

College Preparation Plan for 11th Graders

- **Continue your SAT/ACT prep** through the college board website (full tests and the question of the day app are available here), Khan Academy (remember to link you PSAT/SAT scores to khanacademy.org so an individualized study plan can be designed based on your strengths and weaknesses on those tests.), a course you attend, and/or working through an SAT study book.
 - **Keep reading** the great works of literature to improve your scores in reading and writing. Review algebra I, II and geometry for the math sections of the tests by practicing problems.
 - BCCA students are encouraged to **take the SAT** in the spring of this school year, but they can sign up for the test at any time, and take it as many times as they, and their parents desire. You may want to take an **ACT** as well to see how you do on a test that is a bit different than the SAT. Most schools will accept either so you can use whichever one you do best on.
- Work extra hard to earn top **grades** this year. **This academic year is the most critical of your 4 years of high school because the grades you get and courses you take may be the last things on your transcript at the time you apply to college.** Your senior year grades may not be in yet when you apply to colleges.
- **Extracurricular activities** should continue this year. It is time to take on leadership roles, where possible. **Leadership** and service may help you qualify for scholarships. Update your college folder/binder with any new or continuing activities you are involved in.
- Ramp up the **college visits** and go to college fairs for a broader look at many schools if you are still unsure of which direction to go. Make a list of some **reach schools** (that you would love to attend but may not be able to get into because your qualifications are below or at the low end of the schools typical freshman admitted students), some schools that you think you will be a **good fit** for (you are likely to be at least in the middle 50% of this year's freshmen with your GPA and SAT scores at these schools), and a school or 2 that are your **fall back** schools (you exceed the middle 50% GPA and SAT numbers for this year's freshman class there and are pretty positive you will get accepted.)
- Think about people (teachers, pastors, employers, scout leaders, coaches, etc.) you want to ask for college **letters of recommendation**. You will need at least one, and colleges usually require the mandatory one to be from one of your core teachers. You may want to go ahead and speak to them at the end of the school year about whether they think they can write a good letter of recommendation for you or not. This will give them plenty of time to work on your letter if they say yes. Remember that they may say no if they do not feel they can write a strong letter for you and it is good for them to tell you rather than to write a letter for you that is not strong. If a teacher turns you down, ask what you can do differently in their class and strive to make the necessary changes. Maybe by the fall of your senior year they will feel differently about writing a letter for you, but if not, ask someone else.
- How is the **college savings** coming? What can you do to improve the situation? There are scholarships out there, pursue them rather than waiting for someone to come to you with an offer. Look at specific scholarships offered at your schools of interest and elsewhere.

Summer after Junior Year

- Work? Serve? Apprenticeship? Learn? Practice? Read! Do not spend the entire summer sleeping.
- **Decide which colleges you want to apply to**, out of the schools you have researched and maybe already visited. Include at least 1 reach school, 2 or more good fit (middle 50% schools), and 1-2 fall back schools. There are fees to apply to each school, and these add up quickly, so you do not want to apply to schools you are not pretty serious about attending.
- Make decisions regarding whether to apply as an **early decision** (binding) applicant, an **early action** (nonbinding) applicant, or a **regular decision** applicant at each of the schools you want to apply to. (Early action can have a higher acceptance rate than regular decision and may be the best way to apply to a reach school, but do your research before you decide which way to go at each school.)
- How much will college cost? Do the **FAFSA4caster** (or redo it if you have done it previously) to get an idea of how much college will cost? This will also help you see if you qualify for grants. The actual **FAFSA** and CSS profile can be done on or after **October 1 of your senior year**.
- **Update your calendar** with application deadlines, scholarship deadlines, college visit dates planned, and SAT, ACT, and subject test dates.
- Begin to work on your applications and essays for specific colleges and on the common app. which many colleges accept. You will be very busy your senior year and will be happy to have some of the work done in advance.