



ST. JOHN'S
NORTHWESTERN
ACADEMIES

College Timeline for High Schoolers

It is never too early to start preparing students for life after high school and get them thinking about what kind of education, training or career they want to pursue after graduation. For this year's first (and probably most comprehensive) topic, let's take a look at a general timeline for all high school students who are interested in applying to college.



University of Wisconsin - Madison

Freshmen - Even though their high school career just started, you can ease them into thinking about long-term goals and what path might be best for them by doing a fun quick, easy exercises:

- Have them think about which subjects and classes they like best and why
- Take personality assessments to learn more about their strengths, challenges, and communication and learning styles
- Explore a variety of extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, community service, volunteer opportunities, part-time jobs, etc.)
- Develop time management and study skills
- Create an activity log to track all extracurricular activities, summer experiences, academic honors and other achievements
- Start building positive relationships with school faculty and staff
- Start exploring how to pay for colleges and what options might be available



Sophomores - Build on what you had done freshman year with more in-depth college and career exploration. In addition to paying close attention to your values, interests and activities, expand on the following:

- See if you can deepen your involvement in any sport or extracurricular by taking on a leadership role or step outside of your comfort zone and try something new
- Stay focused on keeping your grades up - this year's grades are important to college admissions officers
- Challenge yourself academically by taking higher-level (honors or AP) classes in subjects that you are interested in
- Attend a local college fair and start planning college visits (either locally or while you're traveling)
- Evaluate and discuss your course selection or ask questions about new courses and ask for suggestions to develop your academic interests
- Continue looking at how you want to pay for colleges, research scholarships opportunities and learn about budgeting
- Take a practice ACT and/or practice SAT



Juniors - Evaluate if any of your values have changed over time, stay consistent with non-academic extracurricular activities, expand your leadership opportunities and keep up on your activity log. Continue to look for ways to strengthen and deepen your interests in these activities and pinpoint the areas of academics that you are the most avid about.

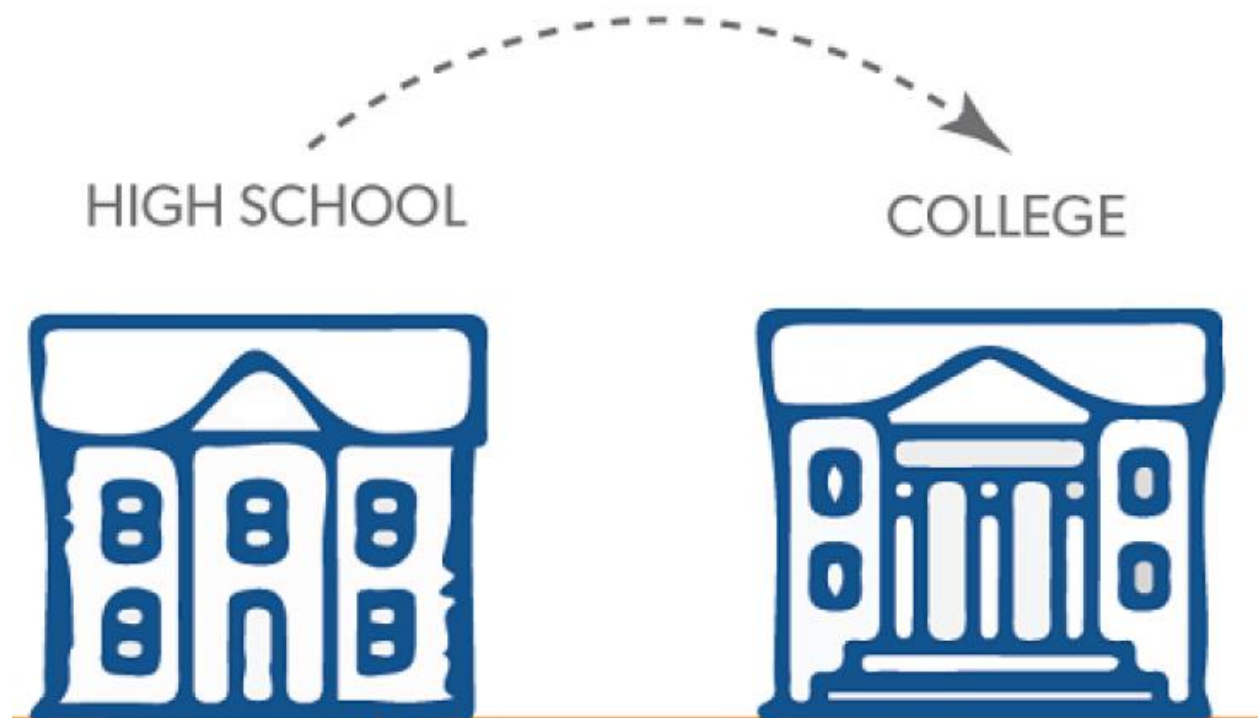
- Keep your grades up! Junior year grades are the last ones some schools will see before making an admission decision.
- Enroll in the College and Career Planning Class either your first or second semester - this will help you write your Common Application personal statement, begin your Common Application, research colleges and trade schools, provide aptitude and career assessments, and more!
- Start a preliminary list of colleges and plan college visits
- Continue challenging yourself academically with AP or honors classes
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT test in October to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship
- Begin studying for the ACT/SAT and register for tests in your area - your first ACT or SAT will likely take place in December and May
- Request letters of recommendation from current teachers
- By the end of your junior year, you should refine and finalize your college list - be sure it reflects a balance of admission possibilities (likely, possible, reach and high reach schools)
- Research the type of applications required for each school on your list, as they will vary
- Keep track of application deadlines for college admissions and scholarships



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Seniors - Your high school career is quickly coming to an end and you have some important decisions to make and actions to take!

- Retake the ACT/SAT early in the fall to try and obtain a higher score
- Confirm your final college list, application deadlines and requirements
- Write your college-specific supplemental essays
- Meet with your College and Career Counselor to review your Common Application and personal statement
- Continue to research scholarships, adding requirements and deadlines to your list
- Check-in with teachers who are writing your letters of recommendation and ask for a letter of recommendation from your school counselor
- Apply to scholarships throughout the school year
- Prepare financial aid paperwork and apply through FAFSA
- Complete and send out all Early Action (EA) and Early Decision (ED) applications. Deadlines to apply are typically around November 1 and early applications indicate to colleges that they are your top choice for enrollment if accepted. EA is non-binding but the ED is binding.
- Send completed applications, test scores, letters of recommendation and transcripts to colleges
- Regular Decision (RD) deadlines typically fall around January 1
- Colleges have until April 1 to release decisions
- Plan visits to accepted colleges to finalize your college choice



If you have any questions regarding your student's college or career readiness, or where they should be on this timeline, please visit the College and Career Counselor, Ms. Catherine Lewis, in room 116 or reach out via email at clewis@sjnacademies.org or call 262-646-7283.