

# 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE



### EVALUATE YOUR EDUCATION OPTIONS AND MAKE A LIST

Now is the time to follow a more specific path. Your list of colleges and programs should include schools that meet your most important criteria (for examples: size, location, cost, academic majors, or special programs). Go to college fairs, attend college nights, and speak with representatives who visit your high school.



### TAKE THE PSAT<sup>®</sup>

Taking the test qualifies you for the National Merit Scholarship program, which means you could earn money for college. In addition, it's a good way to practice for the SAT.



### STAY ON TRACK WITH YOUR CLASSES AND GRADES

We've said it before and we'll say it again. Keep your grades up! Even if your grades haven't been that good so far, it's never too late to improve. Colleges like to see an upward trend. Talk to your guidance counselor to ensure that you have the credits you need to graduate and remain a competitive applicant.



### ORGANIZE A TESTING AND PREP PLAN

Figure out when you'll be taking important tests like the SAT<sup>®</sup>, ACT<sup>®</sup>, SAT<sup>®</sup> Subject Tests, and AP<sup>®</sup> exams, and mark the dates on your calendar. If you qualify for special testing accommodations because of a learning disability, you may need to register for tests early to ensure you get the support you need. Create your own study plan, or lean on a prep resource like Peterson's.



### STAY INVOLVED WITH EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Colleges look for consistency and depth in the non-academic activities you pursue. Taking on leadership roles and making a commitment to the same groups are more important than trying out tons of new activities each year. Remember to have fun!



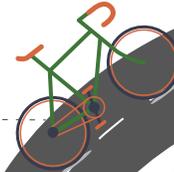
### CONTACT YOUR RECOMMENDATION WRITERS

Consider whom you want to ask to write your recommendations now and let them know so they'll have time to prepare before getting tons of requests in the fall. Ask teachers who know you well and who will have positive things to say. Letters of recommendation from a coach or activity leader are also valuable.



### START WORKING ON YOUR APPLICATION ESSAYS

Compose rough drafts of the essays you'll need for your college applications. Have a teacher read and discuss them with you so you can make improvements. Make any revisions to your application essays and prepare final drafts. Don't forget to proofread your final essays a few times.



### ORGANIZE YOUR FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

Develop a plan that includes a list of the aid sources, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines. Getting organized will make the process of applying a lot easier.



### VISIT COLLEGES

Visit the campuses of your top college choices. Take a tour and speak with the admissions and financial aid staff. If you have friends or relatives in college, talk to them about what college life is like. Although it's important to hear what the admissions staff has to say about a school, it's also important to get the students' perspective.



### APPLY FOR A SUMMER JOB OR INTERNSHIP

Summer employment and internships in fields you're interested in will look appealing on a college application or resume. The money you earn can also be used to help pay application and testing fees in the fall.