# 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.

## 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!

## 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.

## LEARN ABOUT PAYING FOR COLLEGE
- ✓ 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.

## TAKE THE RIGHT CLASSES
- ✓ 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.

## MAKE GOOD CHOICES
- ✓ 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPLORE</th>
<th>PLAN</th>
<th>ENGAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Explore colleges and careers.</td>
<td>✓ Take the right classes.</td>
<td>✓ Get involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Explore different occupations that match your interests.</td>
<td>□ Challenge yourself with honors or advanced classes.</td>
<td>□ Try something new!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Make a list of colleges that interest you. Confirm that they have the program or major that match your interests.</td>
<td>□ Explore ways to earn college credit while you’re still in high school.</td>
<td>□ Get involved in school and community activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Research admissions requirements.</td>
<td>□ Take a full schedule of classes.</td>
<td>□ Volunteer in your community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Take a virtual campus tour or visit a campus with</td>
<td>□ Set goals for the year.</td>
<td>□ Make a plan for summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Attend a nearby college fair.</td>
<td>□ Attend all your classes and turn in all assignments.</td>
<td>□ Find a mentor – a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, other trusted adult or older student that you can talk to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Learn about paying for college.</td>
<td>✓ Practice good study skills.</td>
<td>✓ Make good choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Learn about financial aid and attend workshops with your family.</td>
<td>□ Use a planner or calendar.</td>
<td>□ Choose to hang out with friends that share positive goals and interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Explore the different costs and net prices of colleges.</td>
<td>□ Get enough sleep.</td>
<td>□ Be safe online and on your phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Set up and regularly contribute to a college savings account.</td>
<td>□ Update your file of important documents.</td>
<td>□ Avoid risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Search for local scholarships that you can apply for.</td>
<td>□ Prepare for college admission tests by taking practice tests or the PSAT 10.</td>
<td>□ Be kind; treat others with respect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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# High School Planning Checklist

**For 11th grade students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>PLAN</th>
<th>ENGAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Explore colleges and careers.</td>
<td>✓ Prepare for your senior year.</td>
<td>✓ Get involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ List 3-5 careers that interest you and the education you will need.</td>
<td>□ Review your transcript with your counselor and make sure you are on track for graduation.</td>
<td>□ Continue participating in school and community activities; be a leader!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Review what is most important to you in a college; refine your list of colleges to 5-10.</td>
<td>□ Take dual credit courses.</td>
<td>□ Volunteer in your community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Sign up to receive information from colleges.</td>
<td>□ Make a list of deadlines for your top colleges – include scholarship deadlines too.</td>
<td>□ Make a plan for summer; take summer enrichment courses or get a job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Attend a college fair.</td>
<td>□ Identify teachers whom you can request a letter of recommendations for college applications.</td>
<td>□ Find a mentor – a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, other trusted adult or older student that you can talk to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Draft a college admissions essay.</td>
<td>□ Register for and take the ACT or SAT in the fall; attend test prep courses if available.</td>
<td>□ Be a role model and mentor for younger students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Participate in an information interview for a career you’re interested in.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Learn about paying for college.</td>
<td>✓ Stay organized.</td>
<td>✓ Make good choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Learn about financial aid and attend workshops.</td>
<td>□ Maintain a file of important documents, personal information, writing samples and awards.</td>
<td>□ Choose to hang out with friends that share positive goals and interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Complete the FAFSA4Caster on the Federal Student Aid website.</td>
<td>□ Create a resume with a list of all your activities and accomplishments.</td>
<td>□ Be safe online and on your phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Regularly contribute to a college savings account.</td>
<td>□ Use a professional email for school needs.</td>
<td>□ Avoid risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Search and apply for scholarships.</td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Be kind; treat others with respect.</td>
</tr>
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# High School Planning Checklist

## For 12<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

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