

Junior Year Planner

- Monitor your grades regularly using your Skyward portal. Use study groups and tutors as needed.
- Continue to be engaged in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Create a résumé — a record of your academic accomplishments, extracurricular activities, and work experiences since you started high school. Brainstorm ideas for writing personal statements. Be intentional in getting to know teachers and counselors who may be writing your letters of recommendation.
- Discuss post-secondary and career goals with your parents and counselor. Network with your peers, family, and friends for information on post-secondary choices. With your family, make an appointment with your counselor to discuss ways to improve your post-secondary preparation and selection processes.
- Speak to your College and Career Coordinator about creating job shadowing opportunities.
- Meet with colleges, trade and technical schools, the military, and/or apprenticeship representatives who visit your school. Attend college fairs and open houses.
- Review the strengths and weaknesses of your sophomore year PSAT-10 with your counselor. The PSAT provides valuable feedback on your college and career readiness. Continue working on a personalized plan to help you get ready for taking the SAT and possibly the ACT.
- At school, speak to your counselor about taking the PSAT/NMSQT®, which is given in October. The sign up is in September for that October test date.
- To prepare for the SAT, you can access free, personalized SAT practice tools at satpractice.org, including thousands of interactive questions, video lessons, practice tests, and more. Take the ACT and/or SAT exam.
- Take the SAT. All juniors will take the School Day SAT in April. It is provided free of charge by the State of Illinois and is a mandated graduation requirement. Make sure you start preparing for the test several months in advance using the tools available at satpractice.org.
- Review SAT and/or SAT results, and decide whether or not to try for a better score. If you're not happy with your scores when you get them, you might want to take the SAT again in the summer or fall. Many students take the test a second time as seniors, and they usually do better. Fee waivers are available to eligible students.

- Develop a list of 10 to 12 colleges that are of interest to you. You can find many colleges at which you'll be happy and get a great education. The college search is about exploring who you are and what you want and then finding colleges that will meet your goals.
- Assemble a file of materials collected from colleges, trade and technical schools, the military, and/or apprenticeship programs. Use computer search programs to identify appropriate post-secondary education options. Manage your search data by making a list with the requirements for admission, application procedures, and costs to the various schools and programs.
- If you're interested in drama, music, art, sports, etc., start to gather material for a portfolio.
- Visit the colleges. When planning your campus visits, make sure to allow time to explore each college. While you're there, talk to as many people as possible. These can include college admission staff, professors, and students. Take campus tours and, at colleges you're serious about, make appointments to have interviews with admission counselors.
- Estimate your financial aid need. Financial aid can help you afford colleges, trade and technical schools. Use the College Board's "Getting Financial Aid" and the financial aid calculator at bigfuture.org to estimate how much aid you might receive.
- Start to gather documents for financial aid: Be sure to keep a copy of your tax returns handy. You'll use these to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which opens on Oct. 1 of your senior year.
- Begin a search for financial aid sources. National sources include the College Board's Scholarship Search and electronic sources. Don't overlook local and state aid sources. Scan local newspapers to see which civic, cultural, and service organizations in your area award financial aid to graduating seniors. Start a file.
- Contact your counselor before leaving school for the summer if you are considering military academies or ROTC scholarships. If you want a four-year ROTC scholarship, you should begin the application process the summer before your senior year. Students considering a U.S. military academy should contact their Congressional Representative.
- Register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center if you are an athlete planning to continue playing a sport in college (ncaaclearinghouse.net). Once again, athletes should review the NCAA Guide for Student Athletes
- Find a full-time or part-time job, or participate in a summer camp or summer college program. Acquire volunteer or job experiences related to career plans.