

# College Planning Timeline

## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

- ❑ GRADES matter starting now! You create a GPA at the end of first semester and that GPA helps you gain admission into college.
- ❑ Review general college admission requirements
- ❑ Be sure to take college-prep classes
- ❑ Fill out class planning sheet which covers the next three years (January)
- ❑ Get involved in extra curricular activities
  - School or Church
  - Clubs
  - Volunteer work
- ❑ Keep grades up to get the best possible GPA (grade point average)
- ❑ Document volunteer work (letters from the places you volunteered that explain the name of the place, what you did, when and where you did it, and what they observed about your volunteer work)
- ❑ Start to prepare a resume that you can add to in the next 3 years
- ❑ Learn about different careers with career searches
  - [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org) (2 career tests in the “Plan” section)
  - Google search for other free career tests
- ❑ Take the Explore test in October (a practice ACT test with a career/interest component)
- ❑ Begin to talk about and talk to parents about college financing plan
- ❑ Apply to summer college experience programs (available at most 4 year institutions)
- ❑ Have appropriate email address (not [partyboy@gmail](mailto:partyboy@gmail.com) or [sexkitty@hotmail](mailto:sexkitty@hotmail.com)) that will be your contact for all colleges and scholarship opportunities
- ❑ Create an account on [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)
  - User name: first initial & last name; password: lights and graduation year
  - Examples: dnoffze or djnoffze; lions2011 or lions11
  - By using these for all college and scholarship searches, you won't forget
- ❑ Start applying for college scholarships that will be reserved until you enter college
  - [www.zinch.com](http://www.zinch.com), [www.schoolsoup.com](http://www.schoolsoup.com), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
  - [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)
- ❑ Look at college websites to start examining college choices
  - [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)
  - [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

For more information, go to: <http://www.lhsparker.org/inside/college.html>  
Click on the many topics to get more information.

# College Planning Timeline

## 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

- ❑ Meet with your high school counselor 2<sup>nd</sup> semester to discuss course work and college plans
- ❑ Plan the best possible schedule for yourself—challenge yourself
- ❑ GRADES MATTER!!!!
- ❑ Keep grade up to get the best possible GPA (grade point average)
- ❑ Document volunteer work (letters from the places you volunteered that explain the name of the place, what you did, when and where you did it, and what they observed about your volunteer work)
- ❑ It's a good idea to take a practice college entrance exams in the fall. Take a PLAN test in October (a practice ACT test) and PSAT (practice SAT test).
- ❑ Take the ACT or SAT test at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade; only if you've taken Chemistry and Advanced Algebra this year
  - Purchase practice books or enroll in a prep class for ACT/SAT
- ❑ Add to the prepared resume that you started last year
- ❑ Apply to summer college experience programs
- ❑ Get involved (or stay involved) in extra curricular activities
  - School or Church
  - Clubs
  - Volunteer work
- ❑ Create an account on [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)
  - User name: first initial & last name; password: lights and graduation year
  - Examples: dnoffze or djnoffze; lions2011 or lions11
  - By using these for all college and scholarship searches, you won't forget
- ❑ Begin to think about possible career goals/interests. Visit websites that have career interest tests.
  - [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org) (2 career tests in the “Plan” section)
  - Google search for other free career tests
- ❑ Apply for college scholarships that will be reserved until you enter college
  - [www.zinch.com](http://www.zinch.com), [www.schoolsoup.com](http://www.schoolsoup.com), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
  - [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)
- ❑ Look at college websites to start examining college choices
  - [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)
- ❑ 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester attend visits with the college admission representatives on campus
- ❑ End of Sophomore year:
  - **Plan to visit colleges you might be considering.**
  - Plan a family trip that would include a college visit so you can get a feel for that college campus.
  - Or consider visiting nearby colleges to gain a better understanding of different types of schools—i.e.: large public university, small private college, etc.
- ❑ Remember – summer jobs can mean money for your college!

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# College Planning Timeline

## 11<sup>th</sup> grade

- ❑ Continue many of the items started in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade planning timeline
- ❑ Fall of 11<sup>th</sup> grade, begin building a list of possible colleges; think about those values that are important to you (academic program, location, size, cost, activities, athletics, Christian, etc.)
- ❑ Attend college fairs in the Denver metro area and visit with college admissions representatives at your high school
- ❑ Preview colleges on their websites and request information from them
- ❑ Keep grades UP to achieve the best GPA (grade point average)
- ❑ Visit your high school Counseling Office for information you may want to know
- ❑ Document volunteer work (letters from the places you volunteered that explain the name of the place, what you did, when and where you did it, and what they observed about your volunteer work)
  - Many scholarships are available for those who have volunteered on a regular basis
- ❑ Add to/Create a resume so you have the necessary info for college forms and possible summer jobs
- ❑ Think about career goals/interests or possible major for college
  - Google search for free “career interest tests”
  - [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org) (2 career tests in the “Plan” section)
- ❑ In the spring, meet with your school counselor to review courses, course credits, college information, and senior classes
- ❑ Create an account on [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)
  - User name: first initial & last name; password: lights and graduation year
  - Examples: dnoffze or djnoffze; lions2011 or lions11
  - By using these for all college and scholarship searches, you won’t forget
- ❑ Take the PSAT/NMSQT test in October
- ❑ Take the ACT and/or SAT college admission test in the spring (April, May, or June)
  - Must register for a test about a month prior to taking it
  - This form takes about 90-120 minutes to fill out properly
- ❑ Attend pre-college summer programs
- ❑ Begin exploring scholarship and financial aid opportunities
  - Start writing essays NOW so you have more \$\$ for college
  - [www.zinch.com](http://www.zinch.com), [www.schoolsoup.com](http://www.schoolsoup.com), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com), [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)
  - Many other websites to visit (see DenverLHS.org/inside; click on “college and career” OR Google search for scholarship info)
- ❑ Plan to take strong academic courses during your junior and senior year
  - Strive to achieve your academic best
  
- ❑ Second Semester and Summer Items to work on...see back

- Summer between Jr. & Sr. year (or sooner if it works in schedules)
  - Calendar: You'll need a calendar to mark the important deadlines that colleges have
  - Attend college fairs and/or college information sessions: Spring and Fall
  - Plan college visits during spring break and over the summer
    - Plan vacations that are near the colleges you want to visit; plan day trips for the colleges in state
    - Call ahead so they are sure to have someone to take you on a tour
  - Visit colleges you may be considering. If this is not practical for you and your family, consider visiting nearby colleges to gain a better understanding of different types of schools—i.e.: large public university, small private college, community colleges, etc.
  - Register for the ACT or SAT in September or October
  - Begin to narrow your college choices
  - Make note of college application and scholarship deadlines (keep a calendar!)
  - Fill out college applications over the summer
    - Each application takes about 2 hours to fill out...remember this is the only impression the college has of you, so make it look great!
    - Fill out at least 3, with a maximum of 10 before returning to school in August
    - Most colleges waive the application fee if you fill them out early
    - College applications should be IN by November 1 of Senior year
  - Keep copies of everything you send via internet (for your records or if it gets lost)
  - Write college essays over the summer. Have a teacher or other adult read it over before sending it in
- Read and discussion the “Career and Educational Options” section of the College Planning link on the school website with parents, school counselor, or other respected adult
- Visit and compare Colorado schools on the web
  - [www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)

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# College Planning Timeline

## 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

### June, July, August (before senior year begins)

- **Have an appropriate email address** (not [partyboy@hotmail](mailto:partyboy@hotmail.com), [sexkitty@gmail](mailto:sexkitty@gmail.com))
  - Colleges will communicate via email with you! Read email often!
- **Create a consistent User Name and Password for ALL college apps**
  - User Name: First initial, last name (dnoffze or djnoffze)
  - Password: lions2011, lions11
- **Calendar: use one for all college deadlines/due dates**
  - Note college application & scholarship deadlines
  - Mark Nov 1 as the deadline for filling out college applications this fall (even if they say the deadline is later! Get it done!!)
- **Register for the ACT or SAT test in September or October**
- **Visit college campus (at least 2-3, maybe more)**
  - Plan vacations that are near the college you want to visit, plan day trips for the colleges in state
  - Call ahead so they are sure to have someone to take you on a tour
    - Call Admissions office to set up date and time of official tour
- **Begin filling out college applications (at least 2-3, up to 10)**
  - Each application takes about 2 hours to fill out...remember this is the only impression the college has of you, so make it look great!
  - Most colleges waive the application fee if you fill them out early
  - College applications should be IN by **November 1** of Senior Year
  - If the application for your fall semester is not available, **FILL OUT THE ONE NEAREST YOUR ENTRANCE DATE**. Then send an email telling the Admissions people that you are applying for the Fall of 2011 year, even though you filled out the Fall of 2010 or Spring of 2011 forms. (I have been directed by Admissions Reps that this is the way to proceed if you want to fill out college applications early.)
- **Keep copies of everything you send via internet (for your records)**
- **Write a rough draft for your college essay, then have a teacher or counselor review it. Then write your final draft.**
- **Document volunteer work**
  - Letters from the places you volunteered that explain the name of the place, what you did, when and where you did it, and what they observed about your volunteer work
  - Keep a running log on your computer; include who, what, when, where, activity

## September & October

- Attend College Fairs
- Meet with the counselor to discuss future/college plans
- Register for Oct. ACT or SAT early in September
- Request transcripts be sent to the colleges where you have applied
- Transcript request forms are available in the guidance office as well as with Mrs. Radic in the main office
  - Full name of college
  - Complete Address, city, state, zip code
- Apply for scholarships at the colleges as well as others
  - [www.zinch.com](http://www.zinch.com), [www.schoolsoup.com](http://www.schoolsoup.com), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
  - You or your parent's work place, insurance companies, etc.

## October – ACT test date (see [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) for more info) -SAT test date (see [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org))

- Schedule college visits to those you've sent applications
  - Attend college view days/preview days that are hosted at the college
  - Over fall break the first week in October
  - Near Thanksgiving or Christmas break
  - Spring break

## November 1

- College applications should have been submitted by this time
- Even if a college has "rolling enrollment", please get your application in by this deadline
- Applications completed by this time often qualifies you for \$500-2000 scholarship for early admission
- Having college applications in by this time usually eliminates the need to pay the application fees which can save you anywhere from \$25 - \$125
- Do not be part of the 1000-5000 applicant pool that arrives November 15-December 15!

## December 3

- Last day to request transcripts being sent to colleges until the new year

## December – ACT test date (see [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) for more info) -SAT test date (see [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org))

### January 1-31

- Fill out FAFSA form on line as soon as possible. Colleges cannot proceed with your financial aid packet until the FAFSA has been turned in. **Do NOT wait until April 15** to do taxes this year!!!!!!
- Continue to fill out Financial Aid information for the college

### January 15

- College transcript requests will be sent again beginning this date
- SAT test date (see [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org))

### February - ACT test date (see [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) for more info)

- It is not recommended that you take the ACT test after this date (check with your college if they will accept a score after this date)

### January – March

- Check DEADLINES for colleges
  - Missed deadlines means missed opportunities & missed money
- Begin to receive acceptance letters from college
- If you applied in September/October or earlier, you will hear sooner
- Let colleges know of your acceptance to their offer to have you at their college
- Fill out housing forms (for those living away from home)
- Continue to fill out Financial Aid information for the colleges

### March 1 or 15 – Check College Deadlines for Financial Aid applications!!

### March 31 – Most college Financial Aid is depleted by this date.

Some monies may be left, but not any significant amounts.

Financial Aid packets should have been filled out in January and February.

### April 1

- Inform colleges you will not be attending that you are no longer interested and have made another choice
- Let them know via an email to your admissions counselor at that college, a phone call, or by returning the postcard some colleges send you

- They will not be offended; they just need to know so they can give your spot to another potential student
- Finalize any details with the college
  - Find out more about housing
  - When is Freshmen Orientation?
  - When do I sign up for classes? How do I do this?

## May

- This should be a relaxing month from the college planning process
- Prepare for finals to end with the best grades possible
- Request a Final Transcript to be sent to your college  
(all colleges require a final transcript upon graduation)
- Enjoy the last of Senior year in high school!
- Enjoy graduation and the celebrations (be safe!)
- Thank you notes to anyone who has had a specific impact on you in the last four years (and for graduation gifts too!)
- Plan when you will attend the freshmen orientation program at the college you will be attending in the fall

## June, July, August (after senior year)

- Attend Freshmen Orientation at your college
- Find out what is included in the college dorms
- Find out what you can and cannot take to college
- Visit thrift stores or learn the art of garage sale shopping (ask for a bargain: bid low, they'll bid high, the deal will be somewhere in the middle. You save money!)
- Check out websites for less expensive college books (half.com, etc.)
  - Ask veteran college students about places to purchase books.
  - Share books with a friend or buy them from another student who had the same class last year.
- Enjoy the new adventure that college life will bring!!

For more information, go to: <http://www.lhsparker.org/inside/college.html>  
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The following information is taken from:

“High School Parent Guidebook” by Linda O’Brien. Woodburn Press, 2009 (p. 21-24).

[www.woodburnpress.com](http://www.woodburnpress.com)

## Career and Educational Options

### Career Options

Choosing a career and figuring out how to prepare for that career can be very difficult. Your children need to you to help them explore and evaluate their career and educational options.

**Identify abilities and interests.** As parents, you know your children better than anyone. You can, therefore, be invaluable resources in helping your children identify their strengths, interests, talents, and values. Help your children also see how their interests, strengths, and personality traits can be assets in the right careers. Remember, many talents aren’t measured in school (e.g., the ability to work with people, creativity, leadership ability).

**Explore career options.** Students can learn about various careers by 1) reading, 2) talking to people, and 3) getting firsthand experience.

If your child is interested in reading about a career, go to [www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/). This Web site provides information on over 250 careers. For each career it gives a description of the work, the educational requirements, advancement opportunities, advantages, disadvantages, wages and salaries, future outlook, and related careers.

Encourage your child to talk to people who work in various career fields. If possible, see if you can arrange for your child to job shadow someone for a day.

The best way to learn about a career is to get some firsthand experience by taking a course, getting involved in a related extracurricular activity, or getting a job in a related field. Volunteering is also an excellent way to learn about a career field. Students considering a career in health care, for example, could volunteer at a hospital or clinic. Students interested in the building trades could volunteer at Habitat for Humanity.

### Educational Options

Approximately 80% of all careers require education and/or training beyond a general high school education. Some careers require four years of college. Others require one year of education or training at a career school or community college. In many cases, a student’s career choice will determine which educational option is most appropriate.

While there are many factors that determine the kinds of opportunities a student will have in life, the most significant determining factor is education. *Make sure that your child understands the importance of getting a good education, and strongly encourage your child to continue his/her education after high school.*

High school students should strongly consider and explore the following educational options:

**Career and Technology Programs**  
**Four-Year Colleges**  
**Community Colleges**

**Career Schools**  
**The Military**  
**Apprenticeships**

*Note: The first career option, **Career and Technology Programs**, enables students to prepare for a specific career while they are still in high school. The other five educational options are for high school graduates.*

### **Career and Technology Programs**

Most high schools offer career and technology programs in a variety of career fields (CEC: skilled trades, computer technology, culinary arts, fire science, medical careers, etc.). These programs are particularly appropriate for students who prefer a more practical, “hands-on” approach to learning. While students in these programs generally have the skills they need to get a job as soon as they graduate, almost two-thirds continue their education beyond high school.

If you think your child might do better in an educational program that focuses on “learning by doing,” ask your child’s counselor for information on the career and technology programs at your school.

This program is available to Juniors and Seniors only, provided that enough credits have been accumulated at that time.

### **Four-Year Colleges**

A four-year college education, or a bachelor’s degree, can open doors, provide status, and prepare students for financially rewarding careers. Four-year colleges vary greatly in their size, costs, admission policies, and majors that they offer.

In order to be ready for college level work, students need to follow a college prep program in high school. Students who want to go to a four year college also need to sign up for the right tests (ACT or SAT) and complete the required forms.

To make sure your child will be prepared for college, talk to your child’s guidance counselor.

### **Community Colleges**

Community colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs that enable students to begin their careers after two years of college or less. Business, law-enforcement, real estate, automotive, interior decorator, engineering technology are just a few of the careers that students can prepare for by going to a community college.

Students can also attend a community college for a year or two, and then transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor’s degree. The community college system in Colorado works very closely with the four-year institutions to ensure that all credits will transfer to the new school.

Community college is about half the cost of a four-year college. With the assurance that credits will transfer, it is a money saving decision to attend community college first.

### **Career Schools**

Career schools offer short-term training programs in a wide variety of career fields (e.g., cosmetology, computer technology, automotive, dental hygiene, welding, etc.). While some programs

last only a few weeks, others take up to two years to complete. Career schools can be expensive, and not all of them are reputable. Look in the yellow pages of the phone book under “schools” to find the career school in your area. *Make sure that any school you are considering is accredited.*

### **The Military**

The military trains young men and women so that they can protect the interests of our country. The military offers qualified high school graduates a good salary and free job training. The military also provides discipline and structure, as well as opportunity for career advancement and travel. In addition to the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, there are opportunities in the Reserves and the National Guard. For more information, go to [www.military.com](http://www.military.com).

### **Apprenticeships**

Students who prefer a hands-on approach to learning may want to consider applying for an apprenticeship program. Apprentices learn a skilled trade (e.g., carpentry, plumbing, roofing, firefighting, etc.) through a combination of classroom instruction and on the job training. Apprenticeship programs usually last 1-6 years. Because most apprenticeship programs have a limited number of openings, they can be difficult to get into.

Parents, above all, continue to have conversations with your children about career choices and life after high school. It is not uncommon for teens to have two or three ideas one time, and the next time have two or three different ideas. Exploring these ideas is what career choices is all about. Blessings on guiding your children into careers that use their God-given skills and abilities.