

## **Time Line of College Prep Activities for High School Students**

### **Freshman Year:**

1. Establish a permanent school record file at home. Include:  
Report cards, standardized test scores, honors, awards, list of service activities & hours served, sports teams, extracurricular activities (clubs, scouts, etc.) employment information, contact information for references.
2. Identify: Educational Goals, academic strengths/weaknesses and academic assistance offered by your school.
3. Review high school offerings; make a list of classes you hope to take over the next 3 years.
4. Start a list of career possibilities. Research the educational requirements for these fields, and start a short list of schools who offer those programs.
5. Discuss educational goals and high school class selection with important people: parents, mentor etc.
6. Make appointment with guidance counselor to share and discuss your plan. Provide copies of your plan during this meeting.
7. Sit down with parents/guardian and discuss a college finance/savings plan.
  - ❖ Summer plans: pursue volunteer, educational and employment opportunities. Be sure to consider camp/exploration programs offered by colleges.
  - ❖ Shadow/Interview professionals working in career fields of interest.

\*Checklists based on those included in the book College Comes Sooner Than You Think, by Bonnie Featherstone & Jill Reilly, Ohio Psychology Press, copyright 1990

## **Sophomore Year:**

1. Create a working resume. This document will help you keep track of all the activities you are involved in throughout high school. This document can be utilized for future employment and admission to college.
2. Review and update your career list. Continue to explore careers using OCIS, BLS.gov, etc. Add/eliminate colleges to your short list based on what programs are offered.
3. Review your class selection and academic record with your counselor. Discuss possible career options and opportunities available in the CTC. Evaluate benefits/challenges of PSO, Flex credits, and summer school. Update high school plan.
4. If considering a military academy, attend a local informational meeting about the selection/admission process.
5. Continue to add to your permanent file. Be sure everything has a date on it.
6. Look for and take advantage of programs offered in the community: Museum programs, Toledo Youth Orchestra, Young Artists at Work, ACE Mentor Program, Math Counts, etc.
7. Take the PLAN usually offered in the fall. Sign up in the counseling office 6 weeks in advance.
8. Meet with parent/guardian to evaluate and update finance/savings plan for college.
  - ❖ Take advantage of summer educational and employment opportunities. Save at least half of all earnings for college. Volunteer in a professional setting or shadow someone with a favorite career you are considering.

## **Junior Year:**

**This is the most important year for college planning. This is also the academic year which is most seriously evaluated by colleges!**

### **Fall:**

1. Review your permanent file. Continue to add/date important documents.
2. Update your resume.
3. Review/update career and college short list. This requires a visit to the library or counseling office where many great resource books are available.
4. Look for opportunities to be a leader. Become an officer in a club or other organization.
5. Attend college fair with parents. Try to speak with admissions reps from favorite schools. Look for sessions on financial aid and the college admission process. Get materials/check out college websites of any colleges who are of interest, but were not at the college fair.
6. Attend college visit sessions at your high school for any colleges on your short list.
7. If considering a highly selective/competitive college, research the admission requirements now! Meet with your college counselor and consider the services of a private consultant to aid with the application process.
8. Take the PSAT.

### **Spring:**

1. Take the ACT/SAT. Test prep is available in books and on-line. Based on needed scores, sign up and take one or more tests again in June. Send score reports to your top 3-5 colleges.
2. Start to visit college campuses. Make a list of desired attributes/programs (many lists are available in books and on-line) and keep track of each college's features. Make notes about each visit, including names/titles of people you meet. These individuals could assist you later during the application process.
3. Look for local/regional/national scholarships. Investigate scholarships offered by professional organizations of your future career field.
4. Finalize your financial plan with your parent/guardian.

**Summer:** Attend at least one program/visitation sponsored by your intended college on their campus. Work and save as much money as possible. Continue to volunteer and look for shadow opportunities/mentors in your future career field. Take the ACT/SAT if needed.

## Senior Year:

**“The first 3 years of high school is what gets you INTO college... your senior year is what KEEPS you there.”**

### ~ Admissions Officer, U of Michigan

The beginning of senior year is filled with important deadlines. It is VITAL that a student is organized and makes good use of a calendar to **meet all deadlines!** The application/scholarship forms take many hours, and the paperwork may even feel like an additional class at times. Create a master calendar of deadlines is a helpful step. So, plan to devote enough time to the process to get the best results possible.

### **Fall:**

1. Last chance to take the ACT so register early!
2. Select 3- 10 colleges and get applications to apply to them. Many colleges have online applications, including the Common Application. KEEP COPIES OF ALL COMPLETED APPLICATIONS. Also, keep a list of dates on which they were either sent or emailed.
3. Plan on having all of your college applications completed by Thanksgiving for general admissions.
4. Decide if you want to apply Early Decision or Early Action. Remember, these deadlines will be earlier.
5. Check in the counseling department for scholarship opportunities listed on the scholarship board in the counseling center.
6. If essays are required for scholarship/admission applications, work with your counselor or English teacher to create a high quality essay. Samples are available online, but DO NOT PLAGARIZE! Request that they be completed two weeks prior to the deadlines so you can forward them to the college/scholarship organizations. Be sure to give a list of your extra-curricular activities, awards and volunteer experience to the teacher or counselor to help them with the letter.
7. Plan final campus visits to your top 3-5 schools. Seniors are allowed 3 college visits – pick up the form in the counseling center.
8. Determine what scholarships you might be eligible for at your top 3-5 schools. If higher test scores are needed, register to take the SAT/ACT again. Record deadlines for scholarships on your calendar.
1. Many colleges come to Whitmer to meet students. Listen to the announcements and stop by the counseling center to see what schools are coming and sign up. Attend the college visit at your school from your top 3-5 colleges. Get to know the admission reps by name. Ask about special scholarships for your college/major and deadlines for all scholarships.. Be certain to request official transcripts and school records to be sent to each college. Ask about additional scholarship opportunities.
2. If letters of recommendation are needed, ask teachers/community members to write them.
3. Order SAT/ACT score reports to be sent to selected colleges, (if they have not been sent).

1.

**Winter:**

1. Check in the counseling department for additional scholarships.
2. Attend Financial Aid Night in February at Whitmer High School.
3. Make an appointment with a financial aid officer in your first choice college (if possible) to complete the FAFSA in **January**. Bring a parent/guardian with you to the meeting.
4. Collect all needed documents to complete the FAFSA. Get your FAFSA pin at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) and file at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

**Spring**

**Register for any May AP tests that you need to take.**

1. When you are accepted by a college, provide a copy of the letter to your guidance counselor. Record the deadline for notifying the college if you accept or decline on your calendar. Please inform any college you decide not to attend of your decision, because it is helpful for admissions departments as they try to make decisions about other candidates.
2. At the end of the year, fill out a transcript request form to have your final transcript sent to your college.
  1. May 1<sup>st</sup> is a common deadline for notification of acceptance. You must inform your intended college that you will accept by this date!
  2. Tell your counselor which college you have decided to attend. Counselors meet with all Seniors in May so you can report any scholarships awarded.
  3. Find out from your selected college about orientation programs.
  4. Read carefully whatever material is sent to you about freshmen programs, activities and opportunities.
  5. Register for the earliest orientation session as soon as you're accepted. This should improve your chances of getting the classes you want.

**Summer:**

Keep all correspondence from your college. Keep track of important dates on your calendar- orientation, move-in weekend, first day of classes, parent's weekends etc.

1. Get familiar with your college's website! Read the discussion boards and blogs to get advice about the ins and outs of campus life.