Student’s College Planning Guide
Use this checklist to help prepare you for educational opportunities after high school.

In 7th & 8th Grade

☐ Begin thinking about the high school classes that will prepare you for college. Take the most difficult classes you can handle.
☐ Ask your parents or teachers to help you develop good study habits.
☐ Practice setting goals.
☐ Volunteer in your community.

In 9th & 10th Grade

☐ Take interest and skills assessments to help you think about possible career options.
☐ Talk with your guidance counselor and parents about careers that interest you.
☐ Create a tentative high school class plan.
☐ Enroll in a summer enrichment program.

☐ Take interest and skills assessments to help you explore careers that interest you and match your skills and abilities.
☐ Talk with your guidance counselor about college and career options and the education required for those careers.
☐ Talk with your parents about saving and paying for college.
☐ Talk with friends, teachers, counselors and your parents about college.

☐ Take the PLAN in tenth grade to prepare for the ACT, and to identify areas where you need improvement.
☐ Participate in extracurricular activities.
☐ Review your high school class plan. Take the most difficult classes you can handle. Stay focused on your schoolwork.
☐ Explore internships and apprenticeships.
☐ Enroll in a summer enrichment program.

In 11th Grade

☐ Attend college and financial aid fairs.
☐ Mentor others and have a mentor for yourself.
☐ Take the PSAT in the fall to prepare for the SAT, and to identify areas where you need improvement.
☐ Narrow down possible career options and investigate the type of education that is needed.
☐ Request materials from schools that interest you, and visit their Web sites.
☐ Arrange campus visits to those schools that interest you. Meet with an admissions officer, a financial aid representative, faculty members and college students.
☐ Participate in extracurricular activities.

☐ Request admissions and financial aid forms.
☐ Consider earning college credit while in high school through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Post-Secondary Enrollment Options or College in the Schools.
☐ Take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring.
☐ Review your high school class plan. Take the most difficult classes you can handle. Stay focused on your schoolwork. Make sure you are meeting your high school graduation requirements.
☐ Enroll in a summer enrichment program.
☐ Get a job to earn and save money for college, or explore your skills through an internship or apprenticeship.
☐ Research your private scholarship options.
In 12th Grade

- Meet with your guidance counselor to review your high school class plan. Take the most difficult classes you can handle. Stay focused on your schoolwork.

- Consider earning college credit while in high school through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Post-Secondary Enrollment Options or College in the Schools.

- Arrange campus visits to those schools that interest you (if you haven’t already done so).

- Take or retake the ACT and/or SAT in the fall.

- Select the schools to which you will apply. Make a list of important admissions and financial aid deadlines for each school.

- Attend a financial aid event. Review a copy of Focus on Financial Aid.

- Participate in extracurricular activities.

- Create a resume of your academic, athletic and work activities as well as other achievements. Prepare a portfolio if you’re interested in the arts.

- Search and apply for private scholarships.

- Ask for recommendations (if required) from teachers, counselors and others who can comment on your abilities and talents.

- Apply to four to six colleges that interest you. Do not wait until just before the deadline.

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1. You and your parents must complete your taxes before submitting the FAFSA.

- Review you Student Aid Report (SAR) for accuracy. If you make corrections, return the form as quickly as possible.

- Have your high school transcript sent to those colleges to which you’ve applied.

- Choose a college and send in any required forms or deposits (housing, meal plan, etc.). Notify in writing those schools you don’t plan to attend.

- Get a job to earn money for college.