

10th Grade: Help Your Child Prepare for College

The Tenth Grade year is a great year for most students, as they are securely in High School and the pressure of the college application process has not begun. However, there are some things that you can do to support your child in the college preparation area.

Sophomore year also marks the beginning of standardized testing. This year, students can take a practice PSAT/NMSQT — a preparatory step for the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT next year. If it hasn't already started, it's buckle-down time!

September

Get a head start: For some students this is a time to start checking out college fairs and possibly meeting with school representatives that come to town. Encourage your child to start investigating schools by attending one fair and a session or two with representatives at school. But don't push it — this might be way too early!

If your child seems okay with this, encourage the creation/modification of a list of colleges that are possible destinations. However, even if they are eager to start this planning it is likely to change from month to month and range all over the possible career map, so see it as a talking and thinking stage and don't expect them to make any decisions yet.

October/November

All RSSAA students take the PSAT in October of their tenth grade year. This test is a practice test only, but a good opportunity to begin to experience what these tests are like.

Maintain open dialogue on how classes and activities are going. If there are any challenges that need support contact teachers and the High School Coordinator for a conversation.

December

Make plans for improvement: PSAT/NMSQT scores should be back by now and between you, your child, and the high school counselor, strategies for improving weak areas should be developed, if necessary.

January/February

Keep talking: Just as you've been doing all along, make sure that your child's classes seem to be working for them. If grades are slipping, perhaps the course levels are too high, study habits need work, or your student needs additional support. Don't hesitate to talk with teachers and the coordinator.

Stay active: Take a look at extracurricular activities as well, not just from the standpoint of whether or not they're going well, but if they are having a negative impact on your child's studies and need to be cut back.

March

Consider additional testing: You and your child (and the High School Coordinator) should discuss SAT Subject Tests and APs, although many students wait until their junior year.

April:

Break out the sunscreen: Summer is coming up again, and your child should be considering what options are best for his summer plans. Vacations are nice, but so is earning money or enhancing one's transcript with a summer camp or program! Siân Owen-Cruise has lots of information about summer programs available in the High School office.

May/June

Plan for the coming school year: Urge your child to select (or continue) at least one community service activity. Finalize any summer plans, and consider creating a summer reading list together that will help the transition into junior year.

Summer

Make the break a productive one: Your child should have a job or be participating in constructive activities throughout the summer. Summer study, jobs, and volunteer work always rate high with admission officials. If your child has a career goal in mind, see if you can help arrange a day where he or she can "shadow" someone who works in that field.

Do some research: The Web provides good college entrance information, as well as online applications to many institutions. Summer is a great time for you and your child to check out some of the sites and bookmark your favorites.

This page is based on the Peterson's College Planning Timeline: <http://www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-tenth-parents.aspx>