



**Parent Action Plans:  
Helping Your Child  
Navigate High School While  
Preparing for College**

# Parent Action Plan: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

The beginning of High School is an exciting time. Your child is adjusting to a new school, making new friends, and becoming more independent. But your child still needs your help and involvement. Here are some things you can do together to succeed this year.

## Summer before High School

- Visit a college campus together. It's a great way to get your child excited about college. Learn more about how you and your child can prepare for a campus visit.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself/6-steps-to-get-the-most-out-of-a-campus-visit>
- Get the facts about what college costs. You may be surprised at how affordable higher education can be. Start by reading Understanding College Costs.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/understanding-college-costs>

## Fall

- Help your child set goals for the school year. Working toward specific goals helps your child stay motivated and focused.
- Meet your child's teachers and learn about their expectations in the classroom.
- Make a plan to check in regularly about schoolwork. If you keep up with your child's tests, papers, and homework assignments, you can celebrate successes and head off problems as a team. Get homework tips for your child with the link below!
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/take-control-of-homework>
- Talk about extracurricular activities. Getting involved in clubs and other groups is a great way for your child to identify their interests and feel more engaged in school. Read more about the benefits of extracurricular activities in High School.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/outside-the-classroom/extracurriculars-matter-to-you-and-to-colleges>
- Encourage your child to do their best on the PSAT. This is a practice test for Freshmen to help them prepare to take the SAT in their Junior year.

## Winter

- Talk with your child about their appointment with their School Counselor. These appointments usually take place in January and February. Their Counselor will schedule an individual appointment time to meet with them and discuss their academic goals and college plans. Your child's Counselor will also provide them with resources to help them navigate High School and plan for college. Learn more about the high school counselor's role.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-a-support-network/working-with-your-high-school-counselor-for-college-success>
- Start thinking about financial aid. It's not too early to look into types of aid that could help you cover college costs. Start by reading 7 Things You Need to Know about Financial Aid.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/7-things-you-need-to-know-about-financial-aid>

## Spring

- Discuss next year's classes. Our course catalog is available in late March/ early April. An appointment will be scheduled with them to discuss their course requests at the end of the school year. Make sure your child is challenging him- or herself — and taking the courses college admission officers expect to see. Learn more about the high school classes that colleges look for.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/your-high-school-record/high-school-classes-colleges-look-for>
- Help your child start a college list. Visit College Search Step-by-Step together to get tips on starting a college search and figuring out what matters most to your child when choosing a college.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-to-find-your-college-fit/college-search-step-by-step>
- See how much you need to save for college. Use the College Savings Calculator to get an idea of where you are compared with your savings goal.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/paying-your-share/college-savings-calculator>
- Help your child make summer plans. Summer is a great time to explore interests and learn new skills — and colleges look for students who pursue meaningful summer activities. Find out ways your child can stay motivated this summer.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/outside-the-classroom/5-ways-to-stay-on-track-in-summer>

# Parent Action Plan: 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

As your child settles into the High School experience, it's a great time for him or her to take on new challenges. It's also not too early to explore colleges, college majors, and career goals. Use the list below to help make 10th grade count.

## Summer Before 10th Grade

- Visit a college campus together. It's a great way to get your 10th-grader excited about college. Learn more about how you and your child can prepare for a campus visit.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself/6-steps-to-get-the-most-out-of-a-campus-visit>
- Get the facts about what college costs. You may be surprised at how affordable higher education can be. Start by reading Understanding College Costs.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/understanding-college-costs>
- Help your sophomore explore career ideas. He or she can make a list of interests, talents, and favorite activities and start matching them with occupations. Snyder students may do this through their Naviance account.

## Fall

- Encourage your child to set goals for the school year. Working toward specific goals helps your High School student stay motivated and focused.
- Make a plan to check in regularly about schoolwork. If you keep up with your child's tests, papers, and homework assignments, you can celebrate successes and head off problems as a team. Plan to meet with your child's teacher if concerns arise.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/take-control-of-homework>
- Talk about extracurricular activities. Getting involved in clubs and other groups is a great way for your child to identify interests and feel more engaged in school. Read more about the benefits of extracurricular activities in High School.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/outside-the-classroom/extracurriculars-matter-to-you-and-to-colleges>
- Help your 10th-grader get ready to take the PSAT/NMSQT. All 10th graders at Snyder will take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall. Taking this test can help your child prepare for the SAT and get on track for college. Sophomores can also use their score reports to figure out which academic areas they need to work on.

## Winter

- Start thinking about ways to pay for college. Most families get help paying for college costs. Read 7 Things You Need to Know about Financial Aid to learn more.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/7-things-you-need-to-know-about-financial-aid>

## Spring

- Talk with your child about their appointment with their School Counselor. These appointments usually take place in March and April. Their Counselor will schedule an individual appointment time to meet with them and discuss their academic goals and college plans. Your child's Counselor will also provide them with resources to help them navigate High School and plan for college. Learn more about the high school counselor's role.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-a-support-network/working-with-your-high-school-counselor-for-college-success>
- Discuss next year's classes. Our course catalog is available in late March/ early April. An appointment will be scheduled with them to discuss their course requests at the end of the school year. Make sure your child is challenging him- or herself — and taking the courses college admission officers expect to see. Learn more about the high school classes that colleges look for.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/your-high-school-record/high-school-classes-colleges-look-for>
- Make a college wish list together. Talk with your 10th-grader about qualities he or she may want in a college in terms of location, size, majors offered, and so on. Check out How to Find a College That Fits You to learn more about deciding on college must-haves.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/paying-your-share/college-savings-calculator>
- Help your child make summer plans. Summer is a great time to explore interests and learn new skills — and colleges look for students who pursue meaningful summer activities. Find out five ways your upper school student can stay motivated this summer.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/outside-the-classroom/5-ways-to-stay-on-track-in-summer>

# Parent Action Plan: 11th Grade

Junior year usually marks a turning point. This is because for most students and families, it's when college planning activities kick into high gear. Here are some things you can do this year to support your child and give him or her the best options.

## Summer

- Get the facts about what college costs. You may be surprised by how affordable higher education can be. Start by reading Understanding College Costs.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/understanding-college-costs>
- Explore financial aid options. These include grants and scholarships, loans, and work-study programs that can help pay for college costs. Find out more about how financial aid can make college affordable.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/financial-aid-can-help-you-afford-college>

## Fall

- Talk with your child about their appointment with their School Counselor. These appointments usually take place in October through January. Their Counselor will schedule an individual appointment time to meet with them and discuss their academic goals and college plans. This meeting is especially important this year as your 11th-grader starts to engage in the college application process. Learn more about the counselor's role in applying to college.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/building-a-support-network/working-with-your-high-school-counselor-for-college-success>
- Help your child stay organized. Work with your 11th-grader to make weekly or monthly to-do lists to keep on top of the tasks required to get ready for applying to colleges. For more time-management tips, see 8 Ways to Take Control of Your Time.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/8-ways-to-take-control-of-your-time>
- Help your junior get ready for the PSAT/NMSQT in October. This is a preliminary test that helps students practice for the SAT and assess their academic skills. Juniors who score well on the test are also eligible for scholarship opportunities. Find out more about the PSAT/NMSQT.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/the-psat-nmsqt-and-psat-10>
- Encourage your child to set goals for the school year. Working toward specific goals helps your upper school student stay motivated and focused.

## Winter

- Review PSAT/NMSQT results together by logging in to the student score reporting portal. Your child's score report shows what they should work on to get ready for college. <https://studentscores.collegeboard.org/home>
- Help your child prepare for the ACT and the SAT. Many juniors take the SAT in the spring so they can get a head start on planning for college.

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/which-college-admission-tests-do-i-need-to-take>
- Discuss taking challenging courses next year. Taking honors courses or college-level courses like Advanced Placement as a senior can help your child prepare for college work — and these are also the courses that college admission officers like to see. As a reminder, Snyder does have a waiver policy for students who are not recommended for Honors level classes. Waivers are not accepted for AP courses.
  - <https://www.bishopsnyder.org/academics/academic-policies#HonorsCriteria>

### Spring

- Search together for colleges that meet your child’s needs. Once you have an idea of the qualities your child is looking for in a college, help him or her enter those criteria into College Search to create a list of those colleges. Students also have access to Naviance, which will help them research colleges and keep track of their interests.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
- Attend college fairs and financial aid events. These events allow you to meet with college representatives and get answers to questions. Your child can ask the school counselor how to find events in your area. Check out the College Fair Checklist for more information.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-to-find-your-college-fit/college-fair-checklist>
- Help your child make summer plans. Summer is a great time to explore interests and learn new skills — and colleges look for students who pursue meaningful summer activities. Help your upper school student look into summer learning programs or find a job or internship.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/summer-learning-programs-what-why-and-how>
- Visit colleges together. Make plans to check out the campuses of colleges your child is interested in. Use the Campus Visit Checklist to learn how to get the most out of these experiences.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-visit-guide/campus-visit-checklist>

# Parent Action Plan: 12th Grade

Senior year is a whirlwind of activities. This is a big year for your child as he or she balances schoolwork, extracurricular activities, and the college application process. Use the suggestions below to help you and your child successfully navigate this important time.

## Summer Before Senior Year

- Visit colleges together. If you haven't already, make plans to check out the campuses of colleges in which your child is interested. Use the Campus Visit Checklist to learn how to get the most out of these experiences.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-visit-guide/campus-visit-checklist>
- Ask how you can help your senior finalize a college list. You can help him or her choose which colleges to apply to by weighing how well each college meets his or her needs, for example. Find out more about how to finalize a college list.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/how-to-finalize-your-college-list-admissions-college-application>
- Encourage your child to get started on applications. He or she can get the easy stuff out of the way now by filling in as much required information on college applications as possible. Read about how to get started on applications.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-applications-how-to-begin-admissions>
- Help your child decide about applying early. If your senior is set on going to a certain college, he or she should think about whether applying early is a good option. Now is the time to decide because early applications are usually due in November. Read about the pros and cons of applying early.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/the-facts-about-applying-early-is-it-right-for-you>
- Gather financial documents: To apply for most financial aid, your child will need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You'll need your most recent tax returns and an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA.

## Fall

- Your child will meet with their School Counselor in August-October. This year, he or she will work with the counselor to complete and submit college applications, create a plan for applying to college, and discuss what is needed for them to apply. Students should have already taken the ACT and SAT or be scheduled to take it. They should also have their list of colleges narrowed down so they know which ones they're planning to apply to. Learn more about the counselor's role in applying to college.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/applying-to-college-your-counselors-role>



- Create a calendar with your child. This should include application deadlines and other important dates. Your child can find specific colleges' deadlines in College Search or on their Naviance account. If your child saves colleges to a list there, he or she can get a custom online calendar that shows those colleges' deadlines.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
- Help your child find and apply for scholarships. He or she can find out about scholarship opportunities from the school counselor or through the colleges they're applying to. Your child will need to request and complete scholarship applications and submit them on time. Learn more about scholarships.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-and-scholarships/where-to-find-college-scholarships>
- Offer to look over your senior's college applications. But remember that this is your child's work so remain in the role of adviser and proofreader and respect his or her voice.
- Fill out the FAFSA to apply for aid. The form will be available beginning October 1. The government and many colleges use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to award aid. Now it's easier than ever to fill out this form because you can automatically transfer your tax information online from the IRS to the FAFSA. Read How to Complete the FAFSA to learn more.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/how-to-complete-the-fafsa>

### **Winter**

- Work together to apply for financial aid. Have your child contact the financial aid offices at the colleges in which he or she is interested to find out what forms students must submit to apply for aid. Make sure he or she applies for aid by or before any stated deadlines. Funds are limited, so the earlier you apply, the better.

### **Spring**

- Help your child process college responses. Once your child starts hearing back from colleges about admission and financial aid, he or she will need your support to decide what to do. Read about how to choose a college.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/making-a-decision/you-got-accepted-now-what>
- Continue to encourage your child to keep their School Counselor in the loop of any college acceptance decisions. Your child will be asked to complete a Senior Plan Form that will be due in early May.
- Review financial aid offers together. Your senior will need your help to read through financial aid award letters and figure out which package works best. Be sure your child pays attention to and meets any deadlines for acceptance. Get more information on financial aid awards.
  - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/understanding-your-financial-aid-award-offers>
- Help your child complete the paperwork to accept a college's offer of admittance. Once your child has decided which college to attend, he or she will need to review

the offer, accept a college's offer, mail a tuition deposit, and submit other required paperwork. Learn more about your upper school senior's next steps.

- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/making-a-decision/you-made-your-college-choice-whats-next>