

TENTH GRADE COLLEGE TIMELINE/CHECKLIST

- Meet with your guidance counselor.** Your guidance counselor is available to help you make sure you are taking the right classes for college preparation. Things to consider: Am I eligible to take Dual Credit, AP courses? What steps do I need to take to be ready for the PSAT or the ACT?
- Plan to meet with your College and Career Counselor.** Your College and Career Counselor can help you map out a course of action for this year to make sure you are on target to meet your short and long term college and career related goals
- Do well in your classes.** You have made it past the nervousness and newness of your ninth-grade year and now is the time to kick things into high gear. Your academic performance this year will determine your eligibility to take upper level courses and will also be an important part of your college application. You will also want to be focusing on balancing your academic performance with your involvement in extracurricular activities.
- Talk to your family about your post high school goals.** Have a discussion about the colleges. You are interested in. Your family can learn about what you want to pursue and you can hear any concerns or suggestions they might have.
- Take a practice PSAT/NMSQT.** The test is offered in October each year and is a practice test for the PSAT. Taking this in your sophomore year is a good way to prep for the actual PSAT/NMSQT which will provide you with the opportunity to qualify as a National Merit Scholar in the junior year.
- Consider taking the Pre-ACT test** if you plan to take the ACT and if it is offered at your school. This test is designed to prepare you for the actual ACT exam. Your results will help guide your study focus and practice areas for the real ACT. Talk to your counselor about if this test is offered by your school.
- Update your college planning file.** Continue adding grade reports, awards, certificates or other relevant items to your college planning file. You may want to begin making a list of potential teachers, administrators or other key people who may be able to write a letter of recommendation for your college application. Your College and Career Counselor can help you determine what items you will need for that file.
- Continue to extracurricular activities.** Work towards leadership positions and become involved in community services and volunteer activities. This could include volunteering for a neighborhood organization or agency, church or through your high school.
- Start studying for standardized tests like the ACT and SAT.** If you did not take the PSAT/NMSQT or the Pre-ACT, you will want to begin exploring the many online and print test-prep resources.

- ❑ **Exploring potential careers or interests:** Your College and Career Counselor can guide you through questionnaires and tests that will help you determine the careers you may be good at or may enjoy the most. Look into participating in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops and camps with specialty focuses such as music, arts and sciences.
- ❑ **Explore your interests and possible careers** by attending a Summer Enrichment Camp or program. Many local colleges offer camps for tenth graders that allow students to explore areas career or academic interests. [Collin College](#) has offered nursing, robotics, music, dance, SAT/ACT preparation camps. Other colleges like [UT Dallas](#) offer camps for students who want to explore topics such as Engineering, Computer Programming and Sports camps.
- ❑ **Attend College Fair:** This will give you a chance to meet with representatives from local and national colleges and universities.
- ❑ **Complete Best Fit College Survey.** Now is a good time to begin thinking about the factors that are important to you in a college. Do you want to enroll at a large school or a small school? How far away from home would you like to live? Is student diversity important? What extracurricular activities do you want to participate in? Your College and Career Counselor can walk you through this process and help you research colleges that fit your best needs.
- ❑ **Contact colleges you are interested in.** Once you have completed your Best Fit College Survey, it is now time to create your list of colleges. Explore the school's website or contact the school to see if they have a prospectus, or maybe even an open house (if they are in your general area or if you will be in theirs), that you may attend. You want to start getting a feel for the campus as much as you can before you start narrowing down.
- ❑ **Get a summer job.** The type of work you do in the summer may vary. Some students are more focused on making money to help support their college or career goals and may choose to work a job based solely on making money. Others may choose to use the summer to explore career interests and will choose to work in a place that may not pay as much (or in some cases nothing at all), but will provide them with an insight to that area of work. If you have time, ask about job-shadowing or interning in the summer.