



# High School Planning Checklist

## For 9<sup>th</sup> grade students

### EXPLORE

#### ✓ Explore colleges and careers.

- Talk about your future dreams and plans with your family, friends and other adults and set goals.
- Ask others about their careers and the education/training necessary.
- Think about what is most important to you in a college.
- Visit a college campus on a field trip with your school or your family.
- Explore colleges online.

#### ✓ Learn about paying for college.

- Learn about financial aid and attend workshops with your family.
- Set up and regularly contribute to a college savings account.
- Search for local scholarships that you can apply for.

### PLAN

#### ✓ Do well in school.

- Set goals for the year.
- Go to all of your classes.
- Discover how you learn best.
- Learn how to make outlines and do research.
- Ask for help and use online resources.
- Turn in all assignments.
- Read-it makes you smarter!

#### ✓ Take challenging classes.

- Challenge yourself with honors or advanced classes.
- Explore ways to earn college credit while you're still in high school.
- Plan to take math all 4 years in high school.
- Take a foreign/world language course if offered.

### ENGAGE

#### ✓ Get involved.

- Try something new!
- Get involved in school and community activities.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Make a plan for summer.
- Find a mentor – a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, trusted adult or older student that you can talk to.

#### ✓ Make good choices.

- Choose to hang out with friends that share positive goals and interests.
- Be safe online and on your phone.
- Avoid risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having unprotected sex.
- Be kind; treat others with respect.



# High School Planning Checklist

*For 10<sup>th</sup> grade students*

## EXPLORE

### ✓ Explore colleges and careers.

- Explore different occupations that match your interests.
- Make a list of colleges that interest you. Confirm that they have the program or major that match your interests.
- Research admissions requirements.
- Take a virtual campus tour or visit a campus with
- Attend a nearby college fair.

### ✓ Learn about paying for college.

- Learn about financial aid and attend workshops with your family.
- Explore the different costs and net prices of colleges.
- Set up and regularly contribute to a college savings account.
- Search for local scholarships that you can apply for.

## PLAN

### ✓ Take challenging classes.

- Challenge yourself with honors or advanced classes.
- Explore ways to earn college credit while you're still in high school.
- Take a full schedule of classes.
- Set goals for the year.
- Attend all your classes and turn in all assignments.
- Ask for help and use online resources.

### ✓ Practice good study skills.

- Use a planner or calendar.
- Get enough sleep.
- Update your file of important documents.
- Prepare for college admission tests by taking practice tests or the PSAT 10.

## ENGAGE

### ✓ Get involved.

- Try something new!
- Get involved in school and community activities.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Make a plan for summer.
- Find a mentor – a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, other trusted adult or older student that you can talk to.

### ✓ Make good choices.

- Choose to hang out with friends that share positive goals and interests.
- Be safe online and on your phone.
- Avoid risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having unprotected sex.
- Be kind; treat others with respect.



# High School Planning Checklist

For 11<sup>th</sup> grade students

## EXPLORE

### ✓ Explore colleges and careers.

- List 3-5 careers that interest you and the education you will need.
- Review what is most important to you in a college; refine your list of colleges to 5-10.
- Sign up to receive information from colleges.
- Attend a college fair.
- Draft a college admissions essay.
- Participate in an information interview for a career you're interested in.

### ✓ Learn about paying for college.

- Learn about financial aid and attend workshops.
- Complete the FAFSA4Caster on the Federal Student Aid website.
- Regularly contribute to a college savings account.
- Search and apply for scholarships.

## PLAN

### ✓ Prepare for your senior year.

- Review your transcript with your counselor and make sure you are on track for graduation.
- Take dual credit courses.
- Make a list of deadlines for your top colleges – include scholarship deadlines too.
- Identify teachers whom you can request a letter of recommendations for college applications.
- Register for and take the ACT or SAT in the fall; attend test prep courses if available.

### ✓ Stay organized.

- Maintain a file of important documents, personal information, writing samples and awards.
- Create a resume with a list of all your activities and accomplishments.
- Use a professional email for school needs.

## ENGAGE

### ✓ Get involved.

- Continue participating in school and community activities; be a leader!
- Volunteer in your community.
- Make a plan for summer; take summer enrichment courses or get a job.
- Find a mentor – a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, other trusted adult or older student that you can talk to.
- Be a role model and mentor for younger students.

### ✓ Make good choices.

- Choose to hang out with friends that share positive goals and interests.
- Be safe online and on your phone.
- Avoid risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having unprotected sex.
- Be kind; treat others with respect.



# High School Planning Checklist

## For 12<sup>th</sup> grade students

### PLAN

#### ✓ Stay organized and plan ahead.

- Take the ACT or SAT if you haven't taken it or want to re-take it. Send test scores to colleges you plan to apply to.
- Narrow your list of colleges: 3 to 5 is a good number. Always have a backup plan!
- Finalize your personal statement or essay and draft a resume.
- Request letters of recommendation and transcripts for your applications.

#### ✓ Make a plan for paying for college.

- Create a FSA ID and gather all the information you will need to apply for federal financial aid (FAFSA).
- Explore financial aid and scholarships and make a list of deadlines and required materials.
- Apply for as many scholarships as you can and stay on top of deadlines.

### APPLY

#### ✓ Apply for college admission.

- October is College Knowledge Month: many schools in Minnesota are waiving college application fees during October.
- Make sure that your high school transcript, test scores, letters of recommendation and other supplemental materials are sent to colleges by their deadlines.
- Check your email regularly – this will be the main way colleges will contact you.

#### ✓ Apply for financial aid.

- Submit your FAFSA, which is available October 1. Consider attending a hands-on workshop for completing the FAFSA.
- Add all of the schools where you plan to apply to the FAFSA.
- Make sure your Student Aid Report (SAR) is correct and make any changes.

### ENGAGE

#### ✓ Get it done!

- No slacking on grades! Many colleges and scholarship applications look at 2<sup>nd</sup> semester grades.
- Consider applying for a summer program at a university, or an internship or job in a field you're interested in.
- Remember that many college orientations happen during the summer so include this in your plans.
- If you are male, you must register with Selective Service within 30 days (before or after) your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. If you don't, you will not be eligible for federal financial aid for college.
- Look for decision letters and financial aid award letters; keep track of next steps.
- Make a decision! Pay attention to acceptance deadlines and completing appropriate forms.