
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

COLLEGE PREPARATORY CHECKLIST

Throughout Your High School Years

- Continue to make school a priority. Get good grades. Don't skip classes.
- Talk to your parent(s)/guardian(s) about college and financial aid.
- Know your cumulative grade point average (GPA). If your school does not give it to you on your report card, find out how to calculate it from your school counselor.
- Visit your school counselor at the end of each school year (or during the first two weeks of a new school year) to make sure you are on track for high school graduation and college by taking the right courses and being aware of any key testing dates or deadlines.
- Practice effective study habits. Don't wait until the last minute to begin working on an assignment or to study for a test. Cramming can get you into trouble when you get to college, which requires more in-depth subject knowledge.
- Study for the college entrance examinations (ACT and SAT) throughout your high school years. Practice tests are available via a number of online resources. If you take assessment tests for the exams early, you can find areas in which you may need additional practice.
- Whenever possible, participate in extra-curricular activities, including sports, drama, choir, the band, the yearbook club, the chess club, the homecoming committee, student government, etc.
- Be a leader! Whenever possible, join the leadership team for any activities you participate in.
- Volunteer in your local community or for other civic projects, especially during your junior and senior years in high school, so that you will have something to put on your college applications.
- Use the time between each school year to brush up on school subjects and to read books. Your English teacher or your local library may publish a reading list.
- Believe in yourself in school and in whichever career you are interested in pursuing.
- Visit several college campuses.

In Your Sophomore Year

- At the beginning of the year, talk to your high school counselor about any upcoming PSAT test, the preliminary version of the SAT. Ask the counselor about your district's practices and how to sign up for any tests.
- Try to take an ACT and/or SAT preparation class over the summer before you enter your junior year. If you cannot, get a study guide from a bookstore or visit www.mel.org; click on "Tests and Tutorials." You need a driver's license (yours or your parent's) or a library card to use it. You can also ask your counselor or librarian to borrow or check out study guides.

In Your Junior Year

- Check with your high school counselor to make sure you are taking the courses you need to graduate.
- Begin studying for the ACT and/or SAT in the fall of your junior year. Your school may offer a course, you may be able to take a course from an independent provider (usually fee-based), or get a study guide from a bookstore. You may want to visit www.mel.org; click on "Tests and Tutorials" you need a driver's license (yours or your parent's) or a library card to use it.
- Take the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) in the spring of your junior year. Remember, this includes the ACT, and the ACT is used to determine eligibility for the Michigan Competitive Scholarship.
- If desired and/or if your scores from the PSAT indicate possible eligibility for a National Merit Scholarship, take the SAT by at least the spring of your junior year so you will have time to take it again if you would like to improve your scores.
- Make a list of colleges you would like to attend. Begin college visits.
- Go to a meeting about financial aid so that you will be familiar with the federal (FAFSA) and state financial aid forms that you will need to submit in your senior year.
- Between your junior and senior years, study for ACT and/or SAT so that you can take or retake it in the fall, if applicable.

In Your Senior Year

- Find out how you can take the MME if you missed it in your junior year. To find out if you are eligible to take the MME as a senior, visit www.michigan.gov/mme.
- Take or re-take the ACT and/or SAT in the fall of your senior year so that you will have your results in time to apply for college.
- Continue to maintain good grades! You can't let go of your college focus.
- Do the right thing! Don't get in trouble and damage your good behavior record.
- At the beginning of the school year, seek out your favorite teachers, employers, etc. to ask for college recommendation letters.
- Make sure you submit applications to college by December. Check the colleges you are interested in attending to find out their application deadlines. Some colleges have early submission dates that start in October, so that acceptance can be announced by December.
- Complete your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 and prior to March 1. Also, be aware of state and college deadlines for completing the FAFSA.
- Take advantage of College Goal Sunday where families can visit local colleges or universities and get help filling out financial aid forms. For information about the dates and locations of the upcoming event, go to www.micollegegoal.org.

Activity Coding Legend:



**Community-Based
Matches**



**School or Site-
Based Matches**



**Need access to
a computer
with internet**