

9th COLLEGE TIMELINE

9TH GRADE

BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

- Select 9th grade courses with care, setting up for possibility of taking advanced courses later in high school, or across all 4 years
- Explore clubs and activities, try one or two new ones, or consider how to take current activities to the next level
- Start an informal list or journal to track all activities, and approximate time commitments, and any awards or special experiences
- Get to know your teachers, meet with them as needed
- Develop or strengthen study habits, calendar use and planning skills
- Set up a healthy sleep schedule on weeknights
- Meet with your counselor, just to get acquainted, share your plans and goals

— PARENTS: Run the Net Price Calculators on the websites of a few different colleges to get a sense of how much colleges will expect you to pay.

— PARENTS: If you haven't already done so, start saving for college. Even a small amount every month, compounded, will help.

MID-YEAR

- Start curriculum planning for 10th grade, look for opportunities for challenge
- Start planning for summer
- Meet with your counselor for help with curriculum planning, to continue to develop that relationship, and to ask for any suggestions for summer activities or anything else to strengthen your profile for college applications

- Consider setting up a student email account to be used for all college communication

■ **SUMMER 9/10**

- Some productive activity, such as a job, career or academic exploration activities, community service or volunteering, or family responsibilities

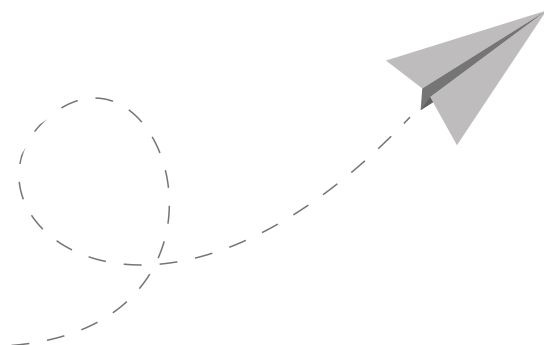
- Evaluate what can be strengthened for 10th grade – study skills, schedules, etc.
- Consider how to deepen extracurricular involvement for 10th grade
- Read! (Best possible preparation for standardized tests.)

PRO-TIPS FOR PARENT

1. **Ideally, the student should be in the driver's seat for as much of the college process as possible, but your help and support will be needed throughout.** In addition to the items on the timeline that are highlighted as parent responsibilities, here are a few ideas to help you identify where your help will be most beneficial.
2. **You know your kid better than anyone.** Students are all different, both in their development and their engagement with the college process, so it is normal that some will require more parent involvement and some will need less, so the first recommendation is to adapt and adjust as needed based on your child.
3. **Be involved in any part of the process that involves money.** Make it clear to your student which decisions will be driven by finances, and what the ground rules are for parts of the process with associated costs. This includes not only the cost of attending college and how that affects the college list, but also costs for tutoring, test prep and testing fees, application fees, visiting colleges, travel to and from campuses once enrolled, and others.
4. **Be your child's prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that is not fully developed in teens, but that is so crucial in making complex plans and decisions.** As you look through the items on the timeline, you will probably recognize which ones will require you to act as a sounding board or a manager. This could include anything from encouraging them to connect with teachers and counselors and to try new activities, to helping them think out loud about their priorities as they develop their college lists, to planning travel for campus visits, to setting up spreadsheets and schedules or other structures for completing applications over time rather than at the last minute. They are likely to need your support for any high-level reflection or any process that involves careful curation, whether of their own priorities or the college list itself
5. **Nothing has to be perfect.** Not the college list, the essays and applications, the transcript, the grades, the test scores, the activity list--none of it! Colleges are

looking for real students who present themselves as authentically as possible, and no one was ever denied admission for a minor typo. Please resist the temptation to be too hands-on, especially with the essays. Admissions officers can spot a sentence written by someone over forty right away, and that will not help your student's chances. Remember that colleges need kids, so as long as the college list is well-balanced and fits the student, everything just has to be "good enough."

6. **It is still the student's journey.** Do what is truly necessary to support your child, but then stand back as much as you can. Students need to feel that the major decisions are theirs, and that what is being expressed in the applications is theirs. (In fact, they have to sign a statement attesting to the latter.) The more they are empowered in the process, the more likely they are to take ownership of the journey itself, and the more likely they are to be invested in their success, wherever they end up.
7. **Don't forget to enjoy the journey.** This does not have to be terribly stressful. At its best, college planning can be a joyful journey of self-discovery, and include some memorable parent-child moments you will cherish. It is more likely to play out this way if your teen starts the process early enough, and works on it a little bit almost every week starting in the middle of 11th grade. Anything you can do to support a calm, thoughtful, little-bit-at-a-time process will increase the chances that you and your teen can appreciate the growth it can facilitate, and savor the surprising moments of joy you may discover along the way.



Grown and Flown is the #1 site for parents with teens in high school and college.
Contact us at grownandflown@gmail.com | www.grownandflown.com

This timeline is a general guide and will not cover every student or circumstance. As circumstances change some information may become obsolete. By Stephanie Meade from [Collegiate Edge](#)

