



High School Planning Checklist

For 9th grade students

EXPLORE

✓ Explore colleges and careers.

- Talk about your future dreams and plans with your family, friends and other adults and set goals.
- Ask others about their careers and the education/training necessary.
- Think about what is most important to you in a college.
- Visit a college campus on a field trip with your school or your family.
- Explore colleges online.

✓ Learn about paying for college.

- Learn about financial aid and attend workshops with your family.
- Set up and regularly contribute to a college savings account.
- Search for local scholarships that you can apply for.

PLAN

✓ Do well in school.

- Set goals for the year.
- Go to all of your classes.
- Discover how you learn best.
- Learn how to make outlines and do research.
- Ask for help and use online resources.
- Turn in all assignments.
- Read-it makes you smarter!

✓ Take the right classes.

- Challenge yourself with honors or advanced classes.
- Explore ways to earn college credit while you're still in high school.
- Plan to take math all 4 years in high school.
- Take a foreign/world language course if offered.

ENGAGE

✓ Get involved.

- Try something new!
- Get involved in school and community activities.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Make a plan for summer.
- Find a mentor – a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, trusted adult or older student that you can talk to.

✓ Make good choices.

- Choose to hang out with friends that share positive goals and interests.
- Be safe online and on your phone.
- Avoid risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having sex.
- Be kind; treat others with respect.



High School Planning Checklist

For 10th grade students

EXPLORE

✓ Explore colleges and careers.

- Explore different occupations that match your interests.
- Make a list of colleges that interest you. Confirm that they have the program or major that match your interests.
- Research admissions requirements.
- Take a virtual campus tour or visit a campus with
- Attend a nearby college fair.

✓ Learn about paying for college.

- Learn about financial aid and attend workshops with your family.
- Explore the different costs and net prices of colleges.
- Set up and regularly contribute to a college savings account.
- Search for local scholarships that you can apply for.

PLAN

✓ Take the right classes.

- Challenge yourself with honors or advanced classes.
- Explore ways to earn college credit while you're still in high school.
- Take a full schedule of classes.
- Set goals for the year.
- Attend all your classes and turn in all assignments.
- Ask for help and use online resources.

✓ Practice good study skills.

- Use a planner or calendar.
- Get enough sleep.
- Update your file of important documents.
- Prepare for college admission tests by taking practice tests or the PSAT 10.

ENGAGE

✓ Get involved.

- Try something new!
- Get involved in school and community activities.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Make a plan for summer.
- Find a mentor – a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, other trusted adult or older student that you can talk to.

✓ Make good choices.

- Choose to hang out with friends that share positive goals and interests.
- Be safe online and on your phone.
- Avoid risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having sex.
- Be kind; treat others with respect.



High School Planning Checklist

For 11th grade students

EXPLORE

✓ Explore colleges and careers.

- List 3-5 careers that interest you and the education you will need.
- Review what is most important to you in a college; refine your list of colleges to 5-10.
- Sign up to receive information from colleges.
- Attend a college fair.
- Draft a college admissions essay.
- Participate in an information interview for a career you're interested in.

✓ Learn about paying for college.

- Learn about financial aid and attend workshops.
- Complete the FAFSA4Caster on the Federal Student Aid website.
- Regularly contribute to a college savings account.
- Search and apply for scholarships.

PLAN

✓ Prepare for your senior year.

- Review your transcript with your counselor and make sure you are on track for graduation.
- Take dual credit courses.
- Make a list of deadlines for your top colleges – include scholarship deadlines too.
- Identify teachers whom you can request a letter of recommendations for college applications.
- Register for and take the ACT or SAT in the fall; attend test prep courses if available.

✓ Stay organized.

- Maintain a file of important documents, personal information, writing samples and awards.
- Create a resume with a list of all your activities and accomplishments.
- Use a professional email for school needs.

ENGAGE

✓ Get involved.

- Continue participating in school and community activities; be a leader!
- Volunteer in your community.
- Make a plan for summer; take summer enrichment courses or get a job.
- Find a mentor – a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, other trusted adult or older student that you can talk to.
- Be a role model and mentor for younger students.

✓ Make good choices.

- Choose to hang out with friends that share positive goals and interests.
- Be safe online and on your phone.
- Avoid risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having sex.
- Be kind; treat others with respect.



High School Planning Checklist

For 12th grade students

PLAN

✓ Stay organized and plan ahead.

- Take the ACT or SAT if you haven't taken it or want to re-take it. Send test scores to colleges you plan to apply to.
- Narrow your list of colleges: 3 to 5 is a good number. Always have a backup plan!
- Finalize your personal statement or essay and draft a resume.
- Request letters of recommendation and transcripts for your applications.

✓ Make a plan for paying for college.

- Create a FSA ID and gather all the information you will need to apply for federal financial aid (FAFSA).
- Explore financial aid and scholarships and make a list of deadlines and required materials.
- Apply for as many scholarships as you can and stay on top of deadlines.

APPLY

✓ Apply for college admission.

- October is College Knowledge Month: many schools in Minnesota are waiving college application fees during October.
- Make sure that your high school transcript, test scores, letters of recommendation and other supplemental materials are sent to colleges by their deadlines.
- Check your email regularly – this will be the main way colleges will contact you.

✓ Apply for financial aid.

- Submit your FAFSA, which is available October 1. Consider attending a hands-on workshop for completing the FAFSA.
- Add all of the schools where you plan to apply to the FAFSA.
- Make sure your Student Aid Report (SAR) is correct and make any changes.

ENGAGE

✓ Get it done!

- No slacking on grades! Many colleges and scholarship applications look at 2nd semester grades.
- Consider applying for a summer program at a university, or an internship or job in a field you're interested in.
- Remember that many college orientations happen during the summer so include this in your plans.
- If you are male, you must register with Selective Service within 30 days (before or after) your 18th birthday. If you don't, you will not be eligible for federal financial aid for college.
- Look for decision letters and financial aid award letters; keep track of next steps.
- Make a decision! Pay attention to acceptance deadlines and completing appropriate forms.