

COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

9th and 10th Grade

- Get to know your Guidance Counselor AND Mrs. Dorsch, the College and Career Advisor
- Get involved!
 - Find extracurriculars you are passionate about:
 - Sports
 - Clubs
 - Outside organizations
 - Jobs are GREAT
 - Volunteer Opportunities (Some colleges REQUIRE this. Make Volunteering part of your regular life.)
- Keep your grades at a B or above (ALL YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL)! Colleges only look at 3 years of high school grades (9,10,11) when making admission decisions. If you have less than a 3.0 your options will be limited for admission. Also, every tenth of a point in your GPA can cost you scholarship money! For instance, you might miss out on an additional \$2,000 per year for a 3.49 vs a 3.5. It adds up!
- Start thinking about the Cost of College. Talk to your parents or guardians about costs and what your family can reasonably pay for college.
 - Attend the annual fall Paying for College Zoom event at DMHS to learn more.
- Attend the SUSD College Fair
- Attend the fall Family In-State College Night at DMHS
- PSAT Test – Fall of 10th Grade. The PSAT is the Preliminary SAT test and gives sophomore students a preview of standardized testing. ALL SUSD students take this in fall of 10th grade. Take it seriously! If your score is high, you should RETAKE the PSAT as a Junior. Junior scores are used for consideration for National Merit
- Track your Accomplishments – track athletic awards, extracurricular feats and community service hours. This will make it SO much easier when completing your college applications.

11th Grade

- Retake the PSAT if your 10th grade score was good. This score is considered for National Merit.
- Attend on-campus College Visits! Meet with college reps who make decisions on application acceptances! This is a great chance to make a face-to-face connection with decision makers.
- Attend the SUSD College Fair
- Attend the fall Family In-State College Night at DMHS
- Look into Test Prep options
https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1761253987/susdorg/yl0y1asyvajsu5gf4hbby/Test_Prep_Classes_2025.pdf
- Take the ACT and SAT (11th graders will take an official ACT in spring). ACT and SAT offer 8 testing dates each year beginning in August and September.
 - www.act.org
 - <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration>
- Attend Fall Paying for College Zoom event as a refresher.

- Do College Search Engines to start learning about different college options!
 - Niche.com
 - College Board Big Future College Search
- Tour Colleges – make online appointments for official campus tours or do a virtual tour. Fall and Spring break are great times. (It is most advantageous to visit while the college is in session)
- Take the ASVAB and do Career Interest Assessments to help you lock in on a course of study in college.
 - YouScience www.youscience.com (log in with Clever using your SUSD gapps email.)
 - 16 Personalities www.16personalities.com
 - ASU Me3 Major Finder <https://yourfuture.asu.edu/me3>
 - US News and World Report College Major Quiz <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/college-major-quiz>
 - Career One Stop <https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/Assessments/what-is-assessment.aspx?lang=en&frd=true&secondaryNavPanels=AQ%3D%3D>
- Spring ACT – All Juniors in SUSD will take an official ACT in the spring with all registration and fees paid by the district. Students can also test in addition to this date by registering on your own, selecting a test site and paying the fee. You can test as many times as you wish.
- Keep up your extra-curriculars. Make the most of the activities you are doing with leadership, take initiative, solve problems, enter competitions, create tangible results. Connect interests by blending hobbies with academic subjects or service to create unique, compelling experiences.
- Spring – Create your list of colleges to apply to. Use the Common Data Set to help determine whether a college is a Reach, Target or Safety school. Make a list to include:
 - 4-6 Reach Schools – You have less than a 15% chance of admission
 - 4-6 Target Schools – you have a 15% - 70% chance of admission.
 - 4-6 Safety Schools – You have a greater than 70% chance of admission.
- Letters of Recommendation – *Consider* who you will ask for letters of recommendation in the fall. Think of who knows you the best and will be able to speak to you both personally, and as a student, employee, athlete, or other connection. You can ask in your junior year but follow up in the fall with an email and specific information on your application date and colleges you are applying to.

11th Grade – Summer

- Visit colleges you are interested in.
- Start working on your Common App essays.

12th Grade

- August - Start your Common App www.commonapp.org
- August – Start and submit your In-State Applications
 - ASU <https://admission.asu.edu/apply>
 - UofA <https://www.arizona.edu/admissions/apply>
 - NAU <https://nau.edu/apply/>

- August - Create a spreadsheet of colleges, requirements and deadlines.
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13-4tqWTDmurVOWfy87SLB-19ip6E9XI96hdOEGhazfc/edit?gid=0#gid=0>
- Fall - Ask for letters of recommendation – do this EARLY in the school year. Ask in person, then follow up with an email with the dates your applications will be due and the colleges you are applying to. Give as much notice as possible, or at the least 2 weeks. Provide Recommenders with your RESUME and a Brag Sheet (see here!)
<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1709636203/susdorg/wgtfpovbn4cwtmhxsvk/bragsheet.pdf>
- Write your essays and supplementals in a Word Doc and then paste into your application or Common App. Edit and proofread CAREFULLY! Watch for:
 - Margins
 - Punctuation, spelling and paragraph structure.
 - Make sure your essay is tailored for your college (i.e., don't include the name Baylor in an essay for University of Texas).
- Send ACT or SAT scores to colleges you wish to send them to. You will do this via your ACT or SAT accounts.
- Send AP Scores to colleges via College Board account.
 - Send scores free by June 20. After that it is \$15 per school
- October 1 – FAFSA opens for Seniors applying to college for the following fall.
 - Student: Create your FSA ID at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>
 - Parent: Create your own FSA ID at same site.
 - Once FSA ID has come through (may take a few days) you can begin the FAFSA form.
 - Submit as FAFSA early as possible, but no later than June 30 for aid consideration for school starting in following fall.
 - NOTE: Only SENIORS can start a FAFSA.
 - You will have to complete a FAFSA every year you are attending college in order to continue receiving federal aid.
- Apply to Scholarships from outside sources or your college.
- After Applying:
 - Check your college portals DAILY to make sure they are not missing any important information to process your application.
 - Once accepted, check for updates on scholarships or leadership programs you may be eligible to apply to.
- Once you decide on a college:
 - Withdraw your other applications by notifying their admissions departments
 - Pay your Enrollment Deposit to secure your space. Good Luck!
 - Send Thank You notes to people who have helped you through this process!
 - Counselors, Recommenders, other supporters