

Planning Calendar Checklist:

- Start planning for college early. The following list describes the tasks to be completed during your Junior and Senior year. With a little planning and time management, you won't be stressed at graduation.

Junior Year

- Take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) to prepare for the SAT and to qualify for some scholarships. The PSAT will also help you understand which subjects require additional studying.
- Talk with your school counselor about possible career paths. Check to see if your high school or a local community college offers a career aptitude test to see what fits your personality. Figure out what colleges or universities offer programs that interest you and fit your needs.
- Verify admission requirements for each school that interests you. Some schools will require a certain number of classes in a foreign language or other subject. Check the requirements early so that you may take the necessary classes.
- Speak to your counselor about taking challenging classes that will look good on your transcripts. Take advanced placement and/or college prep classes that sometimes allow you to earn college credit at a reduced cost.
- Try to locate a part-time job, an internship, or a volunteer opportunity that is relevant to your career goals. For example, volunteering or working as a nurses aid at a local hospital or retirement home may help you determine if the medical field is right for you.
- Study for the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test). Some study guides come with computer software, tips and practice tests. Free practice tests can be found at: www.collegeboard.com.
- In the spring, visit the schools that interest you while classes are in session. This will give you an opportunity to talk to students, professors, and advisors. You may call the Admissions Office of each school to schedule a tour or inquire about visiting opportunities.

- Research expenses around the school area and calculate cost-of-living, tuition, books, room and board and miscellaneous expenses.

- Search for scholarships and grants. Check with local organizations, your parents' employers, your bank, local rotary clubs and community organizations, your religious organization, your school, your local library, foundations, and organizations that represent your cultural heritage, career field, or that of your parents. Make a list of scholarship deadlines and begin applying.

Senior Year

- Register to take the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) or the ACT (American College Testing) and begin studying. There are several books, websites, and organizations that can help you with your preparation.

- Attend college and career fairs in your area and make any additional visits to campuses. Attend financial aid nights offered at your high school or local colleges.

- Request transcripts, test scores, and letters of recommendation for your college applications. Request, complete, and track your college admissions application packets. Verify and meet any application deadlines. Apply to a variety of schools.

- Continue to focus on getting good grades, looking for scholarships and grant money, and narrowing your college and career choices.
In late November, apply for a Federal PIN number online at www.pin.ed.gov. The PIN number will allow you to electronically sign your application for Federal Student Aid, as well as your student loan application.

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon after January 1st as possible at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You may use the information provided on your W-2's or from your completed tax forms. List up to six schools on your FAFSA to receive your financial information.

- Look for responses from both the FAFSA (Student Aid Report) and from your college applications. Respond quickly to any requests for additional information.

- Compare the financial aid packages and costs of attending each school and make a final decision on which school you will attend. Speak to your financial aid advisor regarding any questions you have about your financial aid package.

- Sign your letter of intent and make a tuition deposit at the school you have chosen. Request a copy of your final transcripts to be sent from your high school to the college of your choice.

- Make a list of important dates not to be missed on your calendar, such as the date your tuition is due in full, the date a housing deposit is required, the date of orientation at your school, the deadline for registration of all classes, the deadline for dropping a class, and the date of the first day of classes.

- Ask questions. Visit your financial aid office and that of your student advisor. Research possible requirements and important dates on your school's website. Prepare for your move to college and for a challenging academic schedule.