

Freshman Checklist

Fall (September-November)

- **Make a list of academic and personal goals:** It is important to always have goals; they give you direction and help you create success. Create an academic and a personal goal at the beginning of the school year and discuss these with your parents/guardians.
- **Get involved in your school/community:** Find out about activities available at Spectrum. Join a program, club, sport, extracurricular activity, youth group, or volunteer. By getting involved, you can learn more about yourself and your interests. And it will look good on scholarship applications.
- **Meet with your high school counselor:** Talk about your future goals and colleges that might interest you. It's a great idea to get to know your counselor.
- **Why College?** Consider the different reasons students attend college and what your reasons are. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college#why-college>
- **Support Network.** Establish who is in your support network. Make a list of people that you can count on to help you throughout high school and help you explore college.
- **Register for the PSAT:** Consider taking the PSAT test. This will be your first indicator about college readiness and will be a chance to qualify for CaSH classes. Check the Daily Announcements for more information.

Winter (December-February)

- **Create a 4-year academic course schedule:** Consider taking AP or Honors classes during 10th grade and/or PSEO or CaSH classes during 11th and/or 12th grade. Courses recommended for college success: 4 yrs. of English, 4 yrs. of social studies, 4 yrs. of math, 3 yrs. of science, 2 yrs. of the same world language, 1-2 yrs. Art, and 1 yr. computer.
- **End of quarter reflection:** This is something that should be done after each quarter/semester. Reflecting on your progress helps to focus on your goals. Think about what you could improve for the next quarter. Get feedback from each teacher about your current progress in class.
- **It's time to review your goals and set new goals for the rest of the school year.** Re-evaluate the goals you made at the beginning of the year. Set new goals to focus on for the rest of the year.
- **Career Research.** Use the US Department of Labor's career search tool to research career options. <http://www.mynextmove.org/>
- **What sets you apart?** Think about unique characteristics that describe you. How will you stand out when applying to colleges? <https://www.cappex.com/media/whatSetsYouApart.pdf>

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Spring (March-May)

- Start learning about your college options:** Research the different types of colleges using the following resource. http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/pdf/choosing_a_college.pdf
- End of marking period reflection.** How did your first year go? What are things you could improve on? Meet with your guidance counselor if necessary.
- College Savings Plan.** Talk to your parents about planning for college expenses. If your family already has a savings plan, continue to add to it. If not, now is a great time to start saving for college.
- College Terminology.** Become familiar with the college lingo. <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-admission-glossary>
- Resume.** Start a list of your awards, honors, paid and volunteer work, and extracurricular activities. Update it throughout high school.

Summer (June-August)

- Identify what you want in a school.** Think about what your top factors are when researching and selecting a college. Next year you will begin to focus more on researching specific schools that offer programs related to your interests and prospective careers. <https://www.cappex.com/media/choosingYourCollegePriorities.pdf>
- Research colleges.** Start looking at college websites. It is never too early to become familiar with the layout of a college website and what each college offers you.
- Read a book.** Reading over the summer will increase your vocabulary and help improve reading speed.

On Going

- Maintain your Grades/GPA.** It is really important that you maintain good grades throughout your high school career. Good grades will look better when applying to colleges, and it will open up a lot more opportunities for scholarships.
- Get to know your teachers and other high school staff members.** It is important to create a solid network of people. You will find out in the future, it's not always what you know, it's who you know.
- Talk with your parent(s).** It is important to talk with your parents about college and what your plans are. They may be ever changing, so keep your parents in the loop.
- Consider attending a college fair.** This is a chance to talk to multiple college representatives at once! Check out the guidance website for a list of college fairs in the area. <http://www.spectrumhighschool.org/cms/one.aspx?pageId=23354378>
- College Representatives at Spectrum:** Talk to college representatives that visit Spectrum. This is a great way to ask a few questions about a college. Check out the College Visits calendar on the Spectrum website. <http://www.spectrumhighschool.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=1303570&pageId=20629606>