

Year-by-Year Planning Guide

The 9th and 10th Grades

- Sharpen your organizational skills by developing a system to keep track of assignments, tests, events and appointments.
- Time management and organization are key to succeeding in college.
- Meet with your guidance counselor early and determine the courses that will best prepare you for College.
- Map out a core curriculum that will allow you to meet college entrance requirements.
- Take as much rigor with accelerated, honors, or advanced classes as you can in areas that are of Interest to you.
- Spend time volunteering; get involved with clubs that develop leadership skills. Colleges are looking for more than test scores – they’re looking for well-rounded students who show character.
- Keep a log of your activities, awards and accomplishments. You’ll want to have this information in one Place when it’s time to start filling out college applications.
- Start talking with your family about financing your college tuition; create a financial plan together. Also, start researching potential scholarships and grants.
- Check with ACT and SAT (College Board) to see what practice tests are available in your area.

The 11th Grade

- Continue challenging yourself with advanced placement classes whenever applicable. Top schools often look at this as part of your overall application.
- Start putting together your list of preferred schools. Research their websites, check out their publications and see if they’re in line with your list of priorities.
- Attend a college fair, or two, and find out from your guidance counselor when representatives from the universities you’re interested in will be visiting your school.
- Find out which standardized tests are required by the schools you’re interested in, and then in the spring semester take the SAT with writing, ACT with the writing component, or both.
- In the spring and summer before your senior year, start visiting the colleges that interest you.
- If you are considering a career in design, start organizing a portfolio of your creative work.

The 12th Grade

- Keep those grades up.
- Once you’ve done your best on the SAT and/or ACT, have the results sent to your chosen schools.
- Apply to several schools. Remember to categorize your schools of choice; apply to your “dream” schools, but also apply to a few others that meet your qualifications.
- Send in your applications as early as possible. Include all the materials that are requested. Fee waivers are available for those in need.
- If you’re applying for financial aid, submit your application early for best consideration. Submit the FAFSA (available October 1) for consideration for all federal grants, loans, and work-study.