

College and Career Planning for 10th and 11th Graders

There are some steps you can take as a 10th and 11th grader to make sure you're on the right track for college and career. Here's a list to help you navigate the college planning process.

Grade 10

- Meet with your school counselor to ensure your course schedule is challenging enough to prepare you for your future.
- Take the PSAT and the PLAN in 10th grade. These tests provide valuable feedback through the Student Score Reports; you can then work on any academic weaknesses while there is still plenty of time to improve upon them.
- Are you interested in attending a U.S. military academy? If so, you should request a pre-candidate questionnaire.
- Attend college and career fairs. These often take place in the fall, at your school or at the Melbourne Auditorium in October of each year.
- Keep up participation in school activities and/or clubs. Extracurricular activities can help you develop time-management skills and enrich your high school experience.
- Volunteer service is important for a well-rounded student. See your school counselor for a community service proposal and approval.
- Tour campuses. If possible take advantage of vacation or other family travel time to visit colleges or technical centers and see what they're like.
- Start to think about how you will pay for your college or technical education. Consider opening a savings account. Get on the internet and read about college savings.

Grade 11

Fall

- Make sure you meet with your school counselor to ensure your course schedule is challenging enough to prepare you for your future. Think about the possibility of participating in dual enrollment, AP, AICE, IB or other challenging coursework.
- Obtain a social security number, if you do not have one, you will need it to apply for college and financial aid.
- Start to review your college and technical choices and make selections. Use www.flvc.org or <https://www.flchoices.org/> to explore the best options for you! Make a list of at least 10 colleges; you will want to apply to at least 3-6 in the fall of your senior year.
- Study for and sign up to take the **PSAT in October**. Check with your school guidance office for registration details. If you plan to ask for testing accommodations because of a disability, be sure your paperwork has been approved by the College Board. Check with your school counselor for details. **You must take the PSAT in 11th grade to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Competition (NMSQT).**
- Attend the college fair at the Melbourne Auditorium in October, as well as any other college fair opportunities, both locally and nationally.
- Students who plan to pursue Division 1 or Division II sports in college **must** apply for eligibility online through the NCAA Eligibility Center. <https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common/> See your coach or athletic director for specific guidelines.

Spring

- Start to plan to take the SAT (**January**) ACT (**April at high school**) tests. You can locate study materials on www.collegeboard.com or www.actstudent.org. Check the university requirements at the schools you will be applying to for testing requirements. Check with your school guidance office for registration details. If you plan to ask for testing accommodations because of a disability, be sure your paperwork has been approved by the College Board. Check with your school counselor for details. *Consider retaking the ACT or SAT after you receive your score reports. Make sure to study before taking the test again for college admissions.*
- Attend financial aid nights at your high school or local community college to start learning about the FAFSA and the process of applying for financial aid.
- Begin to prepare your college essays. Start to think about your topics. Check the applications of your top colleges to find out if it is an open ended essay or one that asks you to write about yourself.
- Ask a teacher or counselor to write a recommendation that can be used for scholarships and college admissions at the beginning of your senior year.
- Start to check into scholarships and start thinking about how you will pay for college. You can join online scholarship searches such as www.fastweb.com
- If you haven't done so already, visit your top choice colleges and narrow down your choices by July.
- Use the internet to access the websites of colleges you will be applying to in the fall.