



Junior (11th Grade) Future Planning Timeline

This is a key year in the college planning process because you'll be taking standardized tests, narrowing down your college list, and learning more about financial aid. In addition, you'll need to stay involved in your high school courses and activities.

Fall

- Stay on track with your classes and grades.**
Even if your grades haven't been that good so far, it's never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend.
- Take the PSAT.**
College-bound juniors should take the PSAT. Taking the test qualifies you for the National Merit Scholarship program, which means you could earn money for college.
- Evaluate your education options.**
Now is the time to follow a more specific path. Decide whether you want to pursue full-time employment, further education or training (such as a vocational-technical school, career college, or two-year or four-year college), or a military career. If you're interested in attending a military academy, talk to your Guidance Counselor about starting the application process now.
- Make a college list (Colleges I'm Interested in)**
Include colleges that meet your most important criteria (e.g., size, location, cost, academic majors, or special programs). Weigh each of the factors according to their importance to you, and develop a preliminary ranking of the schools on your list.
- Continue gathering college information.**
Go to college fairs, attend college nights, and speak with college representatives who visit your high school. You may be able to narrow your choices or add a school to your list.
- Organize a testing plan.**
Figure out when you'll be taking the SAT and/or the ACT and mark the dates on your calendar. You will want to have plenty of time to prepare. Register months in advance to be scheduled at your preferred test site. Make sure you're meeting any special requirements.
SAT Dates/Deadlines and Registration
<https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration/dates-deadlines>
ACT Dates/Deadlines and Registration
<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html>

Interested in playing college sports

If you want to play Division I or II sports in college, start the certification process and check with your counselor to make sure you're taking a core curriculum that meets NCAA requirements. Register with the NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse.

Winter

Stay involved with extracurricular activities and volunteer activities.

Colleges look for consistency and depth in the non-academic activities you pursue. Taking on leadership roles and making a commitment to the same groups are more important than trying out tons of new activities each year.

Organize your college information.

Set up a filing system with individual folders for each college's correspondence and printed materials. This will make it easier to locate the specific information you're looking for.

Begin narrowing down your college choices.

Make sure you have all the information you need about the colleges you're interested in (entrance requirements, tuition, room and board costs, course offerings, student activities, financial aid, etc.). Then begin comparing the schools by the factors that are most important to you, and rank your choices.

Prepare for standardized tests.

Register to take the SAT and/or the ACT. . Most juniors take the SAT/ACT in April or June. You can take them again in the fall of your senior year if you're unhappy with your scores.

Talk to your family.

Have a discussion about the colleges you're interested in. Your family can learn about what you want to pursue and you can hear any concerns or suggestions they might have.

Learn more about financial aid.

Examine your family's financial resources, and gather information about financial aid from the schools you're interested in

Spring

Prepare a challenging schedule for senior year.

Choose challenging courses, and make sure you're on track for graduation. When you pick your classes, don't load up on easy electives. Colleges do consider your senior year courses and grades; so, stick with a schedule that challenges you.

Start a scholarship search.

There are lots of scholarships out there; you just need to spend a little bit of time and effort to find them. Check the scholarship list in Naviance for local organizations offering scholarships, and use other scholarship search tools. The sooner you start looking for scholarships, the easier it will be to select some to apply to during your senior year.

Standardized Tests

Remember to take the SAT/ACT on your registered date. Bring all required materials with you, and be on time.

- Contact your recommendation writers.**

Teachers, coaches, employers and others are often asked to write recommendations for students. Consider whom you want to ask now, and let them know so they'll have time to prepare before getting tons of requests in the fall. Have a strategy. Ask individuals who can provide differing perspectives of you as a person. The letter from a teacher will typically address your ability as a student while letters from a coach, activity leader, or employer knows you well outside of school.
- Apply for a summer job or internship.**

Summer employment and internships in fields you're interested in will look appealing on a college application or resume. The money you earn helps, too.
- Set up appointments at your top college choices.**

You'll often have to plan ahead when visiting colleges. Call the admissions office to set up a personal interview, tour, and a meeting with a professor or coach if you're interested. Don't hesitate to request an application fee waiver. NOTE: Athletes must be registered with the NCAA before conducting an "official" visit.

Summer

- Visit colleges.**

Visit the campuses of your top five college choices. Take a tour, and speak with the admissions and financial aid staff. You may also be able to talk to students if some classes are in session. If you have an interview, be sure to send a thank-you letter to the interviewer once you return home.
- Get advice from other college students.**

If you have friends or relatives in college, talk to them about what college life is like, especially if they attend a school you're interested in. Although it's important to hear what the admissions staff has to say about a school, it's also important to get the student's perspective.
- Organize your financial aid information.**

Develop a plan that includes a list of the aid sources, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines. Getting organized will make the process of applying a lot easier because you'll know where to find important information.
- Start working on your application essays.**

Compose rough drafts of the essays you'll need for your college applications. Have a teacher read and discuss them with you so you can see what to work on. Make any revisions to your essays, and prepare final drafts. Don't forget to proofread your final essays a few times.
- Make "early decision" and "early action" preparations.**

If you plan to apply "early decision" to any school, take the time to visit the school again, and make sure you're willing to commit. If you elect to apply early decision, you should start working on your application as soon as possible because its deadline will be earlier than others