Holland Patent High School

11TH GRADE

Junior Year

Junior year is a very important time in high school...not to mention fun! You are no longer the underclassmen, you are enjoying the merits of being a seasoned student and senior year is well within sight! It may feel as though graduation is still very far away, but time will fly! Take some time now to make preliminary plans for your life after high school.

Classes and Grades: This is the last full year of classes and grades that will appear on your transcript when you apply to college, vocational training, certificate programs or a job. Admissions representatives will look very closely at your junior year grades so focus and achieve! When you make your schedule for next year, choose classes that will fit into your future plans. If you are college bound consider dual-credit courses or AP classes for a leg up on college credits.

Important Tests

- PSAT: Oct 6th
- SAT: April 7th
- ASVAB: Nov 18
- ACT: Check ACT website

Important Dates

College Night @ MVCC Utica
October 6th - 6:30PM-8PM

College Night @ RFA Gym
October 7th - 6:30PM-8PM

SUNY Poly Campus Tour
October 15th - All Day

MVCC Open House and Tour
November 13th - All Day

Ongoing College Visits: Check Announcements

College/Career Planning:

Career Planning: Use SchooLinks and other career assessment tools to gain a better understanding of what occupations might be a good fit for you! Feel free to ask your counselor for help interpreting the results! Your career plans will impact your post high school plans.

College Planning: It is never too early to think about your college options. Research schools online, meet with the admissions counselors that come to Holland Patent and attend local college fairs. Meet with your counselor to talk details.

Graduation Requirements

Credit Requirements

A minimum of 22 units of credit are required for graduation. Typically, a course meets one period a day, five days a week, for a full school year and receives one credit. Students accumulate credits toward graduation while fulfilling core requirements. Any additional credits needed to complete the 22 credits for graduation may be met with elective courses.

English: 4

Social Studies: 4

Math: 3

Science: 3

Language Other Than English: 1
(3 for Advanced Designation Endorsement)

Fine Arts: 1

Physical Education: 2

Health: ½

Freshman Seminar

Senior Seminar

Electives: # of credits will vary

Completed Portfolio

5 Hours of Community Service

Total: 22 Credits

Assessments & Diplomas

Regents Assessment requirements are intended to assure that high school graduates have met the New York State Learning Standards in English, Social Studies, Math and Science. An additional assessment may be required in a Foreign Language. To earn a NY State High School Diploma, a student must pass Regents assessments with a score of 65 (or NYS Ed. Approved Alternatives) in the following areas:

Regents Diploma
5 Total Regents

English Language Arts

US History & Government

Global History

Math (Algebra I)

Science (Life or Physical)

Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation
8 Total Regents

English Language Arts

US History & Government

Global History

3 Math (Alg, Geo, Alg 2)

2 Science (1 Life, 1 Physical)

World Language Assessments

HPHS College Course Offerings and AP Courses

Holland Patent High School has a number of college level courses offered through MVCC, Syracuse University, Herkimer College and AP courses. Earning college credits now is a great way to save time and money! Talk with your counselor to see it these offerings are a good fit for you.

Take college level courses on a college campus while attending high school. Students with an 85+ GPA can take courses through MVCC, HVCC or Utica University. See your school counselor for more information. There are fees associated with these classes on campus.

Dual Enrollment Courses

Western Civ.	U.S. History	Government
Psychology	Sociology	Economics
College Alg/Trig	Inter. Math	Statistics
Calculus	Pre-Calculus	Mandarin 3 & 4
Public Speaking	English	Music Appreciation
Spanish 4 & 5	French 4 & 5	ASL 3 & 4
Fine Arts	Graphic Design	CAD 1&2
Keyboarding	Intro to Business	Business Entr.
Personal Finance	Computers & Society	Lifesaving
Animal Science	Plant Science	Food Science
Pre-Vet Science	Ag Business/Leadership	
Fitness Center	Strength Training	

AP Courses:

English Composition
Biology
Calculus
World Modern History
U.S. History
Government
Music Theory

SUPA Courses:

English 12
Presentational Speaking
Physics
Chemistry
Learning Strategies

HELPFUL WEBSITES

Career Exploration

- https://www.oneida-boces.org/linkstosuccess
- www.bls.gov/?oco
- https://app.schoolinks.com/login/k12

College

- www.collegeboard.org
- www.princetonreview.com
- www.suny.edu
- www.commonapp.org

College Athletics

- www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

Financial Aid

- www.studentaid.gov
- www.hesc.com
- www.finaid.org
- www.fastweb.com
- www.studentscholarships.org

Resume Writing

- http://www.jobstar.org/tools/resume/index.php

Testing Tips and Info

- www.collegeboard.org
- www.khanacademy.org

Music & Art Majors

- Considering art or music as a major or career? Talk with your teacher and counselor about developing a portfolio to show college admissions representatives.
- Each college will have different portfolio requirements, do your research and start gathering your work together now.

As Soon AS Possible

- Meet with your counselor to review the courses you've taken, and see what you still need to take.
- Check your class rank. Even if your grades haven't been that good so far, it's never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend.
- Explore Career Zone www.careerzone.labor.ny.gov, and other career assessment tools to learn more about occupations that are a good fit for you. You will take ClassLinks assessments in class.
- Make a list of colleges that meet your most important criteria (size, location, distance from home, majors, academic rigor, housing, and cost). Weigh each of the factors according to their importance to you. Continue visiting college fairs. You may be able to narrow your choices or add a college to your list. Speak to college representatives who visit your high school.
- If you want to participate in Division I or Division II sports in college, start the certification process. Check with your school counselor to make sure you are taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements.
- If you are interested in one of the military academies, talk to your school counselor about starting the application process now.
- Discuss your PSAT scores with your counselor.
- Begin narrowing down your college choices. Find out if the colleges you are interested in require the SAT or ACT Assessments.
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT or other tests that may be required for your future plans.
- Begin preparing for the tests you've decided to take.
- Complete Job Shadow paperwork through SABA.
- Set up a filing system with individual folders for each college's correspondence and printed materials.

SPRING

- Meet with your counselor to review senior-year course selection and graduation requirements.
- Discuss ACT Assessment/SAT scores with your counselor. Register to take the ACT Assessment and/or SAT again if you'd like to try to improve your scores.
- Discuss the college essay with your school counselor or English teacher.
- Stay involved with your extracurricular activities. Colleges look for consistency and depth in activities.
- Consider whom you will ask to write your recommendations. Think about asking teachers who know you well and who will write positive letters about you. Letters from a coach, activity leader, or an adult who knows you well outside of school (e.g., volunteer work contact) are also valuable.

SUMMER

- Visit the campuses of your top-five college choices.
- After each college interview, send a thank-you letter to the interviewer.
- Talk to people you know who have attended the colleges in which you are interested.
- Start filling out college applications online through the websites of the colleges in which you're interested in applying to.

How do I decide what career is right for me?

- The first step in knowing what you want in a career is knowing about yourself! There are many resources available to you to learn about yourself and careers. As you explore your future options keep these things in mind:
- There is no such thing as the "one perfect occupation" out there.
- There are most likely many jobs that would satisfy your career goals and make you happy in the world of work.
- It is OK to not know! Even if you are unsure, you can still plan.
- At this stage in your career, look for majors and fields of interest. Then narrow your search to specific occupations. If you are not sure what to do right now, then choose a path that leaves many options open to you in the future.
- You are not making the one and only career decision of your life.
- Many people change majors, and careers in their lifetime. The key to future success is to explore your options and choose the best one right now. You will reevaluate your choices throughout the next year and throughout college...most likely throughout your life!
- Do you know you are college bound? Then choose courses that will help you get into college. Are you interested in vocational training? Talk to your counselor about the BOCES programs. If you do not know what you want, then plan to keep as many doors open as possible.
- Use the resources available to you.
- The next section focuses on career assessment tools. Use these tools to make the best decisions you can. Talk with your counselor about the assessment results and how to make meaningful choices.

Career Assessments: Your Guide to Making Career Choices

How can Assessments help?

- Career assessments can help you learn about yourself. They can help you learn about your top skills, interests, values, and more. Furthermore, they can attach careers and career clusters to those skills, interests, and values to help you narrow your search and find an occupation that is a great fit for you!
- Look at recommended occupations and gather information about what type of education or training is required, what colleges offer your major of interest, and what steps you need to take to reach your goals!
- Career Exploration can be a long journey but there is help along the way. Career assessments are just one resource you can use. Here are some other important tools to help you reach a great fitting occupation:
    - Career Counselors (these are available in high schools AND colleges)
    - Job Shadowing, Interviews, Videos, Teachers/Professors/Others

Preparing for College: Where to Start?

Hopefully you have already taken the first steps of selecting challenging courses, maintaining good grades, and learning more about yourself and your career interests. Now is the time to look into colleges that interest you!

What types of schools are there?

- **Community Colleges**– offer 2 year degrees and prepare students for work, or to transfer to a 4 year college.
- **4 Year Colleges and Universities**– offer bachelor degrees and many offer graduate degrees. Public schools are subsidized by tax money and are typically less expensive for state residents. SUNY schools are public. Private schools are funded by contributions, endowments and tuition. Though costs are typically higher than public schools, there may be opportunities for grant and scholarship money.
- **Vocational Schools**-offer training in a specific field. These schools prepare students to enter a specific field with a certification program.

What should I be doing now?

- Talk with your counselor to discuss your college plans. Use the Junior Year checklist in this handbook as a guide to help you prepare.
- Make plans for the admissions tests you will need such as the SAT and ACT. If you are unsure about what you want to do, take the test that will leave the most doors open. Your counselor can help you decide which test/tests are right for you.
- Most importantly, keep your grades up and talk with your counselor to choose challenging courses. We recommend you take dual-credit courses and AP classes.

What is the next step?

Research, research, research! Use the internet to research colleges. Look for the following information in your search: majors offered, location, size, tuition costs, athletics, extracurricular activities, class size, student to teacher ratio, facilities such as the library, computer access, dining halls, etc. Discuss your findings with your counselor to help you narrow your choices to explore further with campus visits and interviews.

26-27 SAT Dates

SAT Test Date	Registration Deadline
Oct 3, 2026	Sept 18, 2026
Nov 7, 2026	Oct 23, 2026
Dec 5, 2026	Nov 20, 2026
Mar 6, 2027	Feb 19, 2027
April 7, 2027	SAT School Day
May 1, 2027	Apr 16, 2027
June 5, 2027	May 21, 2027

26-27 ACT Dates

ACT Test Date	Registration Deadline
Oct 17, 2026	Sept 11, 2026
Dec 12, 2026	Nov 6, 2026
Feb 27, 2027	Jan 22, 2027
April 10, 2027	March 5, 2027
June 12, 2027	May 7, 2027

11th GRADE TIMELINE

SUMMER – PRIOR TO YOUR JUNIOR YEAR

- Visit as many colleges as possible. Check websites for information about tours and open house programs and combine with a family vacation or gathering. Even if a school is not on your list, but an opportunity for a visit presents itself, consider checking it out. Doing so will give you perspective for asking more informed questions and making better decisions later in the process.
- Prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT or SAT by visiting the College Board's SAT Preparation Center at collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice, or take the practice ACT at www.actstudent.org/testprep.

FALL

- Take the most challenging courses you can as it is the rigor of your curriculum, along with a solid grade point average, that will be evaluated by college admission committees. Taking challenging courses shows that you are ready for a competitive college environment. Be sure to meet with your counselor to review the courses you've taken and determine what you still need to take.
- Maintain your grades. Grades earned in your junior year will be evaluated by college admission officials when you apply for admission.
- Obtain schedules for the SAT, SAT Subject Tests and ACT and determine which of these exams you will take. Complete the registration forms and mark the dates on your calendar. See your counselor for information.
- Inquire about national competitions and scholarships, such as the Intel Science Talent Search, by visiting with your counselor.
- Complete SAT II subject exams as you finish subject areas. See your counselor for information.
- Develop your leadership skills and stay involved. Colleges look for consistency and depth in activities.
- Attend college fairs, financial aid nights and college planning workshops. Encourage your parent(s)/guardian(s) to accompany you.
- Establish an e-mail account specifically for your college search. Remember, a "funky" e-mail address is best left for communicating with friends and family.
- Start early! Learn about federal financial aid, your potential eligibility, and how the EFC (Expected Family Contribution) works. Visit Federal Student Aid at studentaid.ed.gov and SUNY Smart Track at www.suny.edu/smarttrack/literacy for more information.
- Talk to your counselor if you are interested in a military academy to find out about requirements and timelines.

WINTER

- Generate a list of 10-20 colleges and contact them for information. Research costs and note upcoming campus visit programs.
- Organize! Make folders for your college information, along with deadlines and important dates. Check it often.
- Send e-mail messages to your colleges of interest to get on their mailing lists. To request information from SUNY go to www.suny.edu/attend/request-information.
- Research scholarships at www.fastweb.com and see your counselor for additional information.
- Create a first draft of your resumé to maintain a record of college courses taken, college programs in which you've participated, awards you've won, projects you've completed, extracurricular achievements, and volunteer work.
- Review your senior year class schedule with your counselor to ensure that it fulfills graduation requirements.
- Start the certification process if you are interested in participating in college athletics. Consult with your athletic director or coach(es) to determine whether

you are a candidate for an athletic program. Be sure to check with your counselor to make sure you're taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements. For more information go to www.ncaa.org.

SPRING

- Research Early Decision and Early Action programs and schedule your testing to meet early deadlines.
- Attend college fairs, financial aid nights and college-planning workshops. Many spring events are designed for high school juniors.
- Utilize your college list to arrange visits to campuses during spring break.
- Focus on financial aid and enlist the assistance of your parents/ family members. For each college on your list, calculate the total cost of a year (two semesters) using the college's net price calculator. SUNY's calculator will be available at www.suny.edu/ howmuch.
- Contact your U.S. Representative or U.S. Senator to express your interest in and desire to be nominated to attend a military academy.
- Consult your coach and counselor BEFORE submitting the NCAA eligibility paperwork (for potential athletes).
- Consider whom you'll ask to write letters of recommendation (current teachers and counselors). Then, provide a summary of what you wish for them to include and politely ask if they can assist. Remember to send each a thank you note.
- Inquire about personal interviews or group information sessions at your favorite colleges.
- Search for summer pre-college programs, workshops and classes at SUNY campuses or apply for internships and summer jobs in your field of interest.
- Pace yourself. Don't spend so much time trying to improve standardized test scores that your grades and involvement in activities suffer. Find and maintain a balance.

SUMMER - Following your junior year

- Take the SAT II subject tests if your potential colleges require them and you have finished the curriculum which would help you score well. (If you and your family are experiencing financial hardship, ask your counselor about a fee waiver.)
- Narrow your list of colleges to 4-8. Make sure these are a right match for you. Just because a relative attended an Ivy League school, doesn't mean it is a good fit for you.
- Visit the three schools at the top of your list. (Be sure to include SUNY.) Schedule your visit in conjunction with a family vacation or when colleges are hosting events.
- Decide on whether you'll apply as an Early Decision or Early Action candidate and begin preparing your application for admission. These deadlines are typically in early to mid-November of your senior year.
- Compose rough drafts of essays and ask your family, friends, and teachers to review your essays for grammar, punctuation, readability, and content.
- Contact coaches, if applicable, and include your high school sports schedule and game tapes. Be sure to tell them why you are interested in their program and school.
- Create an arts portfolio, if applicable, to showcase your performing, visual or creative arts work. Your portfolio may include essays, photographs, illustrations, slides or other forms of artwork. A portfolio should represent your best creative work from class projects or assignments and be consistent with portfolio instructions given by an individual campus program.
- Preview application questions now and begin to draft your answers. Worksheets for the SUNY application can be found at www.suny.edu/attend/learn-more/forms-and-publications.

Links to non-SUNY websites and information are provided for your convenience and do not constitute an endorsement.

CollegeBoard **Access**

College Planning: 11th Grade

Junior year 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 stay on track for college.

FALL

☐ **Start with you:** Make lists of your abilities, social/cultural preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college.

☐ **Learn about colleges.** Look at their websites and find colleges at **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search**. Talk to friends, family members, teachers, and recent grads of your school now in college. List the college features that interest you.

☐ **Resource check:** Visit the counseling office and meet the counselors there. Is there a college night for students and families? When will college representatives visit your school? (Put the dates in your calendar.) Examine catalogs and guides.

☐ **At school, speak to your counselor about taking the PSAT/NMSQT®,** which is given in October. If you plan to ask for testing accommodations (because of a disability), be sure the College Board has approved your eligibility.

☐ **Make a file to manage your college search, testing, and application data.** If appropriate (for example, if you're interested in drama, music, art, sports, etc.), start to gather material for a portfolio.

☐ **Estimate your financial aid need.** Financial aid can help you afford college. Use the College Board's *Getting Financial Aid* and the financial aid calculator at **bigfuture.org** to estimate how much aid you might receive.

WINTER

☐ **Sign up to take the SAT® in the spring.** You can register online or through your school. SAT fee waivers are available to eligible students. To prepare for the SAT, you can access free, personalized SAT practice tools at **satpractice.org**, including thousands of interactive questions, video lessons, practice tests, and more.

☐ **Begin a search for financial aid sources.** National sources include the College Board's Scholarship Search and electronic sources. Don't overlook local and state aid sources. (Ask a counselor for help or check your public library.)

☐ **With your family, make an appointment with your counselor** to discuss ways to improve your college-preparation and selection processes.

☐ **Ask a counselor or teacher about taking the SAT Subject Tests™ in the spring.** You should take them while course material is still fresh in your mind. You can download *The SAT Subject Tests Student Guide*, which offers test-prep advice, from **SATSubjectTests.org**.

☐ **Explore AP®.** The Advanced Placement® Program helps hundreds of thousands of high school students achieve their college dreams each year. Get the facts at **apstudent.collegeboard.org/exploreap**. If you're in AP classes, register for the AP Exams given in May.

☐ **Opt in to the College Board Opportunity Scholarships at cb.org/opportunity**. You can earn scholarships ranging from $500 to $2,000 by completing individual college planning steps. Complete all six steps and you'll be eligible for the $40,000 scholarship.

SPRING

- ☐ **Contact your counselor** before leaving school for the summer if you are considering military academies or ROTC scholarships. If you want a four-year ROTC scholarship, you should begin the application process the summer before your senior year.
- ☐ **Develop a list of 15 or 20 colleges that are of interest to you.** You can find many colleges at which you'll be happy and get a great education. The college search is about exploring who you are and what you want and then finding colleges that will meet your goals.
- ☐ **Stay open to all the possibilities—don't limit your search.** To find the best college for you, you should apply to colleges of varying selectivity. Selective colleges admit a portion of students who apply. Some colleges are highly selective while others are less selective. Make sure to apply to public, private, in-state, and out-of-state schools so that you have plenty of options from which to choose.
- ☐ **Take the SAT.** The test is typically offered in March, May, and June. Make sure you start preparing for the test several months in advance using the tools available at **satpractice.org**. And remember, if you're not happy with your scores when you get them, you might want to test again in the fall. Many students take the test a second time as seniors, and they usually do better.
- ☐ **Start to gather documents for financial aid:** Be sure to keep a copy of your tax returns handy. You'll use these to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which opens on Oct. 1.

SUMMER

- ☐ **Register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center** if you are an athlete planning to continue playing a sport in college (**ncaaclearinghouse.net**).
- ☐ **Get your FSA ID:** Before you can fill out your FAFSA, you need to get a username and password (also known as an FSA ID).
- ☐ **Find a full-time or part-time job,** or participate in a summer camp or summer college program.
- ☐ **Visit colleges.** When planning your campus visits, make sure to allow time to explore each college. While you're there, talk to as many people as possible. These can include college admission staff, professors, and students. Take campus tours and, at colleges you're serious about, make appointments to have interviews with admission counselors.
- ☐ **Create a résumé**—a record of your academic accomplishments, extracurricular activities, and work experiences since you started high school.
- ☐ **Download applications.** Go to the website of each college's admission office and either complete the application online or request a paper application from colleges to which you'll apply. Check application dates—large universities may have early dates or rolling admission.
- ☐ **Visit some local colleges**—large, small, public, and private. A visit to a college campus can help you decide if that college is right for you. Make a plan ahead of time to get the most from your visit. Check out the campus checklist at **bigfuture.org**. Attend college fairs, too.
- ☐ **Scan local newspapers** to see which civic, cultural, and service organizations in your area award financial aid to graduating seniors. Start a file.

Visit **bigfuture.org** for more information.

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CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

College Planning: 11th Grade

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FALL

- ☐ **Start with you:** Make lists of your abilities, social/cultural preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college.
- ☐ **Learn about colleges.** Look at their websites and find colleges at **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search**. Talk to friends, family members, teachers, and recent grads of your school now in college. List the college features that interest you.
- ☐ **Resource check:** Visit the counseling office and meet the counselors there. Is there a college night for students and families? When will college representatives visit your school? (Put the dates in your calendar.) Examine catalogs and guides.
- ☐ **At school, speak to your counselor about taking the PSAT/NMSQT®,** which is given in October. If you plan to ask for testing accommodations (because of a disability), be sure College Board has approved your eligibility.
- ☐ **Make a file to manage your college search, testing, and application data.** If appropriate (for example, if you're interested in drama, music, art, sports, etc.), start to gather material for a portfolio.
- ☐ **Estimate your financial aid need.** Financial aid can help you afford college. Use College Board's *Getting Financial Aid* and the financial aid calculator at **bigfuture.org** to estimate how much aid you might receive.

WINTER

- ☐ **Sign up to take the SAT® in the spring.** You can register online or through your school. SAT fee waivers are available to eligible students. To prepare for the SAT, you can access free, personalized SAT practice tools at **satsuite.collegeboard.org/practice**.
- ☐ **Begin a search for financial aid sources.** National sources include BigFuture's Scholarship Search and electronic sources. Don't overlook local and state aid sources. (Ask a counselor for help or check your public library.)
- ☐ **With your family, make an appointment with your counselor** to discuss ways to improve your college-preparation and selection processes.
- ☐ **Explore AP®.** Advanced Placement® Program helps hundreds of thousands of high school students achieve their college dreams each year. Get the facts at **apstudents.collegeboard.org**.

SPRING

- ☐ **Contact your counselor** before leaving school for the summer if you are considering military academies or ROTC scholarships. If you want a four-year ROTC scholarship, you should begin the application process the summer before your senior year.
- ☐ **Develop a list on BigFuture of 15 or 20 colleges that are of interest to you.** You can find many colleges at which you'll be happy and get a great education. The college search is about exploring who you are and what you want and then finding colleges that will meet your goals.
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- ☐ **Get your FSA ID:** Before you can fill out your FAFSA, you and your guardian need to get a username and password (also known as an FSA ID).
- ☐ **Find a full-time or part-time job,** or participate in a summer camp or summer college program.
- ☐ **Visit colleges.** When planning your campus visits, make sure to allow time to explore each college. While you're there, talk to as many people as possible. These can include college admission staff, professors, and students. Take campus tours and, at colleges you're serious about, make appointments to have interviews with admission counselors.
- ☐ **Create a resume**—a record of your academic accomplishments, extracurricular activities, and work experiences since you started high school.
- ☐ **Download applications.** Go to the website of each college's admission office and either complete the application online or request a paper application from colleges to which you'll apply. Check application dates—large universities may have early dates or rolling admission.
- ☐ **Visit some local colleges**—large, small, public, and private. A visit to a college campus can help you decide if that college is good for you. Make a plan ahead of time to get the most from your visit. Attend college fairs and view virtual tours, too.
- ☐ **Scan local newspapers** to see which civic, cultural, and service organizations in your area award financial aid to graduating seniors. Start a file.

CollegeBoard

College and Career Planning Checklist—11th-Grade Tasks

Keep track of key steps to take during each grade of high school to help you plan for college and career. Find a digital checklist at bigfuture.collegeboard.org/checklist.

First Semester

☐	Connect with colleges and scholarships	Want to hear from colleges and scholarship programs looking for students like you? Opt in to Student Search Service so they can contact you directly. You'll learn about campus life, scholarships, and financial aid.
☐	Attend college fairs	Attend college fairs and information sessions to learn more about different schools and their financial aid offerings.
☐	Take the PSAT/NMSQT	If your school offers the PSAT/NMSQT to 10th graders, you'll take it in the fall. The PSAT/NMSQT measures the skills and knowledge that are most important to college and career success. It can help you learn your strengths and areas you need to improve so that you can stay on track.
☐	Explore scholarships	Discover scholarship opportunities from over 6,000 different programs and organizations. You can find matches based on your intended major, cultural background, and other factors.
☐	Review your PSAT/NMSQT score	When your PSAT/NMSQT scores are ready, access your scores on the BigFuture School mobile app if you provided your mobile number on test day. You'll see details about where you excel and where you need to improve.

Second Semester

☐	Meet with your school counselor.	Make an appointment to meet with your school counselor to learn about graduation requirements, the college application process, and other recommendations to help you plan for college and career.
☐	Review AP courses to take next year.	It's time to start planning for 12th grade. You'll work with your counselor, teachers, and/or parents to select courses.
☐	Plan to take the SAT.	Most students take the SAT for the first time in the spring of their junior year. Ask your counselor or principal if your school offers the SAT on a school day. If not, plan to register for it on a weekend. Take a full-length practice test in the Bluebook™ app.
☐	Learn about the FAFSA.	Familiarize yourself with the FAFSA® application process. The FAFSA determines your eligibility for federal aid and some state-based aid programs. Even if you don't think you'll qualify for financial aid, it's essential to submit the FAFSA.

*Complete checklist can be found at bigfuture.collegeboard.org/checklist/11th-grade

CollegeBoard
FOR FAMILY

College Resources for Students and Families

GENERAL WEBSITES

- **BigFuture.** A complete site, with college and scholarship searches, information about the SAT® and other material pertaining to the college search and application process. Easy-to-use college search feature. **collegeboard.org**
- **NCAA Eligibility Center.** Official NCAA website that gives details of student-eligibility requirements to play NCAA sports. Watch this site for changes in eligibility; students can print the *Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete.* **ncaapublications.com**
- **U.S. Department of Education.** The federal government's website is easy to use and an excellent source of information on financial aid, much of it in Spanish as well as English. **ed.gov**

FINANCIAL AID WEBSITES

- **College Board.** A website that includes a scholarship search, a loan calculator, and an online application form for the CSS Profile™, which is required by some colleges. **collegeboard.org**
- **FAFSA® on the Web.** The website for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This form must be submitted in the senior year for families applying for need-based aid. Students may complete it electronically at this site. **fafsa.ed.gov**
- **Fastweb.** Extensive information on merit- and need-based scholarships and aid. **fastweb.com**
- **FinAid!** Good site for information about types of financial aid and applying for financial aid. **finaid.org**

BOOKS

Comprehensive objective directories

- *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc.
- *Four-Year Colleges*. Princeton, N.J.: Peterson's Guides. Published annually.
- *Two-Year Colleges*. Princeton, N.J.: Peterson's Guides. Published annually.

Subjective guides

- Fiske, Edward, and Robert Logue (contributor). *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*. Naperville, Ill.: Sourcebooks Trade. Updated annually.
- Pope, Loren. *Colleges That Change Lives*. New York: Penguin. Paperback 2014.

Source: Department of Education.

CollegeBoard **Access**

Family
11th Grade

Family Action Plan: 11th Grade

Junior year 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 provide 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**.
- [ ] **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**.

FALL

- [ ] **Make sure your child meets with the school counselor.** 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**.
- [ ] **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**.
- [ ] **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**.
- [ ] **Encourage your child to set goals for the school year.** Working toward specific goals helps your high 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, lists Advanced Placement® courses that might be a good match for them, and connects them to **free, personalized SAT practice** on Khan Academy® based on their results.
- [ ] **Help your child prepare for the SAT.** Many juniors take the SAT in the spring so they can get a head start on planning for college. See **which other tests** your high school junior may need to take.
- [ ] **Discuss taking challenging courses next year.** Taking honors courses or college-level courses as a senior can help your child prepare for college work—and these are also the courses that college admission officers like to see. Learn more about **advanced classes**.

WINTER (CONTINUED)

- [ ] **Encourage your junior to consider taking SAT Subject Tests™.** Many colleges require or recommend taking these tests to get a sense of your child's skills in a certain academic area. In general, it's best to take a Subject Test right after taking the relevant course. Learn more about **SAT Subject Tests**.
- [ ] **Encourage your child to take AP® Exams.** If your 11th grader takes AP or other advanced classes, have your child talk with teachers now about taking these tests in May. Read more about the **AP Program**.
- [ ] **Encourage your child to opt in to the College Board Opportunity Scholarships.** Your child can earn scholarships ranging from $500 to $2,000 by completing individual college planning steps. When they complete all six steps, they'll be eligible for a $40,000 scholarship.

SPRING

- [ ] **Search together for colleges that meet your child's needs.** Once you have an idea of the qualities your junior is looking for in a college, help your child enter these criteria into **College Search**. There your child can create a list of colleges to consider applying to.
- [ ] **Help your child research scholarships.** This form of financial aid provides money for college that doesn't need to be repaid. Learn more through College Board **Scholarship 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.
- [ ] **Help your child make summer plans.** Summer is a perfect time to explore interests and learn new skills—and colleges look for students who pursue meaningful summer activities. Help your high school student look into **summer learning programs** or find a job or internship.
- [ ] **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.

Visit **cb.org/opportunity** to learn more.

Visit **bigfuture.org** for more information.

/MyBigFuture @MyBigFuture @collegeboard

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CollegeBoard

FOR FAMILY

Family Action Plan: 11th Grade

Junior year 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 provide 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. **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. **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics/what-is-financial-aid/how-does-financial-aid-work**

FALL

- ☐ **Make sure your child meets with the school counselor.** 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/plan-for-college/college-prep/get-advice/applying-to-college-your-counselors-role**

- ☐ **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. **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/8-ways-to-take-control-of-your-time**

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- ☐ **Encourage your child to set goals for the school year.** Working toward specific goals helps your high school student stay motivated and focused.

- ☐ **Encourage your child to register for AP® Exams.** If your 11th grader takes AP or other advanced classes, have your child talk with teachers now about taking these tests in May. Read more about the AP Program. **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/learn-about-the-ap-program**

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, lists Advanced Placement® courses that might be a good match for them, and connects them to free, personalized SAT practice on Khan Academy® based on their results. **satpractice.org**

- [ ] **Help your child prepare for the SAT.** Many juniors take the SAT in the spring so they can get a head start on planning for college. See which other tests your high school junior may need to take. **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/testing/which-college-admission-tests-do-i-need-to-take**

- [ ] **Discuss taking challenging courses next year.** Taking AP honors courses or college-level courses as a senior can help your child prepare for college work—and these are also the courses that college admission officers like to see. Learn more about advanced classes. **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/inside-the-classroom/how-to-take-your-classes-to-the-next-level**

SPRING

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- [ ] **Help your child make summer plans.** Summer is a perfect time to explore interests and learn new skills—and colleges look for students who pursue meaningful summer activities. Help your high school student look into summer learning programs or find a job or internship. Help your high school student look into summer learning programs or find a job or internship. **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. **http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/campus-visit-guide/campus-visit-checklist**

Finding the Perfect College

CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

Most students want to find the "perfect" college. The truth is, there's no such thing. You can find many colleges where you can be happy and get a great education. The college search is about exploring who you are and what you want and then finding colleges that will meet your goals.

BEFORE SEARCHING, CONSIDER THESE 8 FACTORS

Size

Location

Available majors and classes

Available extracurricular activities

Distance from home

Makeup of the student body

Housing options

Campus atmosphere

Questions to consider:

- Which of these aspects are things you feel you must have to be comfortable at a college?
- On which factors are you flexible?
- What do you want to accomplish in college?
- Do you want to train for a specific job or get a wide-ranging education?
- If you have a major in mind, do the colleges you are considering specialize in that major?

Bigfuture.collegeboard.org is a great option to sort through the many options out there, based on your preferences.

Here are steps you can take to find colleges where you will thrive.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND

Although it's good to have some ideas in mind about what sorts of colleges will be good for you, stay open to all the possibilities at the beginning of your search.

TALK TO PEOPLE WHO KNOW YOU

Tell family, teachers, relatives, friends, and your school counselor about your goals, and ask if they can suggest colleges that may be a good fit for you.

DON'T LIMIT YOUR SEARCH

At the start of this process, you may rule out colleges because you think that they are too expensive or too hard to get into, but this may not be the reality. Remember that financial aid can make college more affordable, and colleges look at more than just grades and test scores.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Once you have a list of schools, it's time to do some research. To learn more about the colleges you're considering, check out college guidebooks and websites.
Jot down your questions and get answers by:

- Talking to your school counselor or teachers
- Checking out colleges' student blogs, if available
- Contacting college admission officials
- Asking admission officials to recommend current students or recent graduates with whom you can have conversations
- Visiting college campuses or viewing virtual college tours, if possible

FAQ: College Entrance Exams

CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

GENERAL

What are college entrance exams? These tests are designed to measure students' skills and help colleges evaluate how ready you are for college-level work. The SAT® and ACT are both accepted by nearly all colleges and universities.

Do all colleges require a college entrance exam as part of the application process? Most four-year institutions accept a college entrance exam score. Those that do not require these scores will indicate that in their admission policies. Providing your score gives you the opportunity to strengthen your application.

How many times should a college entrance exam be taken? Most students take a college entrance exam twice—once in the spring of the junior year and once at the beginning of the senior year.

SCORES

How do colleges use test scores? They are used to apply a common standard for all students no matter where they went to high school. Colleges look at your test scores, along with your high school grades and courses, to see how well prepared you are for college-level work. Some colleges use these scores for scholarship eligibility and course placement. Check with your colleges to find out how test scores are used.

Does a college receive all scores from every college entrance exam you've taken? Some colleges will allow you to select which scores you would like considered for admission and others might have specific instructions about which scores get reported. This information, along with how they require them to be sent, will be included in their application guidelines.

PREPARING

What is the best way to prepare for a college entrance exam? The best way to prepare is to work hard both inside and outside the classroom. Take challenging courses, study hard, and read and write as much as you can.

What are other ways to prepare for the tests?

- Know what to expect. Being familiar with the test's format is the single best way to prepare for that test. Go to the testing organization's website to get familiar with the various test sections and the instructions for each part.
- Take preliminary tests. These tests (such as the PSAT™ 8/9, PSAT™ 10, and PSAT/NMSQT®) have the same format and question types as the admission tests. You can use your score reports to help identify specific areas you need to focus on.
- Practice, practice, practice. Students can use Official SAT Practice to practice for the SAT for free with a world-class platform offering personalized and instructional content. Using free practice tests from the testing organizations' websites, you can discover your strengths and weaknesses and learn how to manage your time wisely during the test.

CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

College Planning: How to Get Started

STEP 1: GET STARTED

Assess your strengths, weaknesses, goals, passions, learning style, and social skills. What is most important to you in the college-search process? What do you hope to learn from the process?

STEP 2: MAKE SOME BASIC DECISIONS

- Where do you want to live?
- Will you go to college full time? Part time?
- Do you want to attend a single-sex school, a technical college, a public or private college, a large university, a small liberal arts college, or a historically black or religiously affiliated college?
- Are there majors and opportunities that will lead to my potential career?

STEP 3: ENLIST HELP

Who do you want to assist you in this process (family, teachers, siblings, relatives, friends)?

STEP 4: CONSULT REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

Look at college directories (College Board's *College Handbook*, Barron's, Peterson's) and use college searches (**https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/**). Visit the websites of the colleges that interest you.

STEP 5: TALK

Discuss your goals and plans with your family, teachers, and school counselor. They can provide helpful advice.

STEP 6: MEET WITH COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Visit with college representatives when they come to your high school. Make a list of your important questions to ask the representatives. Also meet college personnel at area college fairs.

STEP 7: VISIT CAMPUSES

Try to go to the college campus and take a tour, meet with admission and financial aid representatives, and ask students what they think about the college. Can't make the trip? Many colleges provide virtual tours on their websites.

CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

20 Questions to Ask College Representatives

Whether you meet them at a college fair or on a campus visit, college representatives genuinely enjoy talking to high school students and answering questions about their college. The following questions will help start a good dialogue.

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1. What makes your college unique?
2. For what academic programs is your college known?
3. How would you describe the students at your college? Where are most of them from?
4. Where do students hang out on campus?
5. What happens on weekends — are there things to do on campus or in town, or do most students go home?
6. How does the college integrate technology into the classroom?
7. What are the housing options for freshmen?
8. Do many students live off campus?
9. Is there a sports complex or fitness center?
10. What are the most popular clubs and activities?
11. What's the security like on campus?
12. What's the surrounding area like? Is it easy to get around?
13. What are the most popular majors?
14. How would you describe the academic pressure and workload?
15. What support services (academic advisers, tutors, etc.) are available?
16. What is the student-to-faculty ratio?
17. What's the faculty like? Are they accessible outside of class?
18. Are there opportunities for internships?
19. Is there job placement help for graduates?
20. Are there any big changes in the works that I should know about?

CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

Assessing Your List of Colleges

As you develop a list of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them.

THE BASICS

- Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map?
- Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
- What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
- What is the college's selectivity ratio (what proportion of applicants were admitted last year)?
- Does the college offer majors that interest you?
- Is the college coed or single sex?
- What percentage of students live off campus?
- How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
- How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
- What type of financial aid is available?

WHERE WOULD YOU FIT IN?

- What are the admission requirements at the colleges of interest to you? Where does that place you?
- What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
- Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
- Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

VISIT THEIR WEBSITES AND READ COLLEGE GUIDEBOOKS

- What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates, and teachers.)
- What courses are required for graduation?
- Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?
- Are there special programs (study abroad, internships, etc.) of interest to you?
- Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
- What is the social life like?
- What is your general impression of the college?
- Is the school accredited?
- If professional certification is required for employment in the field that interests you, how many students enrolled in the school's program pass the certification exam?
- What does the U.S. Department of Education's **College Scorecard** tell you about the school?

ADMISSION PROCESS

- When are applications due?
- What does the application contain? Are essays required?
- Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
- What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

NOW ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

- Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
- If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
- Do I want to visit this college?
- What additional information do I need?

Source: Susan Staggers, Cary Academy, North Carolina.

CollegeBoard

FOR FAMILIES

Tips for Families on Finding a Great College

How can your child find colleges that match specific needs? First, identify priorities. Next, carefully research the characteristics of a range of schools. Finally, match the two. Here are some college characteristics to consider.

SIZE OF STUDENT BODY

Size will affect many of your child's opportunities and experiences:

- range of academic majors offered
- extracurricular possibilities
- amount of personal attention your child will receive
- number of academic resources

In considering size, your child should look beyond the raw number of students attending. For example, perhaps they are considering a small department within a large school. Your child should investigate not just the number of faculty members, but also their accessibility to students.

LOCATION

Does your child want to visit home frequently, or is this a time to experience a new part of the country? Perhaps an urban environment is preferred, with access to museums, ethnic restaurants, or major league ball games. Or maybe it's easy access to the outdoors or the serenity of a small town.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

If your child has decided on a field of study, they can research the reputation of academic departments by talking to people in their field of interest. If your child is undecided, as many students are, they may want to choose an academically balanced institution that offers a range of majors and programs. Students normally don't pick a major until their sophomore year, and those students who know their major before they go to college are very likely to change their minds. Most colleges offer counseling to help students find a focus.

In considering academic programs, your child should look for special opportunities and pick a school that offers a number of possibilities.

CAMPUS LIFE

Before choosing a college, your child should learn the answers to these questions:

- What extracurricular activities, athletics, clubs, and organizations are available?
- Does the community around the college offer interesting outlets for students?
- Is housing guaranteed?
- How are residence halls assigned?

COST

In considering cost, look beyond the price tag. Because of financial aid, most students pay less than the "sticker price," so don't rule out a college that would be a good fit for your child before you find out how much financial aid it will offer. Most colleges work to ensure that academically qualified students from every economic circumstance can find financial aid that allows them to attend.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

One of the best ways to measure a school's quality and the satisfaction of its students is to learn the percentage of students who return after the first year and the percentage of entering students who go on to graduate. Comparatively good retention and graduation rates indicate that responsible academic, social, and financial support systems exist for most students.

Campus Visit Checklist

CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

Visiting a college campus helps you get a sense of what a college — and life at that college — is like. This can help you decide whether the college is a good fit for you.

GATHER INFORMATION

Find out what you need to do to apply, and see if the college's class and major offerings are what you want:

- ☐ Take part in a group information session at the admission office.
- ☐ Interview with an admission officer.
- ☐ Pick up financial aid information.
- ☐ Sit in on a class that interests you. If classes aren't in session, just see what the classrooms are like.
- ☐ Meet a professor who teaches a subject that interests you.
- ☐ Talk to students about what they think of their classes and professors.
- ☐ Get the names and business cards of the people you meet so you can contact them later if you have questions.

EXPLORE THE CAMPUS

Get a feel for student life, and see if this college is a place where you will do well:

- ☐ Take a campus tour.
- ☐ Talk to current students about the college and life on campus.
- ☐ Check out the freshman dorms, and stay overnight on campus if possible.
- ☐ Visit the dining hall, fitness center, library, career center, bookstore, and other campus facilities.
- ☐ Talk to the coaches of sports that you may want to play.
- ☐ Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.

CHECK OUT CAMPUS MEDIA

Tune in to learn what's happening on campus and what's on students' minds:

- ☐ Listen to the college radio station.
- ☐ Read the student newspaper.
- ☐ Scan bulletin boards to see what daily student life is like.
- ☐ Go to the career center and learn what services it offers.
- ☐ Browse the school's website and any campus blogs.
- ☐ Read other student publications, such as department newsletters, and literary reviews.

GET THE MOST OUT OF A CAMPUS VISIT IN **6 STEPS**

1 DECIDE WHERE AND HOW

See if your school arranges group trips to colleges or if you could get a group of friends together and visit the campus. A family trip is another option and allows you to involve your family in the process.

2 PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

Before you set out, get a map of the college campus and pick out places of interest. Call the college's admission office to schedule a guided tour of the campus.

3 TAKE YOUR OWN TOUR

Just wandering around the campus on your own or with friends can be the best way to get a feel for what a college is like.

4 EXPLORE THE FACILITIES

Finding the spots on campus where students gather or asking a student where the best place to eat is can give you a feel for the character of the college. Visit the library and check out the gym or theater. Ask an admission officer if you can tour a dorm and a classroom.

5 MAKE CONNECTIONS

Talk to current students. Ask the students at the next table or sitting nearby what they like best about the college.

6 TAKE NOTES

During your visit, make notes about your experience. What did you see that excited you? Are there aspects of the college that you don't like? If so, what are they?

Questions to Ask During Your Visit:

ASK TOUR GUIDES/STUDENTS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- What's it like to go from high school to college?
- What do you do in your free time? On the weekends?
- What do you love about this college?
- What do you wish you could change about this college?
- Why did you choose this college?
- What is it like to live here?
- What does the college do to promote student involvement in campus groups, extracurricular activities, or volunteerism?

ASK PROFESSORS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- Can a student be mentored by professors, graduate students, or upperclassmen?
- How are professors rated by the college? Does the college think mentoring and meetings for project guidance are important?
- How does the college help students have access to professors outside class? Do professors join students for lunch, help with community service groups, or guide student organizations?
- How many students do research or other kinds of projects for a semester or more?

ASK FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

- How much has your total college cost for each student risen in the past year?
- How much do your students usually owe in loans when they graduate?
- What is the average income of graduates who had the same major that interests me?
- Will my costs go up when your tuition goes up, or can we use the same tuition rate I started with so I'll know the costs for four years? What should I expect in terms of increases in living expenses?
- How many students usually graduate in the major that interests me? How long do these students usually take to get their degrees ? In what ways does the college help students graduate in four years?

CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

How to Get the Most Out of a College Fair

GOING TO A COLLEGE FAIR

- Take a pen and a small notebook.
- Take a bag to carry the brochures you pick up.
- Print out some address labels with your name, address, phone number, email address, high school, and year of graduation. Spend your time at the college tables asking questions, not filling out contact cards!
- When you arrive, check out the floor plan and find out where the tables for your top choice colleges are located so you can go directly to them.
- Make note of your most important questions in advance so you don't forget them.
- Check on whether any information sessions, such as financial aid, are being offered. Interested? Budget your time accordingly.
- Jot down notes about a college while your memory is fresh, such as right after visiting the table.
- Pick up the business cards of any representatives you talk to, so you can contact them if you have any more questions.

AFTER YOU GET HOME

- Make a point of going through the materials and your notes within one week after the fair. You'll probably remember more about your conversations with college representatives while the memories from the fair are still fresh.
- Follow up with any college that interests you by contacting the admission office to ask further questions and, if possible, plan a visit to the campus.

Source: Associated Colleges of the Midwest (acm.edu).

CollegeBoard

FOR STUDENTS

How to Make the Most of a College Interview

While not all schools offer interviews, the opportunity to interview offers you a chance to learn about the college and allows the interviewer to learn about you. Use it as a tool to assist your college selection. The interview can have a positive effect on your admission — rarely a negative one. Relax and be yourself!

- Your interview will usually be with an admission staff member, but it may be with a student, an alumnus, or a professional interviewer. Keep this person's perspective in mind.
- The interviewer is eager to get to know you and will try to put you at ease. The interviewer will answer your questions but will be more interested if you have helpful questions that show you have already done some research on the college.
- Be prepared. Know your rank, your test scores, and your present areas of interest. If you are undecided about your career, feel free to say so (half of college students change their intended major). Think through some areas you would like to explore, competencies you would like to develop, and projects or situations that intrigue you.
- Do your homework about the school to get the obvious questions answered. You don't want to be silent when asked, "What would you like to know about our college?" Questions or comments like, "What kinds of internships are offered, and how often do students take them?" show more maturity in your thinking than asking about the number of books in the college library.
- Interviewers may ask questions about your interests, extracurricular activities/jobs, books you've read, meaningful experiences, reasons for applying to this college, life at school, and similar topics. Be ready to talk about these subjects.
- Be honest. Everyone has strong and weak points.
- Plan to have your interview alone. Most admission officers prefer to speak with your family after talking with you, rather than during the interview.
- Choose appropriate clothes to wear for the interview.
- When you return home, send a thank-you note to the interviewer. Thank the person for his or her time and refer to something specific you discussed.

Source: Adapted from material prepared by Gloria Mueller, Glenbrook High School, Illinois.

Juniors

Your Fall Recruiting Checklist

Follow these steps to ensure you find the best athletic, academic, social and financial college fit.

Start of Junior Year – August/September

Check in with your high school guidance counselor.

Are you on track to graduate on time with the required number of NCAA core courses? 10 of your core courses will be locked in at the end of your junior year. If you failed or got a low grade in an important class early in high school, make sure you retake that class before the end of your junior year.

Talk to your high school/club coach or an NCSA recruiting expert.

By now, you should have a clear game plan for your athletic recruiting to-do's. What areas can you improve in—both athletically and academically? What types of schools do you want to apply to, and how do you compare to current team rosters?

Keep Track of Important Dates:

1. Stay up to date with the D1 and D2 Recruiting Calendars.
2. Learn more about how the new NCAA Recruiting Rules and Updates affect juniors.

September

Register with the NCAA.

If you're unsure of which division level you want to compete in, or are set on D3 schools, create a free profile—you can always upgrade to a paid account later. Receiving interest from D1 and D2 coaches? You may be better suited for an NCAA Certification Account.

Narrow down your list of target schools—and reach out to coaches.

Whether you're checking out your Top Matches or Coach Activity Report, make sure you have at least 30-40 schools—a mix of safety, target and dream schools—added to your NCSA Favorites. Then, make sure you've reached out to each coach on your list.

Regularly update your NCSA profile.

This is your athletic recruiting resume, so make sure coaches are seeing and evaluating your most recent info—including your transcript, verified stats and in some cases, your highlight footage.

October

Create a game plan for the ACT and SAT.

While the NCAA is no longer requiring student-athletes to take these tests to be eligible to compete in the 2025-26 academic year, many colleges—including those at the NCAA D1 and D2 level—may still want students to complete these tests for admissions or scholarship purposes. Stay current on testing dates for the ACT and SAT—including when you have to register for each test.

Remember to consider all the costs associated with the ACT and SAT tests.

There are fees—and fee waivers—for each test, but don't forget about the costs of tutoring or test prep resources like online classes and guides.

November

Follow your top choices on X and Instagram.

Following a team or coach on social media is a unique way to set yourself apart from other recruits. You'll get a behind-the-scenes look at a team's dynamics, stay up-to-date on their accomplishments, and show coaches that you're genuinely interested in their program.

Go on a college visit or take a virtual campus tour.

Unofficial and official visits provide a great opportunity to get some one-on-one time with a college coach, meet your potential team and tour the campus/athletic facilities, while virtual visits offer a safe, cost-effective option to get a good feel of the school.

NCSA COLLEGE RECRUITING

Parents

Your Recruiting Checklist

Follow these steps to ensure you're supporting your student-athlete in their dream to play their sport in college.

Academic:

- Familiarize yourself with the NCAA Eligibility Requirements, so you and our athlete both know the rules.
- Use the Division I and II core course worksheet to set specific academic goals and plan a core course schedule for your athlete.
- Stay aware of your athlete's grades. The better their grades the more opportunities they will have.
- Begin researching SAT/ACT test preparation for your athlete and familiarize yourself with test dates and registration deadlines.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center and make sure your athlete's high school counselor sends his or her transcript at the end of junior year.
- Help your athlete figure out what they may be interested in studying in college. This will help determine if a school is right for them.

Recruiting:

- Start a correspondence log to keep track of your communications with college coaches or use the NCSA Messaging Center.
- Help your athlete build their recruiting profile, but don't do it for them – this is their journey.
- Help your athlete plan official and unofficial visits to local college campuses. They should be contacting the coaches beforehand to arrange a meeting.
- Create a highlight or skills video using sport-specific video guidelines.
- Help your athlete compile a list of target schools based on their qualifications.
- Help your athlete understand the importance of staying responsible with social media.
- Determine your Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) to familiarize yourself with the collegiate financial aid process and discuss cost with your athlete.

New to the college recruiting process? Create a free NCSA College Recruiting profile to explore the college programs your student might qualify for or review our College Recruiting 101 for Parents guide for expert advice.

NCSA COLLEGE RECRUITING

Initial-Eligibility Standards

If you want to compete in NCAA sports, you need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at **eligibilitycenter.org**. Plan to register before your freshman year of high school. For more information on registration, visit **on.ncaa.com/RegChecklist**.

Academic Requirements

Division I and II schools require you to meet academic standards. To be eligible to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship in your first year of full-time enrollment, you must meet the following requirements:

Division I

1. Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:

ENGLISH	MATH (Algebra I or higher)	SCIENCE (Including one year of lab, if offered)	EXTRA (English, math or science)	SOCIAL SCIENCE	OTHER Any area listed to the left or courses listed in additional discipline (world language, comparative religion or philosophy)
4 years	3 years	2 years	1 year	2 years	4 years

2. Complete your 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in eight academic semesters or four consecutive academic years from the start of ninth grade. If you graduate from high school early, you still must meet core-course requirements.
3. Complete 10 of your 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits, including seven in English, math or science, before the start of your seventh semester. Once you begin your seventh semester, any course needed to meet the 10/7 requirement cannot be replaced or repeated.
4. Earn a minimum 2.3 **core-course GPA**.
5. Ask your high school counselor to upload your **final official transcript** with proof of graduation to your Eligibility Center account.

Division II

1. Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:

ENGLISH	MATH (Algebra I or higher)	SCIENCE (Including one year of lab, if offered)	EXTRA (English, math or science)	SOCIAL SCIENCE	OTHER Any area listed to the left or courses listed in additional discipline (world language, comparative religion or philosophy)
3 years	2 years	2 years	3 years	2 years	4 years

2. Earn a minimum 2.2 **core-course GPA**.
3. Ask your high school counselor to upload your **final official transcript** with proof of graduation to your Eligibility Center account.

Division III

While **Division III schools** set their own admissions and academic requirements, **international student-athletes** (first-year enrollees and transfers) who are enrolling at a Division III school after Aug. 1, 2023, must be certified as an amateur by the Eligibility Center. Contact the Division III school you plan to attend for more information about its academic requirements.

GRADE 9 REGISTER

- If you haven't yet, **register** for a free Profile Page account at **eligibilitycenter.org** for information on NCAA initial-eligibility requirements.
- Use NCAA Research's **interactive map** to help locate NCAA schools you're interested in attending.
- Find your high school's list of NCAA-approved core courses at **eligibilitycenter.org/courselist** to ensure you're taking the right courses, and earn the best grades possible!

GRADE 10 PLAN

- If you're being actively recruited by an NCAA school and have a Profile Page account, **transition** it to the required **certification account**.
- Monitor the **task list** in your NCAA Eligibility Center account for next steps.
- At the end of the school year, ask your high school counselor from each school you attend to upload an official transcript to your Eligibility Center account.
- If you fall behind academically, ask your high school counselor for help finding **approved courses** you can take.

GRADE 11 STUDY

- Ensure your **sports participation** information is correct in your Eligibility Center account.
- Check with your high school counselor to make sure you're on track to complete the required number of NCAA-approved **core courses** and graduate on time with your class.
- Share your **NCAA ID** with NCAA schools recruiting you so each school can place you on its **institutional request list.**
- At the end of the school year, ask your high school counselor from each school you attend to upload an official transcript to your Eligibility Center account.

GRADE 12 GRADUATE

- **Request your final amateurism certification** beginning April 1 (fall enrollees) or Oct. 1 (winter/spring enrollees) in your Eligibility Center account at **eligibilitycenter.org**.
- Apply and be accepted to the NCAA school you plan to attend.
- Complete your final NCAA-approved **core courses** as you prepare for graduation.
- After you graduate, ask your high school counselor to upload your final **official transcript** with proof of graduation to your Eligibility Center account.

How to plan your high school courses to meet the 16 core-course requirement: **4 x 4 = 16**

9th GRADE	10th GRADE	11th GRADE	12th GRADE
(1) English	(1) English	(1) English	(1) English
(1) Math	(1) Math	(1) Math	(1) Math
(1) Science	(1) Science	(1) Science	(1) Science
(1) Social Science and/or other	(1) Social Science and/or other	(1) Social Science and/or other	(1) Social Science and/or other
4 CORE COURSES	4 CORE COURSES	4 CORE COURSES	4 CORE COURSES

CONTACT THE NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER
U.S. and Canada (except Quebec)
877-262-1492 (toll free), Monday-Friday
9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time

@ncaaec @ncaaec @ncaaec @playcollegesports

Registration Checklist

Plan to compete in NCAA sports? Register with the Eligibility Center at **eligibilitycenter.org** before ninth grade (year nine of secondary school).

Which Account Type Is Right for You?

1. **Academic and Athletics Certification Account:** If you plan to compete at a Division I or II school, register for an Academic and Athletics Certification account. This account type (including completed **payment** or a processed **fee waiver**) is needed to go on Division I official visits, sign an athletics aid agreement for a scholarship and compete at a Division I or II school.

2. **Athletics Certification Account:** If you're an **international student-athlete** (first-year enrollee or transfer) enrolling at a Division III school, you must register for an Athletics Certification account (or use your existing Academic and Athletics Certification account) and receive your final athletics certification before you can compete.

   This account may also be right for students transferring from a non-NCAA college or university to a Division I or II school who do not require an Eligibility Center academic certification. These students should check with the compliance office at the NCAA school they may attend to determine their required account type.

3. **Profile Page Account:** If you're not yet in high school or secondary school, are not being recruited, are unsure in which division you want to compete or are a **domestic student** who plans to compete at a **Division III school**, register for a free Profile Page account. **Transition** your account to an Academic and Athletics Certification account once you are **recruited** by a Division I or II school.

ELIGIBILITY CENTER ACCOUNT TYPES

In which division do you plan to compete?	Academic and Athletics Certification Account	Athletics Certification Account	Profile Page Account
Division I or II			
Before recruiting begins or middle school and younger students (**domestic or international**). Can be transitioned to a certification account when needed.			✓
High school student (**domestic or international**) enrolling for the first time at a Division I or II school.	✓		
Transferring from a two- or four-year college or university. (Check with the compliance office at the school you plan to attend.)	✓ OR	✓	
Division III*			
Domestic high school student enrolling for the first time at a Division III school.			✓
High school student with a permanent residence **outside of the U.S.**		✓	
High school student who attended secondary or postsecondary school **outside of the U.S.** for any time (excluding U.S.-based students who study abroad).		✓	
High school student who was based and competed **outside of the U.S.** or participated on a sports team that that based and competed **outside of the U.S.**		✓	
Transferring from a two- or four-year college or university; attended **domestic high school(s)** only.			✓
Division Undecided/Unknown			
Never enrolled full time at a two- or four-year college or university. Best before recruiting begins or for middle school and younger students. Can be transitioned to a certification account when needed.			✓

*[illegible]

Once you have determined the right account for you, visit **eligibilitycenter.org** to register. A list of information you will need to complete your account is outlined below. For a Profile Page account, allow 15 minutes to complete. For certification accounts, allow 30-45 minutes to complete. If you need to exit and come back at a later time, you can save and exit but must return and complete your account within 30 days.

Unsure ***which account type*** *is right for you?* Start with a **free Profile Page account**, then check with the compliance office at the NCAA school recruiting you. If you need assistance, contact the Eligibility Center at 877-262-1492, Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time. International students (including Quebec) should use the **International Contact Form** to submit questions.

ELIGIBILITY CENTER REGISTRATION ESSENTIALS

Below are some items you should have with you when creating an account at **eligibilitycenter.org**:

- [ ] **Student Information**
  Provide your name, gender, date of birth, primary and **secondary contact information** and address.

- [ ] **Valid Email**
  Use an email address you check regularly and will have access to ***after*** high school. The Eligibility Center uses email to update you about your account throughout the process. ***Note:*** If a sibling has registered with the Eligibility Center, use a different email address than the one they used.

- [ ] **Education History**
  List all U.S. and international secondary and high schools and additional programs you attended, even if you did not receive grades or credits. If you attended ninth grade at a junior high school in the same school system in which you later attended high school, the ninth-grade school should not be listed.

- [ ] **Sports Participation History**
  Select each sport you plan to participate in at an NCAA school. For **certification accounts**, list any teams you have practiced or played with, events in which you participated, expenses, awards and any individuals who advised you or marketed your athletic skills. This helps the Eligibility Center certify your athletics eligibility once you **request your final athletics certification**.

- [ ] **Payment (Certification Accounts Only)**
  Certification account registration is complete once your fee is paid (or **fee waiver** is requested, if eligible). Pay online via debit, credit card or eCheck. Effective September 1, the fee for an Academic and Athletics Certification account is $110 for **domestic students** and $170 for **international students**. The fee for an Athletics Certification account is $75. Profile Page accounts are free.

  All fees are nonrefundable after 30 days. If you completed a duplicate registration and paid your registration fee twice, complete the ***refund form***.

Do You Need Assistance Registering?

Contact the Eligibility Center at 877-262-1492, Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time. International students (including Quebec) should use the **International Contact Form** to submit questions.

REMEMBER

Walk-on and "preferred" walk-on recruits must register with the Eligibility Center and meet initial-eligibility standards.

Financial Aid

JUNIOR YEAR: SUMMER/FALL

- ☐ **Take an inventory of your interests and passions.** Scholarships are based not only on academic achievement. Many scholarships award money for college based on a student's activities, talents, background, and intended major.
- ☐ **Research the various types of financial aid.** Find out the difference between a grant and a loan, the way work-study can help with college costs, and more. Read **Financial Aid Can Help You Afford College**.
- ☐ **Continue talking with your family about paying for college.** Start planning your financial strategy. Most families use a combination of savings, current income, and loans to pay their share of tuition and other costs.
- ☐ **Take the PSAT/NMSQT®.** Juniors who take the PSAT/NMSQT, which is given in October, are automatically entered into the National Merit® Scholarship Program. Organizations such as the American Indian Graduate Center, Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, and United Negro College Fund use the PSAT/NMSQT and PSAT™ 10 to identify students for scholarships.
- ☐ **Learn the difference between sticker price and net price.** A college's sticker price is its full published cost, while the net price is the cost of attending a college minus grants and scholarships you receive. Knowing the difference will help you understand why most students pay less than full price for college. Read **Focus on Net Price, Not Sticker Price** to learn more.
- ☐ **Get perspectives and tips from people who know.** Visit the **Video Gallery** to watch short videos of college students and education professionals talking about paying for college.
- ☐ **Think about getting college credit while you're still in high school.** Consider taking Advanced Placement® Program (AP®) classes and exams, which can count for college credit, placement, or both, and may help you save money. Read **Getting College Credit Before College** to learn more about AP and other college-level courses.

Notes:

JUNIOR YEAR: WINTER/SPRING

- ☐ **Keep looking up colleges' estimated net prices**—net price calculators get updated every year. Pick a college you're interested in, and go to **College Search** to find its profile. Click Calculate Your Net Price to see that college's estimated net price for you—the cost of attending a college minus the grants and scholarships you might receive.
- ☐ **Start researching scholarship opportunities.** Scholarships are free money; that is, unlike student loans, they don't have to be paid back. Use the College Board **Scholarship Search** tool to find scholarships you might qualify for.
- ☐ **Opt in to the College Board Opportunity Scholarships at cb.org/opportunity**. You can earn scholarships ranging from $500 to $2,000 by completing individual college planning steps. Complete all six steps and you'll be eligible for the $40,000 scholarship.
- ☐ **Get to know the FAFSA.** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the key to having access to federal financial aid. You can find out more about the form at **fafsa.ed.gov**. You can't fill out the FAFSA until after October 1 of your senior year, but you can create your account and get FSA ID to get a head start.
- ☐ **Go to a financial aid event.** Many schools host financial aid nights, so students and their families can get information and ask questions.
- ☐ **Set aside money from a summer job.** Even a little extra money will help you pay for books and living expenses while in college or enable you to buy some of the things you need to make a smooth transition to college.
- ☐ **Gather the documents you'll need to fill out your financial aid applications.** You and your parents will need to gather tax returns, income statements, and lists of assets to prepare to fill out the FAFSA, the CSS Profile™, and other applications. Read **How to Complete the FAFSA**.

Notes: