**HIGH SCHOOL CHECKLIST**

**9th GRADE**

* Create a four year high school plan. Make sure you know what high school courses are required by colleges and that you are on the right track. Map out when these courses should be taken. Familiarize yourself with the various levels of courses offered.
* Take challenging classes in core academic subjects: most colleges require four years of English, at least three years of social studies, three years of mathematics, and three years of science; and many require two years of a foreign language. Round out your course load with classes in technology & arts.
* Start thinking about careers. Identify interests – not just in academics but in all areas. This will help you focus on goals. Discuss career options with others, such as parents, counselor, teachers, recent college graduates who are working, professionals in the community, etc.
* Actively take part in an extracurricular activity (sport, school club, music or drama group, community volunteer activity). Remember that colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity than a loose connection to several activities.
* Meet your school counselor.
* Save for college.
* Summer enrichment.
* Save copies of your report cards, awards, honors and best work for your academic portfolio.
* Athletes, artists, scholars and others should start collecting items (such as game tapes, newspaper clippings, stats, awards, artwork, school papers, etc.) for their portfolios.

**10TH GRADE**

* Make sure you know what high school courses are required by colleges and that you are on the right track. Map out when these courses should be taken. Familiarize yourself with the various levels of courses offered.
* Take challenging classes in core academic subjects: most colleges require four years of English, at least three years of social studies, three years of mathematics, and three years of science; and many require two years of a foreign language. Round out your course load with classes in technology & arts.
* Start thinking about careers. Identify interests – not just in academics but in all areas. This will help you focus on goals. Discuss career options with others, such as parents, counselor, teachers, recent college graduates who are working, professionals in the community, etc.
* Actively take part in an extracurricular activity (sport, school club, music or drama group, community volunteer activity). Remember that colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity than a loose connection to several activities.
* Meet with your school counselor again.
* Prepare for the PSAT and ACT PLAN. After taking these tests your sophomore year, you can then work on any disclosed academic weaknesses while there is still ample time to improve them.
* Attend college and career fairs
* Actively participate in a school activity or volunteer effort. These activities help students develop time-management skills and enrich their school experience.
* Tour college campuses. Even if there is no interest in attending the college you are visiting, it will help you learn what to look for in a college.
* Summer enrichment.

**11TH GRADE**

* 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. Talk to friends, family, teachers, and recent grads now in college. List college features that interest you.
* Visit the counseling office or website to find out when college representatives will be visiting. Examine catalogs and guides in the College & Career Room.
* Make a file to manage your college search, testing, and application data.
* Start SAT and/or ACT test prep.
* In the Spring, register for and take exams for college admissions. Many colleges accept the SAT or ACT. Check with colleges you are interested in to see what tests they require.
* Take college visits and attend college fairs.
* Begin a search for financial aid sources.
* Develop a list of 15 or 20 colleges that attract you. Look at their website for information about financial aid and academic programs that interest you. Check application dates – large universities may have early dates or rolling admissions.
* If you are an athlete planning to continue playing a sport in college, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center ([www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)).
* Find a full-time or part-time job, or participate in a camp or summer college program.
* Create a résumé – a record of accomplishments, activities, and work experiences since you started high school.
* Update your portfolio. (A portfolio might include awards, game tapes, newspaper clippings, etc.)
* Begin preparing for the application process: draft application essays, collect writing samples; assemble portfolios or audition tapes.

**12TH GRADE**

* Keep taking classes that challenge you. Some colleges require four years in the core content area (English, Math, Social Studies, Science, and/or World Language). Narrow your list of colleges to 5 to 10. Meet with your counselor about them and, if you’ve not yet done so, download college applications and financial aid forms. Plan to visit as many of these colleges as possible.
* Meet with your counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and will fulfill college requirements.
* Create a master list or calendar that includes: tests, college application due dates, financial aid forms/scholarship deadlines, and Manual’s application processing deadlines. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO DEADLINES.
* Ask for the counselor and /or teacher recommendations if you need them. Give counselors and teachers the proper forms at least two weeks before colleges require them.
* If you are submitting essays, write first drafts and have someone read them.
* If you have not had your test scores sent to the college to which you are applying, be sure to contact the College Board or ACT to have them sent.
* If you apply to colleges online, be sure to have your high school transcript sent – it goes to colleges separately.
* Keep active in school. If you are wait-listed, the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and learned of its decision.
* You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April.
* Colleges cannot require a deposit or commitment to attend before May 1. By that postmarked date, you must inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid. (Questions? Talk to your counselor)
* Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college.
* Complete scholarship applications. Apply for as many as you can – you may be eligible for more than you think.
* As soon after January 1 as possible, complete and submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), along with any other financial aid applications your school(s) of choice may require. You can complete the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). You should submit your FAFSA by the earliest financial aid deadline of the schools to which you are applying, usually by early February.