



THE FRESHMAN'S GUIDE TO PLANNING FOR COLLEGE

FOR STUDENTS

At School

- **Get to know your guidance counselor** right from the beginning so that she can get to know you early in your high school career.
- **Focus on grades.** These will be the first of your grades that count towards college admissions.
- **Improve study habits.** This year will undoubtedly be more challenging study skills, and don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it!
- **Choose your classes wisely.** Take the core classes, and either continue your middle school foreign language classes, or begin a new foreign language track. Round out your schedule with classes in the arts or computer science.

After School

- **Get involved in extracurriculars,** especially those with leadership potential. Colleges will be interested in your clubs, sports, volunteer work, etc. Don't join every club, but do look for activities you're passionate about.
- **Make the summer count** towards your college application. Consider getting a summer job, volunteering, or attending an academic camp.

College Prep

- **Take standardized tests** when applicable. If you take a course covered by an SAT Subject Test, consider taking the test at the end of the semester. You can choose not to submit any low scores to colleges.
- **Visit local colleges** if there are any in your area. Take a campus tour to get a feel for what you might be interested in when it's time to apply.
- **Start saving** for those tuition fees! Use FAFSA4caster to estimate your eligibility for federal student aid.
- **Start a "Best Of" list** of awards, activities, honors, work (paid and volunteer) to update throughout high school so you'll be prepared for college applications.

FOR PARENTS

- Encourage your student to stretch himself and take some more difficult classes. His first year of high school will almost definitely be tougher than those middle school years, so remind him to get all the help they need!
- It's not too early to meet with your student's counselor. Get his perspective on your student's course load, college preparations, and adjustments to high school life.
- Talk with your student about college and career goals. Stay involved in her plans and be a sounding board for her ideas, concerns, and desires.
- Start saving for college tuition and expenses early! Also, keep an eye out for any scholarship opportunities for your student.