

FROM CARPOOL TO COLLEGE

Simple College Planning Checklist

*Helping Families Navigate What Comes Next.***Parent: Can you just give me checklist of what to do and when?***Us: Sure. Here's a general framework.*

Grade 9

- ☐ Create two emails: one for the full time, permanent “adulting” email, the other purely for scholarship search.
- ☐ Read the course catalog of your high school
- ☐ Know that you will be ranked, whether they say they “report rank” or not
- ☐ Know the GPA you apply with to college is from grades 9 + 10 + 11 only!
- ☐ Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Enrollment
- ☐ Focus on academic success and building strong study habits
- ☐ Explore extracurricular activities and find interests
- ☐ Begin thinking about potential career interests
- ☐ Introduction of GPA (report card grades build GPA, and transcript prints final grades only)
- ☐ Academic Support know when to hold em, know when to ask for help
- ☐ Have a 504? IEP? Understand what it is, how it works, and assess if the support these plans provide is working.
- ☐ Connect with teachers. Mentors are amazing.
- ☐ Create a 4-year academic plan with challenging courses
- ☐ Join clubs and activities that interest you. Middle school activities and achievements do not have a place on college applications.
- ☐ Start a record of extracurricular activities and achievements
- ☐ Take PSAT 8/9 (if offered at your school)
- ☐ Be mindful of distractions, and strive for balance
- ☐ Parents: Meet with guidance counselor to understand graduation requirements
- ☐ Parents: Start researching college savings options (529 plans, etc.)
- ☐ Parents: Encourage involvement in meaningful activities
- ☐ Parents: Pay attention to how frequently you log into your child's grade portal and establish a collaborative routine with your child.

Grade 10

- ☐ Take challenging courses and maintain strong GPA

- ☐ Explore colleges and start thinking about future goals
- ☐ Take Myers Briggs, Strong Interest Inventory
- ☐ Prepare for PSAT / NMSQT and consider taking a prep course
- ☐ Discuss college affordability and financial planning
- ☐ Attend college fairs and explore different options
- ☐ Plan a rigorous course load for junior year
- ☐ standardized testing and registration calendar
- ☐ With your personal email exclusively for scholarship search, join platforms like GoingMerry & get a sense of what you can work toward
- ☐ Read the course catalog of your high school, paying attention to dual enrollment and college-credit bearing classes. Take them!
- ☐ Set a GPA goal for Jr. Year and work toward it
- ☐ Remember the GPA you apply with to college is from grades 9 + 10 + 11 only! Statistically, this is an important year for building the foundation of your GPA.
- ☐ Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Enrollment...great options if that's your jam.
- ☐ Quality-check your homework? Take an honest look at your study habits, quality of work, and improve them no matter where you are.
- ☐ Try a new club or sport
- ☐ Begin thinking about potential career interests, or, rule some out!
- ☐ Learn to add value to the classroom by thoughtful participation.
- ☐ Have a 504? IEP? Check with your counselor/case manager to monitor efficacy.
- ☐ Friend groups shift. It's normal.
- ☐ Evaluate your 4-year academic plan. Any strands of sequential electives you'd like to take?
- ☐ Join clubs and activities that interest you
- ☐ Keep that record of extracurricular activities and achievements
- ☐ Continue to be mindful of distractions and strive for balance.
- ☐ Attend a regional College Fair or two (regional just means in your neighborhood~ it will host colleges from around the country. At the fair, the person at the table is likely the one who will read your application. Start a relationship!
- ☐ Parents: How are you doing on monitoring your child's grade portal? Do you think you can be completely hands-off by Senior year?

Junior Year

- ☐ Outline your financial aid plan with your family: use the financial aid calculators found on individual college websites, also known as net price calculators, to determine how much your family will need to contribute for your college education. Bear in mind if you plan to attend law, medical, post-Bachelor's level programs, you need to consider the added cost to attend. Graduate school has a higher tuition rate per credit than undergraduate
- ☐ Determine application deadlines for each of your schools. Early ED and EA apps are typically due November 1 of Senior year, while most regular admissions apps are due between Jan 1 and March 1. Rolling Admissions colleges open their apps as early as August. The CA for the application year is available at the beginning of August, will consolidate those deadlines for you. RU and PSU are Rolling with early action typically by Nov 1. UNC Chapel Hill and many southern schools large flagship have an Oct 15 deadline. Direct entry PA, PT, DO, MD will demand application completion by November 1 whether it is stated or not!
- ☐ Discuss college application timelines and requirements

- ☐ Build a balanced college list
- ☐ Essay thoughts? Finish up over the summer.
- ☐ Take the October PSAT/NMSQT
- ☐ Khan Academy provides free personalized PSAT practice at Official SAT Practice on Khan Academy
- ☐ Prepare for the SAT and/or ACT: Begin preparing for the SAT and/or ACT at the start of Junior Year IT is a good idea to take a full-length practice test of each and use the results to help you decide which test is best for you. Many students take their test of choice two or three times, with the final test in early Fall of their Senior year.
- ☐ Gain leadership experience in your organizations
- ☐ Keep track of community service hours
- ☐ Start collecting materials for your portfolio
- ☐ Make a list of 10-15 schools you're interested in and add them to Naviance/SCOIR/SchoolLinks
- ☐ Attend College Fairs
- ☐ Attend Open Houses
- ☐ Attend Financial Aid Parent Nights
- ☐ Register for AP exams
- ☐ Get to know the regionally assigned admissions counselor of each school to where you are applying November:
- ☐ Stay focused on Grades
- ☐ Continue your research in potential colleges
- ☐ Continue your research in potential careers
- ☐ Start Campus Visits
- ☐ Continue gathering materials for your resume and portfolio December:
- ☐ Review PSAT Scores: find out which areas are your strongest, and which you need to improve
- ☐ Are you on grade level? What national percentile are you? This is a great indicator of your academic growth chart.
- ☐ Begin preparing for the SAT and/or ACT January/February
- ☐ Review your colleges list in Naviance and visits the individual college websites (bot)
- ☐ Gather admissions information and personal college requirements (Tuition, location, major, etc.)
- ☐ Register online for the Spring SAT/ACT
- ☐ Schedule your Junior Conference to discuss possible college choices March
- ☐ Continue utilizing Naviance for your college search
- ☐ Continue visiting colleges while they are still in session
- ☐ Line up an internship, summer job, volunteer opportunity or other activity April-May
- ☐ Make sure you are registered for May and/or June SAT
- ☐ Meet with your counselor to discuss Senior year schedule
- ☐ Take May SAT
- ☐ Brainstorm teachers for Letters of Recommendation June
- ☐ Take June SAT/ACT
- ☐ Narrow your college list down to 6-9. Keep in mind high, medium, safe
- ☐ Gather all application materials
- ☐ Begin application essays/personal statements
- ☐ Request letters of Recommendation from your teachers

Senior Year

July / August

- ☐ Continue to finalize your college selections
- ☐ Maintain an open mind and fluidity with adding schools, perhaps some you've never heard of!
- ☐ Keep visiting schools and attending open houses and/ or information sessions
- ☐ Develop College Essay/ Personal Statements
- ☐ Complete Resume
- ☐ Complete "Brag Sheet" on Naviance

September

- ☐ Register for Fall SAT and or ACT exams
- ☐ Review application essays and personal statements
- ☐ Select final college choices
- ☐ Request Letters of Recommendation from counselor
- ☐ Remind teachers about LOR you requested last Spring
- ☐ Begin Scholarship Search/ Review scholarship information and criteria
- ☐ Attend Senior Parent Night
- ☐ Continue to visit campuses and attend College Fairs~ this time, target the schools to which you are absolutely applying. Dig deep.

October

- ☐ Complete application for first choice colleges.
- ☐ Be mindful of ED and EA deadlines, and especially Rolling
- ☐ CSS profile
- ☐ FAFSA profile
- ☐ Update Naviance/Scoir/SchoolLinkswith application submittal status and request transcripts
- ☐ Counselor is responsible for sending official transcripts, school profile, and counselor recommendations
- ☐ October SAT Administration
- ☐ Attend Senior Parent Night

November

- ☐ Try to submit applications by Thanksgiving
- ☐ Apply for FAFSA PIN number
- ☐ November SAT administration
- ☐ Attend Financial Aid Night
- ☐ December SAT administration

Late Fall / Winter

- ☐ File FAFSA, apply before deadlines to have greatest chance for financial aid considerations
- ☐ Request mid year transcripts if required; many schools send automatically/by default. Check with your school counseling department.

- ☐ Advise your counselor of acceptances, deferrals and declinations. Make notation on Scoir/Naviance/SchoolLinks
- ☐ Review scholarship information, especially local ones
- ☐ Apply for local scholarships through School Counseling Department
- ☐ Note any schedule changes to colleges

Spring

- ☐ Confirm summer job, internship, etc.
- ☐ Review financial aid packages as they arrive
- ☐ Send thank you notes to anyone who helped you through the process
- ☐ May 1st deposits due! (But you should have already deposited!)
- ☐ Maintain academic grades.
- ☐ Note: Colleges can withdraw acceptances if there is a significant drop in grades or change in courses (different than what was reported on Common App).
- ☐ Get ahead of notifying college if there was a change in Senior schedule or drop in grades. Consult with your School Counselor
- ☐ Pay attention to housing deposits and timelines: the earlier, the better.
- ☐ If you know where you want to attend, make that commitment and let the other schools know that you will not be attending so they can hit their wait list for other students.
- ☐ Facebook pages, Instagram (roommate search, new friends)
- ☐ Enjoy prom, maintain clean social media, watch those Snaps
- ☐ Stay out of trouble!
- ☐ Visit New Student Portal frequently
- ☐ Maintain New Student Onboarding
- ☐ Register & Attend College Orientation: don't forget to grab a note for your HS attendance office excusing the absence as a "college visit"
- ☐ Roommate considerations & surveys, New Student Residential Survey
- ☐ New Student FERPA waivers – FERPA waive your parents (mandatory if they are paying tuition, medical)
- ☐ New Student Placement Tests if needed
- ☐ Send SAT, ACT, AP scores after enrolled to waive Math or English placement tests
- ☐ Get a passport (study abroad, service opportunities, travel ...be ready!)
- ☐ Carry a copy of your health insurance cards in your wallet!
- ☐ When does your Driver's License expire?
- ☐ Book a physical with your pediatrician and transition to a doctor who treats adults. Note vaccination requirements for colleges.

Late Spring/Early Summer after Graduation

- ☐ Get a digital copy of your final transcript and keep it safe; this will help with transfer or graduate school or internships
- ☐ Final transcript will be sent to the college you indicate through Naviance / Scoir / SchoolLinks
- ☐ Maybe take a summer course at your local community college to get ahead or create a credit-safety net or check-off a critical prerequisite
- ☐ Waive University health insurance if you already have health insurance

- ☐ Pay attention to Fall registration instructions & know that Freshmen have the worst schedules (deal with it); Avoid online classes! Hideous!
- ☐ Meal Plan research
- ☐ Parking permit if applicable
- ☐ Inquire about Rush/Greek Life timelines if applicable
- ☐ Send AP Scores if applicable
- ☐ Health plan, 504/IEP transfer with Office of Accessibility Services

Need More Support Navigating the College-Planning Process?

The From Carpool to College digital membership gives families access to practical resources, expert guidance, and college-planning support designed to help you understand what to do, when to do it, and why it matters.

[Explore the From Carpool to College Services](#)

Helping Families Navigate What Comes Next.

A From Carpool to College resource



[www.fromcarpoolto
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