

# COLLEGE PLANNING

## PREPARATION

Although you will not actually be applying for admission to a college or university until the fall of your senior year, preparation begins the moment you start your freshman year. ***The goals that you set for yourself now and the steps that you take to reach those goals will ultimately determine the number of options available to you upon graduation.***

Successful completion of our minimum program of requirements for graduation will permit entrance to many colleges in the state and the nation. Entrance information relative to the specific college being considered by a student is available through your high school counselor. Students who are considering entrance into a competitive college should consider pursuing the following list of courses, activities, and accomplishments:

- 4 years of English
- 4 years of math
- 4 years of social science
- 4 years of science
- 2 years of a foreign language
- A variety of other courses meeting individual needs and interests
- High academic achievement
- Active involvement in student and community activities
- PSAT/SAT and/or ACT preparation work.

As you plan your four years of high school you will want to keep in mind that most colleges and universities will review your application for admission according to the following criteria:

- The single most important item is your high school record! That is, your academic record of performance from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. (Yes -- 9<sup>th</sup> grade does count!) Take courses that challenge you--not the easy A's.
- The quality of your writing is extremely important. Don't wait until senior year to hone this skill. WRITE, WRITE, and WRITE!
- School, community, and family activities tell colleges how you are unique. Colleges love to find students with perseverance and dedication.
- College Admissions Test Scores (SAT or ACT).
- Take challenging courses, study, and READ, READ, READ!

## HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE - PLANNING FOR COLLEGE

College admissions officers attempt to fill their freshman classes with interesting young people who possess a variety of characteristics. As previously mentioned, your high school record probably will be the most important factor in whether you'll be admitted to a particular college or university. Other areas that will receive consideration include one's personality, out-of-class activities, writing samples, letters of recommendations, and standardized test scores. Advanced planning in all of these areas can make the road from high school to college as smooth as possible. Use the following "Student Responsibilities List" to help keep you on track.

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST - FRESHMEN

- Talk to your parents and counselor about your post-high school plans so that your class schedule will include all appropriate courses. Challenge yourself!
- Remember - Freshman year counts in your grade point average. Do the best that you can!
- Create a personal file with items such as:
  - A copy of your report cards
  - A list of awards and honors you receive, dates included
  - A list of all school and community clubs and organizations you join; include dates, responsibilities and activities, and offices held
  - A list of all of your jobs for the year and/or summer
  - A list of community service/volunteer work you have performed
  - Update your personal file at the end of each semester
- Participate in academic or personal enrichment programs.
- Visit a variety of types of colleges or universities in Kansas or other states just for the experience.
- READ, READ, READ!

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST - SOPHOMORE

- Review your 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade class selections with your parents and counselor to make sure that you have taken, and are taking, appropriate classes for entry into college. Remember, the more selective the college, the more rigorous are the required academics.
- Challenge yourself by doing the best that you can.

- Update your personal file with materials and information at the end of each semester.
- Expand your involvement in volunteer work and out-of-school activities.
- Continue to visit colleges and universities whenever possible.
- READ, READ, READ!

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST AND TIMELINE - JUNIOR

- The junior year is the last full year that will be reflected in the student records prior to applying for college. Therefore, it will be important to continue to challenge yourself academically, personally, and socially.
- Pay particular attention to the courses for which you register, discussing options carefully with your parents and counselor.
- Continue your involvement in sports, activities, community service, etc.
- Update your personal file as the year progresses.
- Take the ACT and/or SAT.
- You're allowed one "free day" for a college visit. Schedule it!

### STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST AND TIMELINE - SENIOR

- Register to retake the ACT and/or SAT if necessary.
- Check senior courses and credits for graduation and entry into college.
- Reduce your preliminary list of schools to a manageable number.
- Complete scholarship and college applications.
- Check announcements for visits from college representatives.
- Schedule college visits.
- Ask teachers for recommendations.
- Check the counseling website and bulletin boards for scholarship opportunities.
- Pay particular attention to deadlines; mark them down on your personal calendar or agenda.
- Create a separate file for each college. Get organized!
- Complete federal financial aid forms and mail.
- Continue to research the colleges to which you have applied.
- Review your acceptances and financial aid offers carefully.
- If possible, visit colleges before making your final choice.
- Wait to hear from all the colleges before you make your decision.
- Notify the college of your choice. Notify schools you have decided not to attend.