

# PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

A CHECKLIST FOR HIGHSCHOOL  
STUDENTS & PARENTS



**Bloomfield**  
Christian School

# PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

Preparing for and applying to college is oftentimes the biggest life decision that a student will make before graduating high school. While this is an exciting process, it can often be overwhelming to balance all of the factors that go into putting together a successful application and selecting a quality school.

Students who begin thinking about and planning for college early on in high school will tend to have a much easier time their senior year when it comes time to make those big decisions.



This college planning guide is meant to help parents and high school students as they work together to prepare for college. Parents and students should review this guide together periodically each year in order to have productive conversations about college and to make sure that plans are in place for accomplishing the necessary tasks for each year.

## FRESHMAN YEAR

- Develop good study skills and time management habits
- Get involved in extracurricular activities, volunteer projects and leadership opportunities
- Keep of list of all your high school activities, awards, work experience, volunteer hours and summer programs
- Start asking questions to the adults in your life about where they went to college and how they decided on a major
- Begin talking to your parents about college options and finances
- Take PSAT and CLT 10. Prepare for both by taking practice tests
- Make a College Board account to track your test scores
- Do not put questionable information, pictures or language on any social media. Remove friends who may use objectionable language or images on your pages



# SOPHOMORE YEAR

## FALL

- Prepare for the PSAT. This year is for practice. Junior year counts for the National Merit Scholarship
- Visit with all college representatives who travel to your high school
- Focus on your GPA and challenge yourself by taking the most difficult courses you can handle
- Try to plan and take the lead on an extracurricular activity this school year. Leadership is one of the most valuable student qualifications sought by college admission officers
- Continue participation in extracurricular activities this school year
- Work on a personal achievement file or log. Include awards, activities, and accomplishments
- Look at multiple internet sites for college information as well as scholarships

## SPRING

- Take a challenging elective
- Take a personality or career matching test if you feel you need a better understanding of your likes and dislikes that will lead you to college or career decisions
- Look for summer classes and activities that will help you discover more about your fields of interest
- Begin hunting for a summer job
- Investigate college summer enrichment programs for high school students. Start filling out application materials for programs you wish to attend

## SUMMER

- Review your weakest scores on the PSAT and study for the PSAT you will take your junior year
- Road trip! Start visiting college campuses that coordinate with where you are already traveling
- Look at individual colleges on the internet. Dream!

## JUNIOR YEAR

### FALL

- Review and revise short term and long term goals (academic, extracurricular, spiritual)
- Meet with your college counselor
- Continue to study for the PSAT that you will take in October
- Determine where you will lead in academic and extracurricular activities
- Update your personal achievement file or log
- Make a filing system with divisions for different colleges, finances, scholarships, mail, and anything related to your college search
- Take an ACT or SAT prep course
- Determine a list of 3-10 colleges in which you may be interested
- Visit with any college admissions counselors who come to visit your school
- Register to take the ACT or SAT if you are planning to take it in January or February



- If you are interested in fine arts, discuss creating and expanding your portfolio with your art, drama or music teacher
- Have a college tuition discussion with your parents. Clarify who is paying for what and how much
- Your Financial Aid Package assessment will begin January 1st of your Junior year. Make any financial decisions with your parents before the start of the assessment period



## SPRING

- If you haven't done so, register to take your first ACT or SAT exams
- Continue extracurricular activities; intensify a few activities rather than adding more
- Update your personal achievement file or log
- Request information packets from colleges on your Top 10 list so that they have your name; then file information when you receive it, noting any due dates
- Make a list of questions for college admissions staff. Remember - finding a college is a two way conversation
- Register by late April to take the ACT/SAT in June if you plan to send any early action or early decision applications

## EARLY SUMMER

- Update your personal achievement file or log
- Build a one-page resume based on your personal achievement file or log
- Engage in summer activities that enrich your life and increase your chances of getting in to your top choice colleges
- If you are interested in pursuing fine arts, assemble your portfolio
- At your summer job, “work heartily, as though working for the Lord, and not for men...” Remember that this employer may be one of your references or could potentially have a placement for you after college
- Review your top 10 colleges, note due dates for the enrollment and scholarship applications
- Look at FAFSA information online, and with a parent’s help, write down the financial forms you will need for next year
- Determine which colleges to tour and schedule visits
- Ask teachers, employers, and pastors to write recommendations
- Give them a requested due date and give them at least one month's time notice



## LATE SUMMER

- Review and revise short term and long term goals (academic, extracurricular, spiritual)
- Finalize your resume
- Write rough drafts of your essay(s) if using the Common Application
- Plan when you can visit remaining colleges on your list
- Keep up your files, creating a master list of due dates
- Register for ACT or SAT



## SENIOR YEAR

### FALL

- Continue with leadership in extracurricular activities and keep your GPA high. Prospective colleges look down on applicants who decrease involvement or check out in their senior year
- If applying early action or early decision, make sure you are on schedule
- Finalize essays



- Complete all applications by November 1, if possible. You do not have to wait on SAT or ACT scores to submit applications
- Keep passwords for accounts on file, keep paper copies if using hard copy applications
- If using the Common App, let the counselor know when you have submitted it online
- Fill out transcript requests and give them to the school office  
Submit scholarship applications before the due date
- Assemble your portfolio if applying for an art or architecture major and submit it
- Do not put questionable information, pictures or language on any social media. Remove friends who may use objectionable language or images on your pages
- Schedule auditions or interviews, if required, for college admission

## SPRING

- Begin FAFSA soon after its October 1 release
- Fill out the CCS/Profile at the College Board website if required by your university
- Parents need to complete and submit tax returns by early February  
Some colleges require mid-year grade reports. If so, submit your transcript requests to your school office
- Continue looking at scholarships. Some local and regional scholarships have spring deadlines
- Apply for all remaining applicable scholarships and financial aid
- If after financial aid is awarded you will need a student loan, file your application

- Notify academic counselor of all acceptances, “wait lists”, and scholarships as they come in
- Evaluate offered financial aid, including scholarships and loans, with parents, and pray about final college attendance decisions
- Decide on a college and notify the admissions office of your intention to enroll by May 1st
- Note if there is an enrollment confirmation form or a financial aid acceptance form. Complete and submit
- Notify the colleges to which you applied that you will not be attending
- Notify your college of any scholarships or financial aid you are receiving from outside sources
- Find a job to help save for and pay for college
- If you are male and turning 18, register with Selective Service. Sources say that not registering will disqualify a student from receiving federal aid for school



# Bloomfield Christian School

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