



**Family Partnership Charter School Sponsors**  
**'Steps to Your Future'**  
*with Mari Jo Parks, M.Ed., Career & College Coach*



Welcome Back to Steps to the Future. The goal of this weekly newsletter is to help students and parents prepare for life after high school. I want to introduce you to a new contributor. I am working with Colin Parker, a Senior in college majoring in Biochemistry, to get advice and wisdom. I will be including his thoughts often to help give perspective. PLEASE let us know if you have any questions or topics that you would like us to address.

Today I want to talk about PLANNING. Your Senior and Junior year will go by very quickly. You have a lot of events, deadlines and opportunities coming your way. Taking time now to do some long-term planning will help you plan better and feel more in control.

Here are my suggestions...

- 1) Get a Master Calendar or dayplanner to record the important dates. Many students like having a monthly calendar but I advise you to also have a year calendar so you can plan appropriately. Having calendars on the wall can be very helpful. Decide what works best for you. Some students use an app on their phone. This is good but I do recommend a visual paper planner, as well.  
*Colin's Thoughts: strongly agree with this. It took me a while to get behind this idea but it's a necessity in college and getting into the habit now will be very helpful.*
- 2) Get a copy of your school calendar. Review the dates including Professional Development Days, Holidays, quarter and semester deadlines. And if possible, any special dates like school district testing, sports, dances, and other traditions. Record those on your calendars.
- 3) Go through your classes and record due dates.  
*Colin's Thoughts: "Very helpful habit to have when you get to college because classes are not everyday and you won't receive the same type of reminders of due dates as high school. Your syllabus will be your best friend.*
- 4) Once you have your master calendar filled with school information, now start adding family important dates. (Don't forget your parent's birthday!)
- 5) Test Dates – At this time the SAT and ACT are not being administered. However, there are other tests including AP tests. Check with your school for any tests being required.
- 6) As you plan your year you will want to include college deadlines. (This will vary by college.) Important deadlines to include:
  - a. Application, which includes essays
  - b. Financial Aid
  - c. Housing Application
  - d. Others required by your college choice*Colin's Thoughts: Having a separate list of these deadlines as a checklist in addition to the calendar can be very helpful. It can be easier to visualize what exactly you need to get done as opposed to only having a spread out calendar with these dates listed; things can creep up on you.*
- 7) Scholarship Deadlines – You may need a calendar just for scholarships. (Lots more information in future articles.)
  - a. Essays are required for almost every scholarship. Starting to write essays now will take some of the pressure off as deadlines get closer. (How to Write Your Essays will be a future topic.)
- 8) Other Opportunities to consider scheduling this year.
  - a. Volunteering is good for your college application and to learn more about the world of work. This can be a long-term volunteer job or events you can help with. Look at your calendar and be realistic about how much time you have to give.
  - b. Working is important for many students. Having a balance of work and school and a personal life, is very important. Many times, I watch students working more hours than is necessary and miss out on other important experiences.

- c. Career Exploration Opportunities - There are many ways to learn about jobs including Job Shadowing. It is an excellent way to learn more about a career. Interviewing people in the careers you are interested in is another great way to know more about the career. This can be done by phone, Facebook or Zoom. Also ask everyone you know how they came to their job.

9) Be kind to yourself. This is a journey not a race!

*Colin's Thoughts: Very important. Had to learn this one the hard way in college.*

Planning will help you experience all the important activities and events of this year. It may look overwhelming but hopefully it will be a way to not miss out on important events and opportunities, as well as be exciting and help you get ready for your next Step to the Future.

Feel free to E-mail Mari Jo at [future.inc1@gmail.com](mailto:future.inc1@gmail.com) with your questions and ideas. I look forward to hearing from you.