

Here's a comprehensive **college planning timeline** for high school students and families. It's designed to help students stay organized and informed throughout their high school years. This timeline ensures students remain on track while reducing the stress of last-minute planning. With Best College Fit Consulting, we can tailor the timeline for the specific goals or interests of each scholar!

Freshman Year (9th Grade)

Focus: Building a strong foundation.

Fall (August-November):

- Ensure you are taking Algebra I or Geometry.
- Adjust to high school academics and routines.
- Meet with your school counselor to discuss long-term goals.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities that align with your interests, meet new people and try new things.
- Begin building relationships with teachers and mentors.

Winter (December-February):

- Explore career interests using tools like personality or career assessments.
- Create a folder and start a record of achievements, activities, and community service for a resume.
- Focus on maintaining strong grades to establish a good GPA.

Spring (March-May):

- Research summer enrichment programs, camps, volunteering, or internships.
- Plan your sophomore year courses (include advanced or honors classes if appropriate).

Summer (June-July):

- Read for fun to build vocabulary and critical thinking skills.
- Attend a summer enrichment program or camp at a college or university.
- Volunteer or work to gain experience and demonstrate responsibility.

Sophomore Year (10th Grade)

Focus: Exploring interests and setting goals.

Fall (August-November):

- Continue strong academic performance.
- Attend college fairs or information sessions in your area.
- Begin informal campus visits to local colleges to understand different types of schools.
- Take the PSAT for practice.

Winter (December-February):

- Explore career and academic interests in greater depth.
- Seek out advanced classes or dual enrollment options for junior year.

Spring (March-May):

- Begin researching colleges online and through guidebooks.
- Meet with your counselor to review academic progress and college planning.
- Look for scholarships or competitions geared toward underclassmen.
- Consider job shadowing.

Summer (June-August):

- Participate in summer programs or internships.
- Plan visits to nearby colleges.
- Continue building your resume with meaningful activities.

Junior Year (11th Grade)

Focus: Preparing for college applications.

Fall (August-November):

- Register and prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT.
- Consider taking the SAT or ACT.
- Create a list of potential colleges based on interests and goals.
- Stay on top of coursework—this is a critical GPA year!
- Attend college fairs and financial aid workshops.

Winter (December-February):

- Receive PSAT scores; use them to identify areas for improvement for the SAT/ACT.
- Register for spring SAT/ACT exams and consider test prep.
- Start planning for senior year courses (take advanced courses where possible).

Spring (March-May):

- Narrow down your list of colleges based on research and preferences.
- Take the SAT/ACT.
- Plan college visits during spring break or long weekends.
- Ask teachers for letters of recommendation before summer.
- Begin working on your college essay(s).

Summer (June-August):

- Finalize your college list with a mix of safety, match, and reach schools.
- Consider a summer enrichment program at a college or university.
- Draft application essays.
- Take campus tours and attend admission interviews if offered.
- Start organizing application materials (transcripts, test scores, etc.).

Senior Year (12th Grade)

Focus: Completing applications and preparing for the transition to college.

Fall (August-November):

- Finalize essays and submit applications for early action/decision (deadlines often in October-November).
- Follow up on recommendation letters.
- Submit scholarship applications for each school you applied to, if eligible.
- Complete the FAFSA and CSS Profile.
- Continue attending college fairs and meeting with admissions representatives.
- Retake the SAT/ACT if needed.

Winter (December-February):

- Submit regular decision applications (deadlines typically in January).
- Ensure transcripts are submitted by your counselor.
- Track application status to ensure all materials are received.
- Apply for scholarships.

Spring (March-May):

- Review college admissions decisions and financial aid offers.
- Attend admitted student events to finalize your decision.
- Commit to a college by May 1st (National Decision Day) and notify other colleges of your decision.
- Submit housing application.

Summer (June-August):

- Register for orientation and complete any required placement tests.
- Submit final transcripts to your chosen college.
- Reach out to roommates.
- Plan for dorm supplies and make travel arrangements.