

GUIDELINE FOR COLLEGE PLANNING

Getting into college takes planning. There are going to be **details, deadlines, and discussions**, all of which are easier if there is preparation for them. The following is a guideline:

Freshman Year

- **Freshman Year Counts**
Grades beginning in your freshman year are permanent, entered on the transcript, and used to calculate your cumulative grade point average. College admissions counselors evaluate your overall academic performance in high school based on this.
- **Choose courses wisely**
Work with your counselor and teachers in selecting courses for the upcoming year. While it is good to challenge yourself with Honors level classes, be sure you are prepared to work at the level demanded by these courses and balance course rigor with academic success.
- **Get Involved**
Join clubs and organizations of interest to you. Extra-curricular activities are an important part of your education outside the classroom.
- **Testing**
Take the Aspire 9 test in Fall and Spring. This is the first test in the ACT test series.

Sophomore Year

Fall

- **Start out Strong**
It is important to set academic goals to maintain the good grades you had in ninth grade or improve on your academic progress if you got off to a rocky start in ninth grade.
- **Take the Lead**
Consider running for a leadership position in a club or organization.

March-June

- **Sophomore Conferences**
Parents and students are invited to an individual conference with their counselor to begin the post high school planning process.
- **Testing**
Take the Aspire 10 in spring which is the second test in the ACT prep series.

- **Summer Programs**

Investigate potential summer experiences: work, summer school, special workshops, and college based programs. The counseling office has a list of summer programs on our website to help you find a program that may interest you.

Junior Year

September-December

- Meet with college admissions representatives visiting Nicolet. Sign up in the Counseling/Student Services Office or on Naviance to receive your pass.
- Schedule an individual conference with you to further discuss college and career planning.

October

- Attend the National Milwaukee College Fair at The Wisconsin Center. Over 200 colleges are in attendance, with updated information on financial aid and potential career opportunities. Watch for other college fairs.
- Consider taking the PSAT. This test qualifies students in the National Merit Scholarship competition.
- Consider registering for the December ACT test.

February/March

- Take the required state ACT.
- Investigate potential summer experiences: work, summer school, special workshops, and pre-college programs. The counseling office has a file of summer programs and information online.
- Review registration deadlines and test dates for ACT, SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Tests. Register online for appropriate dates.

April

- Review registration deadlines and test dates for ACT, SAT Reasoning, and SAT Subject Tests. Register online for appropriate dates.
- Look at potential career and college opportunities. Use the computer programs available through Nicolet such as Naviance Family Connection, and the Counseling/Student Services page on the Nicolet Website: www.nicolet.us. This website links you to colleges and universities, allows you to register for ACT, SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Tests, and explore financial aid and scholarships information.
- Consider visiting colleges and universities during spring break.

- NCAA Clearinghouse – Student athletes should sign up immediately. NCAA recommends registering at their website: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. Students must request to have a high school transcript sent to the NCAA.
- Start working on your college essay and resumé.
- Consider attending one of the college enrichment programs for high school students.

June

- Start thinking about your junior year teachers who would best represent you in a letter of recommendation.
- Take/Retake any tests needed for college admissions ACT, SAT Reasoning, and SAT Subject Tests.

SUMMER

- This is an opportunity time to visit colleges. Plan and write ahead for appointments and applications.
- Obtain and review admission materials and applications from colleges that interest you.

Senior Year

September

- Schedule a conference with your **counselor** to review and clarify your post-high school plans.
- Pick up a Request For Teacher Recommendation form from the Counseling Office. Schedule a meeting with any two teachers to request a college recommendation letter. Request these recommendations **3 to 4 weeks** before the due dates.
- Register to retake (if needed) any entrance tests required by colleges including ACT, SAT Reasoning, and SAT Subject Tests. **Students are responsible for releasing their official test scores to potential colleges through the testing agency.**
- Search college websites for their online applications and start applying to schools.
- Request transcripts and letters of recommendation using your Naviance>Family Connection account.

September-November

- Attend college meetings scheduled in the Counseling Office. Over 100 colleges visit Nicolet each year. Sign up in the Counseling Office or on Naviance to receive your pass.

September-June

- Use the college, scholarship, and financial aid resources that are available in the Counseling/Student Services Office website and in the office.

October

- Take (or re-take) ACT, SAT Reasoning, or SAT Subject Tests, if needed.
- Use vacation breaks to visit colleges you might wish to attend. Call the school before you visit.
- Attend the National Milwaukee College Fair at The Milwaukee Center. Over 200 colleges are in attendance, with updated information on financial aid and potential career opportunities. Watch for other college fairs.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA forms are available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Your application may be submitted online. Check with individual colleges and universities for supplemental materials that may be required (CSS Profile, tax forms, W2 forms).
- Review and use the Nicolet Student Services website: www.nicolet.us to explore colleges and scholarships.

November

- If you are applying for *early decision* or *early action* admission, make sure you submit all required materials on time, or you may be placed in the regular admissions pool.

December

- College applications should be processed through your counselor **by December 1**, if you desire them to be sent before January 1 .
- Attend the financial aid workshop in December to receive necessary forms and current information to apply for financial aid

January-February

- Seventh semester transcripts will be sent by the counseling office to all colleges or universities where you have applied if requested or required.
- March 1st is the priority date for colleges to receive the results from the Financial Aid Need Analysis through FAFSA. Prepare your Federal Tax Form information early, and you will be prepared to submit the Financial Aid Forms on time.

March -April

- If eligible, consider taking the Advanced Placement Tests in May for college credit. See your counselor in early March.
- Many students receive acceptance letters around this time.
- Schedule any final college visits necessary to help you decide on your college choice.

May

- May 1 is the candidate reply date for many colleges. You are responsible for notifying the college you plan to attend by May 1. Also notify the college(s) you will not attend. This is a common courtesy to the college(s) and other potential candidates. If you do not respond by May 1, your admission may be cancelled.