

PLANNING FOR COLLEGE

For Gifted and Talented Students in Ohio

During Middle School

Activities to Consider

- Participate in **Northwestern University's Midwest Talent Search**. Examine the test results for strengths and weaknesses. Take the PSAT during 7th and 8th grade. Save your old PSAT tests to use for review in upcoming years.
 - Participate in as many **enrichment opportunities** as time permits (see separate list).
 - Consider **summer opportunities** in areas of strength or interest. For example, strong math students may wish to consider programs such as EPGY (Education Program for Gifted Youth), AwesomeMath or on-line courses through *The Art of Problem Solving* or even Khan Academy.
 - **Read. Read. Read.** Consider looking at CollegeBoard's "101 Great Books" list and reading as many of the classics as time permits. Look at recommendations from the American Library Association: <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia>
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Summer before High School

Activities to Consider

- Consider doing **community service or volunteering**. Attend summer opportunities in areas of strength or interest.
 - **Develop** a "brag sheet" or **list of accomplishments** that will be easy to update for high school. Include only accomplishments since the end of 8th grade unless significant (e.g. represented Cleveland area at National Spelling Bee or NU Midwest Talent Search medalist).
 - **Look ahead** at your possible schedule throughout high school. Many students take classes such as PE and/or health in the summer so that the schedule is more open for courses of greater interest or to minimize scheduling conflicts.
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Freshman Year

Activities to Consider

- Enroll in the most **rigorous curriculum** you feel you can manage successfully.
 - **Choose two or three activities** you enjoy and be active in your level of involvement. If you are in athletics, know that the time demands will be great. However, if you are a good athlete, the combination of strong academics and excelling in a sport can open doors.
 - **Look at college applications**. See what information is needed so that you can be ready. For example, if you are a math/science student, you may be asked what research you have done.
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Freshman Year

Activities to Consider (Continued)

- **Participate in academic competitions** in your strength areas (as available):
 - Math:
 - AMC 10
 - Ohio Math League,
 - OCTM (participate in OHMIO if you have the qualifying scores);
 - participate in ARML if invited; keep a record of your scores
 - Science:
 - Science Olympiad,
 - FIRST Robotics,
 - Northeastern Ohio Science & Engineering Fair
 - Social Studies:
 - Mock Trial,
 - National History Day,
 - National Economic Challenge,
 - Debate,
 - Model UN
 - English/World Language:
 - Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards,
 - National Spanish Exam;
 - National Shakespeare Competition
 - Any:
 - National Forensic League,
 - Academic Challenge,
 - Knowledge Master Open
 - Begin to **develop solid relationships with teachers** and/or mentors.
 - Take the **PSAT**. Consider taking the ACT and/or SAT if you have not done so already. Identify strengths and weaknesses. Take advantage of CollegeBoard's "My College QuickStart" which offers free test prep and college planning based on your PSAT results.
 - Apply for **summer enrichment programs** in areas of strength or interest.
 - Update your **brag sheet/resume** with results from competitions or achievements.
 - Continue **volunteer work** and/or **community service**. Keep a log of hours.
 - Participate in **career shadowing** and/or attend distance learning programs regarding careers of interest to you. Participate in teleconferences, speaker series in your area(s) of interest as opportunities arise.
 - Start thinking about your goals in life. What will you need to do to achieve them?
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Sophomore Year

Activities to Consider

- Continue enrollment in the most **rigorous curriculum** you feel you can manage successfully.
- Take the PSAT. Take the ACT and/or SAT if you have not done so already. Identify strengths and weaknesses. If test prep is offered at your school, consider enrolling to address weaknesses (if needed). Take advantage of CollegeBoard's "My College QuickStart" which offers free test prep and college planning based on your PSAT results.
- Continue involvement in activities and **consider leadership positions**.
- Develop **solid relationships with teachers and/or mentors**. Meet with your guidance counselor regarding college planning. Take advantage of some of the special offerings/events at school.
- Participate in **career shadowing** and/or attend distance learning programs regarding careers of interest to you.
- Begin thinking about what your **strengths** are and **what types of careers** would be a good match.
- Participate in teleconferences, speaker series in your area(s) of interest as opportunities arise (e.g. mock Presidential debate).
- Participate in **academic competitions** in your strength areas (as available):
 - Math:
 - AMC 10 (or 12),
 - Ohio Math League,
 - OCTM (participate in OHMIO if you have the qualifying scores);
 - participate in ARML if invited; keep a record of your scores
 - Science:
 - Science Olympiad,
 - FIRST Robotics,
 - Northeastern Ohio Science & Engineering Fair
 - Social Studies:
 - Mock Trial,
 - National History Day,
 - National Economic Challenge,
 - Debate,
 - Model UN
 - English/World Language:
 - Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards,
 - National Spanish Exam,
 - National Shakespeare Competition
 - Any:
 - National Forensic League,
 - Academic Challenge,
 - Knowledge Master Open
- Special Programs: If available, apply to be your school's HOBY representative.

Sophomore Year

Activities to Consider (Continued)

- If enrolled in **AP courses, study for the exams**. Understand what it takes to get the 5. Do not assume that your teachers will cover everything; obtain study guides and old AP exams if possible.
- Apply for **summer enrichment opportunities** in areas of your strength or interest. Consider other college summer programs that are of interest. Apply for programs such as Cleveland Clinic internships or NASA Summer Internships if age-eligible.
- Continue with **volunteer work**. Keep track of your hours.
- Do some homework: **start looking at potential colleges**. Look at testing requirements (e.g. ACT or SAT, SAT II's) and what test scores are needed for possible acceptance. Discuss with parents how college will be paid and whether or not a part-time job might be needed. If you have not done so already, talk with upperclassmen about their college visits, scholarships, and acceptances.
- Start looking at **scholarships** that you may be eligible for during your junior year. Start asking about local scholarships that are available senior year. Examine scholarship applications to see what information is needed.
- **Update your brag sheet/resume** with results from competitions or achievements.
- Start thinking about **possible majors** for college. What high school courses would be valuable to support those interests?

Junior Year

Activities to Consider

- Continue enrollment in the most **rigorous curriculum** you feel you can manage successfully. **Take as many AP courses as possible**. Explore post-secondary options for areas where you may have already taken the most challenging courses.
- Prior to October, go over old PSAT tests. If needed, enroll in test prep at your school, if offered. Take advantage of *CollegeBoard's "My College QuickStart"* which offers free test prep and college planning based on your PSAT results.
- In August/September, look at the **ACT and SAT** testing schedule for the upcoming school year. **Plan ahead** for which test dates you will participate. Make sure you allow for SAT II's (subject tests) if your potential colleges require them.
- Continue involvement in activities and aspire to **leadership positions**.
- Continue to develop solid relationships with teachers and/or mentors. **Meet with your guidance counselor regarding college planning**.
- Participate in **career shadowing** and/or attend distance learning programs regarding careers of interest to you.
- Participate in teleconferences, speaker series in your area(s) of interest as opportunities arise.
- Consider doing **a mentorship or internship**.

Junior Year

Activities to Consider (Continued)

- Participate in **academic competitions** in your strength areas (as available):
 - Math:
 - AMC 12, Ohio Math League, OCTM (participate in OHMIO if you have the qualifying scores);
 - participate in ARML if invited; keep a record of your scores
 - Science:
 - Science Olympiad,
 - FIRST Robotics,
 - Northeastern Ohio Science & Engineering Fair
 - Social Studies:
 - Mock Trial,
 - National History Day,
 - National Economic Challenge,
 - Debate,
 - Model UN
 - English/World Language:
 - Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards,
 - National Spanish Exam,
 - National Shakespeare Competition
 - Any:
 - National Forensic League,
 - Academic Challenge,
 - Knowledge Master Open
- Apply for college **summer programs** that are of interest. Apply for Martin Essex summer program (if offered). Apply for **internships** offered by the Cleveland Clinic or NASA if a match for your interests.
- If enrolled in **AP courses, study for the exams**. Understand what it takes to get the 5.
- **Develop a short list of potential colleges**. Consider spending spring break and summer **visiting campuses**. Try to define what type of school is a match for you: Close or far away? Small or large? Highly selective or not selective? Expensive or reasonable? Look at your **ACT and SAT test results** to see which schools are reach, match, and safety. Schedule another test session if you need to improve your score. Try to narrow down what is important to you and what will be affordable.
- Look at which colleges accept **AP credit** and post-secondary credit. Find out what scores are needed for credit, if granted.
- Spend time over the summer looking at **college applications**. Start working on college application essays. Develop a system for staying organized for deadlines (e.g. checklists for applications and a separate checklist for the financial aid pieces).
- **Update your brag sheet/resume** with results from competitions or achievements.
- Be thinking about what **major** you will list on your college applications. If undecided, what is on your short list of interests?

Senior Year

Activities to Consider

- Register for **ACT and/or SAT early (if necessary)**. Look at college deadlines for scores.
- Continue to develop solid relationships with teachers and/or mentors. Meet with your guidance counselor regarding college planning. Think about who you will ask for **recommendations**.
- Participate in **career shadowing** and/or attend distance learning programs regarding careers of interest to you.
- Consider doing a mentorship or internship.
- Continue to participate in academic competitions in your strength areas (as available):
 - Math:
 - AMC 12,
 - Ohio Math League,
 - OCTM (participate in OHMIO if you have the qualifying scores);
 - participate in ARML if invited; keep a record of your scores
 - Science:
 - Science Olympiad,
 - FIRST Robotics,
 - Northeastern Ohio Science & Engineering Fair
 - Social Studies:
 - Mock Trial,
 - National History Day,
 - National Economic Challenge,
 - Debate,
 - Model UN
 - English/World Language:
 - Scholastic Arts and
 - Writing Awards,
 - National Spanish Exam,
 - National Shakespeare Competition
 - Any:
 - National Forensic League,
 - Academic Challenge,
 - Knowledge Master Open
- Continue involvement in activities and be in **leadership positions** if possible.
- Finalize your **short list of colleges** to which you intend to apply. Maintain a system of organization for the paperwork: deadlines, financial aid applications, and correspondence (consider a separate file folder for each application/school).
- Make sure you **understand the college application terms**: early decision, early action, rolling admissions, etc. Apply early if possible. Note the deadlines for scholarship programs - many of those are in November or December.

Senior Year

Activities to Consider (continued)

- **Complete college applications.** Identify your teacher recommenders early in the fall. Choose teachers who know you well or offer to write recommendations. Provide the teachers (and your guidance counselor) with a copy of your updated brag sheet. Proofread all applications carefully prior to submission. Ask someone else to proofread as well.
- Write **thank you notes** to your teachers and any other people writing recommendations.
- **Monitor scholarship deadlines.** Also develop a system of organization for those applications. Periodically check with your guidance counselor (or guidance web site) about local scholarships. When applying for scholarships, take them seriously. Proofread, add your brag sheet if allowed, and follow all instructions.
- Make sure you understand the **logistics of your guidance office** in terms of **transcript requests** and **timelines**. Your guidance counselor may be writing recommendations for hundreds of students. Make sure you give him/her lead time.
- Monitor your college applications and financial aid with checklists. **Record dates due and submitted.** Make sure your parents have a list of financial aid deadlines. Periodically check to insure that all application materials have been received.
- Ask your parents to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**) and/or the **CSS Financial Aid PROFILE**. Check with your colleges about which forms are required prior to completion of forms. Apply early as the funds may be depleted later on.
- Complete **mid-year reports** (typically due in Jan./Feb.) for colleges you are still pursuing.
- Once you make your final college choice, notify your guidance counselor and all other colleges. The final deadline for selection is **May 1st**.
- If enrolled in **AP courses, study for the exams**. If your college does not accept AP scores, still take the exams as you never know if you might transfer to another college that will accept the scores.
- Consider **college summer programs** that are of interest. Apply for internships offered by the Cleveland Clinic or NASA if a match for your interests.

Summer before college

Activities to Consider

- Write **thank you notes** for graduation gifts.
- Talk with older students who have been in college for a year or two. Preferably, talk with students who attend the school you plan on attending. **Find out about dorms, things learned, items needed, and daily life.**
- Consider a **part-time job** to help with expenses. Contact your auto insurance company to see if lower rates are available for when you are away at college if you cannot take your car with you.
- **Start packing early.** Make a list of needed items. Do not lose sight of the fact that most dorm rooms are small. Talk with your roommate(s) to coordinate who is bringing larger items to

avoid duplication.

- Make sure you have a good **laptop/tablet** for school as well as safety features.
- Attend **freshmen orientation**.