

College planning for 9th graders

The following are steps you can take to make sure you are on the right track for college (community, technical, and university):

Grade 9

1. **Get to know your high school counselor and college counseling corner.** You may not see your counselor regularly through meetings until Junior and Senior year, but there are opportunities for you to meet and speak. Make an effort to read the posters and insignia around the counseling offices. Stop by the office and peruse our college books, magazines and cabinets full of college brochures.
2. **Communication by email.** Provide your college counselor with your email address so that you are continuously in the loop about campus visits, events and special programs. The college counseling department will email students and parents with information.
3. **Take the PSAT/ NMSQT®:** Provided to 9th, 10th and 11th graders during the school day in October
4. **Set goals.** Working toward goals helps you to stay motivated and focused throughout the year. Write down your goals and post them somewhere to be reminded of what you are working for every day.
5. **Check in regularly about schoolwork.** Talk to your parents and teachers about how you are doing academically. If you begin to struggle, reach out to teachers, attend tutoring for extra assistance and be vocal about why you are struggling and ask of others how you can improve.
6. **Keep up the good grades.** Your grades are used to determine eligibility for admission to summer programs, colleges and scholarships.
7. **Participate in extracurricular activities.** Academics and tests scores (although part of the college application) are not everything. Explore your interests in a sport, club, group or volunteer activity.
 - a. Colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity than a loose connection to several.
 - b. If you are interested in playing sports in college, research the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). www.ncaaclearinghouse.net
8. **Figure out your summer plans.** Colleges want to see that you've been productive in your summers. Research volunteering and summer program opportunities if you are too young to work. VolunteerMatch.org
9. **Summer programs:** Start searching for opportunities as early as December. Most summer program deadlines are end of February-mid-March. If you need letters of recommendation from teachers or staff, you need to give them at least 4 weeks before a deadline in order to write and submit a letter. Transcripts can be requested from the front office Registrar or College Counseling. Check out the Summer Programs document on the school website for a list of volunteer opportunities as well.
10. **Save for college.**
 - a. It's never too early to start putting aside funds for college (or summer programs).
11. **Sign on to Naviance.** Naviance is a college and career readiness platform that helps connect academic achievement to post-secondary goals. Naviance is the way your college counselors will communicate important information with you. 9th graders will be added to Naviance at the end of first semester.

12. **Start thinking about your life after high school, including the fields and jobs that might interest you.** These may or may not change as you get older, but now is a good time to research the possibilities. Job shadowing, volunteering and research can be done to explore careers you never knew existed.

13. **Start working on your academic resume.**

- a. In a word document, keep a list of what you are involved in (i.e. your titles, positions, descriptions of your participating in each activity, contact information for the organization, club or sport, etc.)
- b. In the same document, keep track of your on and off campus awards
- c. References- make sure you have the names, numbers and email addresses for any supervisors or coordinators that oversee your activities/work, who can write you a character reference or letter of recommendation in the future

Extras:

Are you interested in attending a U.S. military academy? If so, you should request a pre-candidate questionnaire. Visit the following sites for more info:

- www.usna.edu
- www.usma.edu
- www.usafa.edu

College planning for 10th graders

Grade 10

1. **Take the PSAT/ NMSQT®:** Provided to 9th, 10th and 11th graders during the school day in October
2. **Attend Arete Prep College Visits**
 - a. College visits at Arete Prep are scheduled either before school or after lunch. Check the College Counseling bulletin board for a listing. Attend as many as you like!
3. **Build your resume.** Every time you partake in a new activity, program, class, or acknowledged through awards for merit or participation, write these activities down in a word document. You will use these activities come Junior year when we begin crafting resumes.
4. **Attend college and career fairs.** These often take place in the fall, at your school or in your area.
 - a. Check the Arete Prep College Counseling website for dates and times of college visits. Email reminders on visits will be sent to student periodically throughout the first semester.
5. **Keep up your participation in school activities or volunteer efforts.** Extracurricular activities can help you develop time-management skills and enrich your high school experience.
6. **Keep your grades up.** They still matter.
7. **Continue to research and apply for scholarships.**
8. **Tour college campuses.** If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel time to visit colleges and see what they're like.
 - a. Even if you have no interest in attending the college you are visiting, it will help you learn what to look for in a college.
 - b. Ask your college counselor for a list of important tour questions to ask and a check list of things to see on college campuses.
9. **Practice your writing skills.** Learning how to communicate effectively through writing is a skill you will need now and in the future. Take a look at old college application essay questions and answer a couple for your own practice. This will help prepare you to answer essay questions for scholarships and college applications come the summer before your senior year.
10. **Figure out your summer plans.** Colleges like to see you had a productive summer, whether that means you are volunteering, participating in a summer program, working or taking a free online class.
 - a. **Summer programs:** Start searching for opportunities as early as December. Most summer program deadlines are end of February-mid-March. If you need letters of recommendation from teachers or staff, you need to give them at least 2-4 weeks before a deadline in order to write and submit a letter. Check out the Summer Programs document on the Arete Prep Academy website underneath the College Counseling tab. Your college counselors should be contacted immediately if you need help applying.
 - b. **Volunteering:** Visit [VolunteerMatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org) for volunteer opportunities around the valley for kids and teens. Interested in volunteering in your city? Visit your city website and search "volunteer" on their website.

Arete Preparatory Academy

- c. **In-person or online classes:** Do you miss school when you are out of school? Put your summer time to good use by taking a summer class.
 - i. In person: Your city parks and recreation sites have a summer camp and summer class resources. Check their websites for more information. The community colleges in your neighborhood will have opportunities for high school students to take courses on their campus. Inquire with your local community college.
 - ii. Online: There are websites where you can take free online college courses in multiple disciplines. Interested? Visit the sites below and ask your counselor for more information.
 1. www.coursera.org
 2. www.edx.org

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