume.
- \_\_\_ Participate in community service. Remember, this is a graduation requirement!
- \_\_\_ Learn about the FAFSA process:  
[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

## October

- \_\_\_ Sign up for SAT/ACT again if you need to retake them.
- \_\_\_ Finalize your Early Action/Early Decision applications, if applicable.
- \_\_\_ Begin working on your FAFSA.
- \_\_\_ Your college and/or career applications should be in full swing!!
- \_\_\_ Keep your grades up.
- \_\_\_ Be sure to send your ACT and SAT scores to colleges.

## November

- \_\_\_ Submit all college applications and supplemental application forms online; the deadline for most college Early Action applications is October 15 or November 1.
- \_\_\_ Send transcripts to colleges via Naviance.
- \_\_\_ Sign up for SAT/ACT if you still need to retake them-send your scores directly to your college/university.
- \_\_\_ Notify Mrs. Sandor in the guidance office once you have your post-secondary plans solidified. College, Career, or Military, we'll put your status on our Wall of Fame!  
lsandor@cps.k12.in.us

## December - January

- \_\_\_ Make sure applications have been received by your colleges. If you haven't received confirmation, CALL EACH ADMISSIONS OFFICE to verify all application materials have been received.
- \_\_\_ If you are deferred for admission by your top choice college and really want to attend that school, contact the college admissions office within a few days of being notified of your deferral.
- \_\_\_ Study for your final exams!
- \_\_\_ Be sure to double check Regular Admission deadlines!
- \_\_\_ Request mid-year transcripts be sent to schools if requested by your college.
- \_\_\_ Additional financial aid and scholarship applications may be required by your schools. Check with your colleges and universities regarding "institution specific" (special) financial aid forms.
- \_\_\_ Keep up your grades this final semester of high school.



## February

- \_\_\_ Make any needed corrections to the FAFSA based on your parents' Federal tax returns.
- \_\_\_ Deferred/Waitlisted? Write a brief letter to the college admissions officer handling your file highlighting all achievements and activities since your original application was submitted.
- \_\_\_ Continue watching for announcements in Naviance of local and regional scholarships. Apply!!!
- \_\_\_ Mail all supplemental financial aid documents requested by your colleges.
- \_\_\_ Review acceptances and compare financial aid packages.
- \_\_\_ Make sure you are on track to meet your graduation requirements!
- \_\_\_ Notify Mrs. Sandor in the guidance office once you have your post-secondary plans solidified. College, Career, or Military, we'll put your status on our Wall of Fame!  
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## March

- \_\_\_ Show up and participate! Good grades and good behavior are important until the last day of high school.

## April

- \_\_\_ Make sure you are on track to meet your graduation requirements!

## May

- \_\_\_ Take AP tests.
- \_\_\_ Accept financial aid awards offered by the college you will attend.
- \_\_\_ Send an email to colleges that you will not be attending to let them know your plans.
- \_\_\_ Submit enrollment deposit and register for orientation at the college you will be attending.
- \_\_\_ Write thank you notes to those who wrote you letters of recommendation.
- \_\_\_ Study for your final exams!
- \_\_\_ Keep focused on academics. If your final semester grades drop significantly, your college has the right to place you on academic probation or revoke its offer of admission.
- \_\_\_ Request final transcripts to be sent.
- \_\_\_ Fill out the Post Secondary Plan Survey in Naviance so that we know what you're doing after high school..
- \_\_\_ Think about getting a summer job to save some money!
- \_\_\_ If you're interviewing for a job, practice your interviewing skills. Dress to impress