

HOW TO PLAN FOR COLLEGE IN 9TH GRADE

Students and parents often ask: “How early should we start planning for college?” The answer is it’s never too early. There are steps you can take in ninth grade to help you get started on the right track for college.

Follow this checklist as you start thinking about the college planning process:

Create a four-year high school plan

- Think about what you’d like to accomplish in high school
- Meet with your school counselor to make sure you’re taking the right classes
- Ask your teachers about the types of courses offered by your school.
 - For example: If you’re interested in taking an honors class, are there required classes you have to take first?

Start thinking about what you’re interested in outside of the classroom

- Think about jobs and careers that interest you
 - Even though your interests may change, it’s good to start thinking about possibilities
- Talk to adults, such as school counselors, teachers, and recent college graduates, about your interests

Meet with your high school counselor

- Schedule an appointment with your school counselor to discuss post-high-school plans

Participate in extracurricular activities

- Participate in extracurricular activities such as sports teams, school clubs, drama clubs, or volunteering
- If you’re interested in playing college sports, make sure you research the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) as early as your freshman year
 - The NCAA requires completion of certain core classes in high school for eligibility
 - Visit the NCAA Eligibility Center for more information

Save for college

- Start saving money for college. It’s never too late or too early—every little bit helps
- Learn about financial aid, student loans, and scholarship opportunities that will help you pay for college

Explore summer opportunities

- Apply for a job or internship, or volunteer in your community
 - These experiences will help you learn about yourself and even put you on a path to your future