

College & Career Preparation At A Glance

GRADE 9: THE FOUNDATIONAL YEAR

Student Timeline

- Focus on your studies. The freshman year can present a challenging academic transition, and it is foundational to your whole high school career.
- Explore new activities and leadership experiences.
- Begin conversations with your parents about college options, studies, and finances.
- Begin putting together your résumé or curriculum vitae (CV): an account of your noteworthy activities, awards, community service, and interests.

School Timeline

- You will have an introductory meeting with an administrator to discuss high school course plans (associate, standard, or honors diploma) and the habits to develop early.

GRADE 10: THE LEARNING YEAR

Student Timeline

- Focus on your studies. Your high school transcript should reflect strong academic performance in your coursework.
- Continue keeping careful records of your accomplishments for your CV.
- Research an academic, leadership, or service experience to take place during the summer before your junior year. Many colleges offer short summer programs that introduce high school students to the campuses and give students a taste for the academic and social elements of the schools.
- Begin researching colleges and their academic and extracurricular programs. Talk to parents, teachers, and others who may have insight into particular colleges and fields of study.
- Schedule preliminary college visits when vacation travel permits.
- Attend all college events offered by the school. Take notes and ask questions.
- *During the summer*, participate in employment, leadership, and academic opportunities. You should also make plans for CLT, SAT, or ACT test preparation.

School Timeline

- CLT 10 will be administered at ACA to all sophomores.
- PSAT 10 will be administered at ACA to interested sophomores in the Spring.
- Students will meet individually with an administrator to discuss high school course plans, college interests, career plans, summer experiences, and extracurricular activities.

GRADE 11: THE WORKING YEAR

Student Timeline

- Focus on your studies. This year is a particularly busy one, so remain committed to a consistently good or improving record.
- Continue keeping careful records of your accomplishments for your CV. Attend local college fairs and college recruiting events at ACA.
- Schedule college visits over school breaks based on a short list of colleges you have developed with your parents and College Advisor.
- Research regional, national, and college-specific scholarships and continue discussing college finances with your parents.
- Obtain letters of recommendation from teachers to prepare for early applications (before the summer recess).
- Take the CLT, SAT, or ACT this year. You may take these tests in the fall, but we recommend using that time for test preparation. If interested, the PSAT/NMSQT must be taken in the fall. (Several scholarships use PSAT/NMSQT scores to find eligible juniors. Other partners and programs can help you get funding for college and academic honors.) The winter, spring, and summer are the best times for testing, and you may take each test multiple times, although more than three times is not advisable.
- *During the summer*, tour colleges to which you are applying and write college essays. You should write your essays while you have time – not in a rush during the school year. You will need to request your high school transcript as well. Most early application deadlines are in early November; most regular application deadlines are in early January

School Timeline

- You are required to meet with an administrator at least once to discuss the state of applications, activities, college visits, career plans, and academics.
- CLT will be administered at ACA to all juniors in the spring.

- The PSAT/NMSQT will be administered at ACA to interested juniors in the fall.
- SAT and ACT can be taken independently of ACA.
- AP exams can be taken independently of ACA.

GRADE 12: THE DECISION YEAR

Student Timeline

- Focus on your studies – strive for a strong finish.
- Keep adding to your CV. Even when you have sent in college applications, this will be beneficial for your CV as a whole.
- Complete scholarship applications – most needs-based and merit-based college scholarships will be addressed in your college application. You should complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal and Student Aid) and CSS Profile (College Scholarship Service Profile) online as necessary for financial aid.
- If needed to improve test scores and to qualify for scholarships, consider retaking CLT, SAT, or ACT again.
- Ensure all necessary test scores and transcripts have been sent to colleges.
- Attend college recruiting events at ACA.
- Finalize any last college applications and send them.
- You should continue visiting colleges of interest during the fall; reserve any visits in the spring for colleges that have admitted you and between which you are trying to decide. Some colleges provide “visit days” to admitted students, and colleges might even have funding to cover some of the travel costs if you cannot afford to visit on your own dime.

School Timeline

- You will meet with an administrator in the fall to discuss college and career decisions and questions.
- CLT 10 will be administered at ACA to interested seniors in the spring.
- AP exams can be taken independently of ACA.