

College Planning Timeline

9th Grade

- Create a four-year high school plan.
 - Make sure you know which high school courses are required by colleges. You can check the Trailblazer on the [OHS website](#) for course information.
 - Make sure to do your best in all of your classes and earn grades of C or better.

- Start thinking about your post-secondary plans.
 - Identify your interests, likes and dislikes, not just in classes but every area. This will help focus on your goals.
 - Take the free interest profile at cacareerzone.org
 - Talk to other people who are working professionals in the community about careers you find interesting.
 - Visit OHS career center to sign up for workshops.

- Meet with your high school counselor.
 - We will meet with you individually during the months of January/February to discuss your 4-year plan and post-secondary goals.
 - Sign up for remind text for freshmen.

- Participate in extracurricular activities.
 - Explore your interest in a sport, school club, or community volunteer activity.
 - Colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity instead of loose connection to several.
 - Make sure to keep track of your involvement in extracurricular activities. It will make applying for college and scholarships easier during your senior year.
 - If you are interested in playing sports in college, look up the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility requirements.

- Save money for college.

- Explore summer opportunities.
 - Look for a job, internship, or volunteer position that will help you learn about a field of interest.
 - Sign up for OHS summer school if you need to make up D/F grades.

- Many colleges offer summer programs. For example:
<https://cosmos-ucop.ucdavis.edu/app/main> or
<http://summer.berkeley.edu/student-types/high-school-students> Look for a program at the college you are interested in attending. Make sure to research any programs that you plan to attend.
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10th Grade

- Meet with your high school counselor.
 - We will meet with you during the months of November/December to review your 4-year plan and post-secondary goals.
 - Make sure to do your best in all of your classes and earn grades of C or better.
 - Sign up for remind text for sophomores.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT.
 - The PSAT/NMSQT is offered in October. It provides valuable feedback on your college readiness and a free, personalized plan to help you start getting ready for the SAT.
 - The test is usually offered in the 11th grade, so if you miss out on the test in 10th grade, you will have the opportunity to take it your junior year.
 - Use the Khan Academy's free and personalized SAT practice to prepare for the SAT.
- Attend college and career fairs.
 - OHS offers a college and career fair every October.
 - Other local college fairs usually occur in the fall.
 - [NACAC College Fairs](#)
- Participate in school activities and volunteer efforts.
 - Extracurricular activities can help you develop time-management skills and enrich your high school experience.
- Tour college campuses.
 - If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel time to visit colleges.
 - Many colleges also offer virtual tours.
- Explore summer opportunities.
 - Consider taking a class at one of the local community colleges (Columbia or MJC). See your counselor for information on how to enroll.

- Sign up for OHS summer school if you need to make up D/F grades.

11th Grade

- Meet with your high school counselor.
 - We will meet with you individually in October to review your 4-year plan and post-secondary goals.
 - Make sure to do your best in all of your classes and earn grades of C or better.
 - Revisit your interest profile at cacareerzone.org
 - Sign up for remind text for juniors.
- Make a file to manage your college search, testing, and application data.
 - Create a non school email to use for all college related communications.
- Research colleges.
 - Look at individual schools' websites and find colleges at bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search.
 - Use the [Common App](#) website to search for colleges and create an account that you can roll over to your senior year.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT.
 - The PSAT/NMSQT is offered in October. It provides valuable feedback on your college readiness and a free, personalized plan to help you start getting ready for the SAT.
 - Use the Khan Academy's free and personalized SAT practice to prepare for the SAT.
- If you are interested in a U.S. Military academy then you should request a pre candidate questionnaire.
- Take AP Exams.
 - If you're in AP classes, register for the AP Exams given in May.
- Develop a list of 10 or 15 colleges that are of interest to you.
 - 1-2 safety schools, 3-4 match schools, 2-3 reach schools
 - You can find many colleges at which you'll be happy and get a great education. The college search is about exploring who you are and what you want and then finding colleges that will meet your goals.
- Sign up to take the SAT or ACT in the spring.

- Fee waivers are available for students that qualify. See your counselor early because they are limited.
 - Check to see if your school requires the SAT w/essay or ACT w/writing.
 - To register for the ACT visit <https://www.act.org/>
 - To register for the SAT visit <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>
 - Make sure you start preparing for the test several months in advance.
- See if SAT subject tests are required by your intended college.
- You should take them while course material is still fresh in your mind. You can download The SAT Subject Tests Student Guide, which offers testprep advice, from <SATSubjectTests.org>.
- Register with the NCAA.
- If you are an athlete planning to play DI or DII sports in college register at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>
- Opt in to the College Board Opportunity Scholarships at <cb.org/opportunity>.
- You can earn scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 by completing individual college planning steps. Complete all six steps and you'll be eligible for the \$40,000 scholarship.
- Explore summer opportunities.
- Find a full-time or part-time job, or participate in a summer camp or summer college program.
 - Consider taking a class at one of the local community colleges (Columbia or MJC). See your counselor for information on how to enroll.
 - Sign up for OHS summer school if you need to make up D/F grades.
 - Complete a draft of your personal statement.
 - Include a college visit in your summer vacation.

12th Grade

- Meet with your high school counselor.
 - We will meet with you during the month of September to review your 4-year plan and post-secondary goals.
 - Make sure to do your best in all of your classes and earn grades of C or better.
 - Stay active in your extracurricular activities.
 - Sign up for workshops that are offered (applying to college, scholarship, etc).
 - Sign up for remind text for seniors. You will get monthly reminders of college related tasks to complete.

- Narrow down your college list to 5-10 colleges.
 - Visit the colleges if possible. Minimally, complete a virtual tour at each college.

- Create a master calendar.
 - The calendar should include tests dates, college application deadlines, financial aid deadlines and scholarship deadlines.
 - Make sure to double check your college requirements and deadlines to make sure you aren't missing key information.

- Encourage parents/guardians to attend Senior Parent Night, Financial Aid and College/Career Night.

- Take SAT/ACT.
 - Many seniors retake the SAT/ACT in the fall. Additional course work since your last test could help you boost your performance. Plus you already know what to expect on test day.
 - Be sure to have your SAT/ACT scores sent to the colleges you're applying to.

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA).
 - To apply for most financial aid, you'll need to complete the [FAFSA/CADAA](#). Oct. 1 is the first day you can file the FAFSA/CADAA. Deadline to apply is March 2 for California, but the sooner you complete it the better.
 - After submission you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) or California Aid Report (CAR). Double check for errors.

- Complete the CSS/Financial Aid Profile

- CSS is an online application used by certain colleges and scholarship programs to determine eligibility for their aid dollars.
- Ask a counselor or teacher for recommendations if you need them.
- Give each teacher or counselor a copy of your “[letter of recommendation](#)” form. Most recommenders require at least two weeks' notice; ask early.
- Prepare early decision/early action or rolling admission applications as soon as possible.
- Colleges may require test scores and applications between November 1 and November 15 for early decision admission.
 - Sign up for Private College Workshop held in early August.
 - Review personal statement/essay.
- Prepare UC and CSU applications.
- Sign up for UC/CSU application workshops.
 - Review PIQ's for the UC application.
 - Deadline to apply is November 30.
- Prepare Local Scholarship application.
- Attend a Local Scholarship workshop during your English/History class in September.
 - If you need assistance completing the application, attend a lunch time or after school help session during October/November.
 - Application is due November 30.
- Check email often for action items from colleges.
- Use a non school email for college related communications.
 - Do not miss deadlines for housing, testing, orientation etc.
- Apply to community college, if applicable.
- Sign up for MJC or Columbia college workshop.
- Visit college campuses to finalize decision.
- You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April.
 - Compare financial aid offers at [Collegeboard's Big Future](#) or [US Department of Education College Scorecard](#)
- Submit intent to register to college of choice by May 1.
- Send your deposit to one college only.

- Confirm offer with financial aid office.
- Take any AP Exams.
- Show what you've learned in your AP classes. A successful score could even earn you credit, advanced placement, or both in college.
 - Send AP scores to your college.
- Submit final transcripts to college.