

College Preparation Plan for 10th Graders

- Set up an appointment to talk to your college counselor at school early in the school year and maintain regular contact with him/her to discuss college preparation and planning. Subject support is a good time to set up a meeting.
- Review your 4 year course work plan and make sure you are on track. Compare your plan to the requirements of some colleges you may be interested in.
- Take the most challenging courses you can handle that are offered at your school.
- **Focus on your academics. Keep your grades high.**
- Reassess your **extracurricular activities** and update your list of those activities so you will have the information when you are applying to colleges. Keep your list in your college planning binder/folder. (Start a college planning folder/binder if you have not done so.) As far as your activities:
 - Are there any that relate to what you may want to study in college?
 - If not, can you think of some ways to get relevant experience in an area related to your career interests?
 - Are you participating in any service activities? Find one, or more, opportunities that mean something to you and fit with your God given abilities and interests.
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- **Put important dates related to college on your calendar.** Include the dates for the **PSAT** (October), any **SAT** or **ACTs** you plan to take this school year (probably towards the end of the school year), planned college fairs, college visits, etc. **A good time to take the SAT is near, or shortly after, you complete the third course in your algebra I, II and geometry series of math courses, as these subjects are heavily covered on the tests.**
- Get more serious about your **prep for the PSAT, SAT and/or ACT.** There is no one thing more important than your standardized test scores to most colleges so give these the attention they deserve.
 - Did you know your PSAT score could lead to a college scholarship? Look into the National Merit Scholarship.
 - Sites to help you prepare include: collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice and khanacademy.org/sat. You can link your PSAT/SAT scores to Khan Academy and an individualized study plan will be set up for you based on your strengths and weaknesses.
 - Consider taking a preparatory course if you do not test well, are trying need more structured preparation.
 - Purchase a study guide book, if you prefer to practice with paper and pencil, and set up a schedule to work through it.
 - Read good literature as much as possible. This will help your reading and writing scores on the SAT and ACT.
- Behavior matters. Any behavioral issues you have in high school will be part of your permanent record that colleges will see when they get your transcript.
- Think about the types of education/training that are available to you after high school. There are 2-year colleges and 4-year colleges. Think about the types of work that interest you and which type of school would help you reach your goals. Look at community college, technical schools, trade schools, liberal arts colleges, research schools, etc. Make a list of the programs and schools that interest you after doing some online research to find out more about them. It is a good idea to come up with a list of questions that you find answers to about each school so you can easily compare the schools you research. Consider what the school is known for, location (urban or rural), cost, overall size of the campus and

number of students, average class size, distance from home, etc.

- How is your college savings going?
 - Check in with your parents about this.
 - How can you improve the financial picture? Job?
 - Do the **FAFSA4caster** to get an idea of your families out of pocket expenses for college.
 - Take a look at the specific costs of some of the colleges you are interested in to get an idea of how much you are going to need.
 - Did you find any scholarships that seemed like they might be a good fit for you when you did research last year?
 - Are you staying on track to qualify for those, or do you need to be doing something differently? If you have not identified any particular ones to pursue yet, do some research on the scholarships offered by your favorite colleges. Following are a few sites to help you, but there are many others: bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search, wikihow.com/Get-a-Full-Scholarship#Applying_for_University_Scholarships_sub, cfnc.org, finaid.org