

College Planning Timeline

Freshman Year

- Plan challenging high school courses
- Become familiar with college entrance requirements
- Start thinking about reasons for attending college
- Join/continue extracurricular activities
- Attend summer camp at a college to experience a college-like atmosphere
- Research college costs
- Continue/start saving for college
- Meet with your college/career counselor at least once a year
- Explore careers
- Create a professional email account just for college, career, and scholarship opportunities

Sophomore Year

- Continue to take and plan challenging high school courses
- Continue to meet with your college/career counselor at least once a year
- Take the PreACT - a 10th grade multiple-choice assessment that helps students prepare for the experience of taking the ACT® test and provides information regarding their future performance on the exam
- Think about what kind of education/training different careers require
- Start collecting college information
- Visit colleges and talk with college students
- Use this list of college characteristics to decide how to evaluate different colleges
- Continue/start saving for college
- Consider your reasons for going to college and how they relate to your career interests
- Join/continue extracurricular activities
- Explore community college courses for junior and senior year

Junior Year

- Keep meeting with your college/career counselor at least once a year
- Continue to take and plan challenging courses
- Explore community college courses for senior year
- Keep your grades up
- Join an academic club
- Register for the ACT and/or SAT. You should be academically ready to take it by spring. If not, take it early in your senior year. ACT offered at NHS in February/March of junior grade year at no charge.
- Talk with your parents and high school counselor about colleges that interest you
- Prepare a list of questions to ask on campus visits
- Continue to visit colleges and talk with college students
- List, compare, and visit colleges
- Start or update an academic resume
- Consider putting together a portfolio that highlights your special skills and talents
- Check into applying to colleges online
- Investigate scholarship opportunities
- Volunteer for activities and clubs related to career interests

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Senior Year

- Senior year is finally here, and it's full of things to do to get ready for college. Keep track of your progress and upcoming deadlines for testing, admissions and financial aid.
- Review test results and retest, if necessary
- Sign up for the ACT and/or SAT (if you didn't take it as a junior, or if you aren't satisfied with your score, or if you've learned a lot since you first took it.)
- Visit with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and fulfill college admission requirements
- Keep working hard all year; second semester grades can affect scholarship eligibility
- Ask for references from teachers, school counselors, or employers early in the year or at least two weeks before application deadlines. Ask recommenders in person and provide them with a completed brag sheet.
- Visit with admissions counselors who come to your high school
- Attend a college fair
- Begin your college essay(s) early
- Apply for admission at the colleges you've chosen
- Avoid common college application mistakes
- Find out if you qualify for scholarships at each college you have applied to
- Start the financial aid application process – October of senior year
- Attend Financial Aid workshop or attend FAFSA Day
- Visit colleges that have invited you to enroll
- Decide which college to attend, and notify the school of your decision
- Keep track of and observe deadlines for sending in all required fees and paperwork
- Continue to look for scholarship opportunities
- Keep track of important financial aid and scholarship deadlines
- Watch for your Student Aid Report (SAR)—it should arrive four weeks after the FAFSA is filed
- Compare financial aid packages from different schools
- Sign and send in a promissory note if you are borrowing money
- Notify your college about any outside scholarships you received
- Complete Senior Demographic form from Student Services. This form notifies NHS Student Services where to send your final transcript.