



College Bound Timeline



9th Grade:

- Meet with the school counselor to discuss high school graduation requirements, course selection, and college preparation opportunities.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities, clubs, and community service to build a well-rounded resume and explore interests.
- Start building good study habits and time management skills to succeed academically.
- Don't put too much pressure on yourself. 9th and 10th grades are for exploration, intellectual curiosity, breadth, discovery.
- Use private scholarship search engines + school counselors to find scholarships you can apply to before senior year. Start a general list, and then consolidate as your interests change + narrow.

10th Grade:

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT to gauge SAT benchmark and qualify for scholarship opportunities. Get ready for the promotional snail mail + email from colleges to start coming in and qualify for scholarship opportunities.
- Meet with the school counselor to review academic progress and what classes should you take to challenge yourself?
- Continue to pursue extracurricular activities, leadership roles, and community service to demonstrate personal growth and leadership potential.

11th Grade:

- Meet with the school counselor to develop a college application plan, including selecting target schools, scheduling campus visits, and completing college applications.
- Research colleges and universities that match academic

interests, career goals, and financial considerations.

- Continue to excel academically and maintain a high GPA to meet admission requirements and qualify for scholarships.
- Start visiting colleges and putting together a large list of which ones you'd like to investigate further. Remember, this is your initial list. You will cut and add schools. Don't worry too much about finding the perfect fit.
- Take the SAT or ACT and in Spring, Summer SAT subject tests to demonstrate academic readiness and improve chances of admission and scholarships.
- Start applying for financial aid by submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA and CSS Profile) as soon as possible after October 1st of the student's junior year, and other scholarship applications by their respective deadlines.

12th Grade:

- Submit college applications, including essays, transcripts, and recommendations, by the deadlines set by each college or university. Early Action and Early Decision deadlines are typically in November, while regular decision deadlines are usually in January or February.
- Follow up with colleges to confirm receipt of application materials and track application status.
- Review financial aid award letters from colleges and compare costs and benefits. Learn how to appeal your awards correctly.
- Make a final decision on the college to attend and submit the enrollment deposit by the May 1st deadline, which is the National Candidates Reply Date.
- Submit a housing application, if applicable, by the deadline set by the college or university.
- Attend orientation and registration sessions, and select classes for the first semester.
- Submit final high school transcripts to the college or university.

Pro Tips for Counselors

Start early: Encourage your students to begin researching and preparing for the college application process as early as possible. This includes discussing their interests, exploring different college options, and establishing a timeline for completing applications.

Keep organized: Help your students stay on top of deadlines and requirements by creating a checklist or spreadsheet to track their progress. This will help them avoid missing important deadlines and ensure they have all necessary materials ready.

Focus on fit: Help your students identify colleges that align with their academic and personal goals. Encourage them to research the college's academic programs, campus culture, and location to determine if it's a good fit.

Practice writing skills: Strong writing skills are essential for college applications. Encourage your students to practice writing essays and personal statements, and provide feedback to help them improve their writing skills.

Seek out resources: Encourage your students to take advantage of resources available to them, such as college fairs, college websites, and informational sessions. These resources can provide valuable insights into the college application process.

Manage expectations: Help your students understand that the college application process can be challenging and competitive. It's important to manage their expectations and encourage them to have a positive attitude throughout the process.

Support their emotional well-being: Applying to college can be stressful and overwhelming. It's important to provide emotional support to your students and encourage them to practice self-care to manage stress levels during this time.

