

Pre-College Checklist



The American Education

A Student's Perspective...
Steps to a Bright Future!

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Introduction

Education is the key to a bright future. It is essential to be informed of the various opportunities available in the United States to obtain the best American education.

This document has been created specifically for first generation college students in the United States. Education systems vary from one country to another, however they all share a common principal to provide a strong platform for the growth and development of future pioneers.

The American education system encompasses both academic and extracurricular activities. The journey from elementary school to high school is balanced with learning experiences for intellectual as well as all round development in individuals.

The journey continues after high school into a college, where learning is defined differently. In grade school (2nd-12th), it is called learning for knowledge. In college, it is called learning for life.

This document contains ‘real information’ from a ‘real student’ to guide future students and their parents to achieve the best American education.

Read, discuss amongst yourselves and take away what applies to you.

Authors Note

Remember, a good future is achieved 'ONLY' with a lot of hard work and commitment. Each step in this educational process is essential for eventual success.

I hope this document will help:

- Parents to plan for their child's future
- Students to be informed and prepared

Lastly, I wish the parents and their children good luck!



Elementary School

The first four to six years of a child's formal education. Often kindergarten included.



2nd grade- 6th grade

Student

Parents

<p>Maintain outstanding academic profile (<i>good grades</i>) If having trouble-ask teachers about after-school homework help programs.</p>	<p>Spend a lot of time with your children; look at their school work and give comments. <u>Show that you really care.</u></p>
<p>Do extra practice sheets at home. Practice books for each grade level available in (Barnes n’ Nobles, Borders, and Teachers Helper) or Online.</p>	<p>At this tender age, they look to you for guidance and support. You are their first role models.</p>
<p>Prepare for competitive tests like CTY, for more information visit http://cty.jhu.edu</p>	<p>Play games with them, visit museums, go to music shows, take vacations to build a strong bond with your children.</p>
<p>Aspire for Advanced level in Standardized Tests</p>	<p>Take an active role in their learning process; teach them how to learn and glean information from experiences</p>
<p>Work hard to get into GATE (Gifted and Talented) program, an honor that certifies a child’s advancement. This is not guaranteed for all 4years, children will have to excel every year to keep it. Being a GATE student helps in middle and high school to attain honor classes.</p>	<p>Try to play “the student” – get involved in school activities.</p>
<p>Extracurricular activities are very important for personal as well as academic growth. Pick 3-4 activities that you seem to enjoy and stick with them. (Dance/Music/Instrument/Sports) Karate/Marshal Arts- good for stress management , increased concentration, and useful for self-defense</p>	<p>Build a strong rapport with the teachers to assess your child’s success completely.</p>

Junior High School

A school intermediate between an elementary school and a high school, typically for children in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

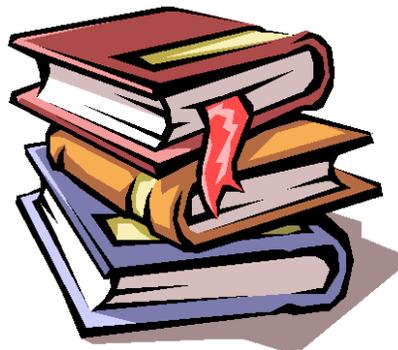


7th grade-8th grade

Student	Parents
<p>Honors Courses: Math, English, Science Guaranteed if ‘GATE’, but, can also get in through teacher’s recommendation or (Placement Tests, and Star Test Scores)</p>	<p>Support your child during their transition from Elementary School to Junior High School.</p>
<p>Elective Course for two years: Any Foreign Language to start in advance before High School : French, Spanish, German, Chinese... Be sure to take at least 3 years of the same foreign language</p>	<p>The GPA in Junior High will not count for college, but it is advantageous to advice your child to aim for a 4.0 GPA to prepare for High School.</p>
<p>Maintain a decent GPA(3.5-4.0)</p>	<p>Provide an access to all the resources your child might need to excel in challenging courses. For example: Extra Homework Help: Enroll in homework club at school or approach the teacher for help. Weak in a subject area: tutoring at learning centers</p>
<p>Continue extracurricular activities</p>	<p><u>Advice them about positive thinking, strong academic/social values.</u> This is essential because your child will be entering a new academic culture that allows more personal freedom along with peer pressure.</p>

High School

A school that typically comprises grades 9 through 12, attended after primary school or middle school.



9th grade

Student

Parents

<p>Continue the elective foreign language course until you have reached the advanced level. Work on GPA!</p>	<p>The GPA from freshmen year does not count toward college applications.</p>
<p>Join 3-5 clubs maximum, and be a part of them for all four years. Try to aim for an officer position before senior year in at least one or two clubs</p>	<p>The SAT is an admission test used by most colleges/universities to assess student's preparedness for college. The exam is out of 2400 points- it tests on 3 major areas: writing, critical reading, and mathematics.</p>
<p>Join a school sport of your choice in school. Player standing: JV (junior varsity is acceptable, but Varsity is outstanding in the school team.</p>	<p>The SAT exam can be attempted at least 3 times allowing the student to improve his/her score.</p>
<p>Get started on Community Service: 40-50 hours is required for all four years in school. Supervised Volunteer Services: Non-profit organizations, County Library, Homeless shelter, Senior Centers, Tutoring in school or outside, Hospitals (must be 15 and a half).</p>	<p>The SAT II exams are administered to assess the mastery of the student in a specific subject. These tests are out of 800 points.</p>
<p>Register on College Board! This is how you can print the admission tickets to SAT Exams. This website also helps students progress in high school and then into college. www.collegeboard.com</p>	<p>SAT PREP! May take a subject SAT II, If prepared. Since 2-3 subjects SAT'S are required. Subjects include: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English, Math IIC (algebra 1&2, geometry, trigonometry, maybe pre-calculus), History...etc</p>

10th grade

Student

Parents

<p>Continue 9th grade activities. (clubs, sports, SAT's, community service)</p> <p>Subject SAT II – try to take 2 of them</p>	<p>If your child is not in honors math, it is still not too late to ask their counselor in high school, if they can take a course in a community college and transfer it. This way they can at least be a head, if they missed honors!</p>
<p>Attempt the PSAT once to get a feel for the real SAT</p>	<p>Ask your child to check in the Career Center, or Resource Center; for internships, scholarships and job opportunities.</p>
<p>High school Exit Exam: Math, English! Important to graduate from high school. Preparation books are available. It is a basic level examination, nothing challenging.</p>	<p>Also, make sure that your child has an idea of his/her interest in a career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign Up for a “Facility Tour”~ Companies that specialize in various fields. Such as Genentech for Biotechnology, Google for Engineering etc...
<p>Summer Internship program-check School Career Services</p>	
<p>Scholarships if necessary: check Career/Resource center, also available online (browse).</p>	
<p>Maintain GPA (3.6-4.0) “THIS YEAR’S GPA COUNTS FOR COLLEGES!”</p>	
<p>Driving School- if you are willing to drive individually by your senior year. Certificate from Driving School is necessary before taking the written exam (if 16 years or younger) Classes from a Driving School are necessary before taking the behind the wheel test.</p>	

11th grade

Student	Parents
Continue 9th grade activities. (clubs, sports, SAT's, community service)	It is essential to support your children through their last two years of high school, as they are the most crucial years.
Take at least 2 AP (Advanced Placement Courses) If possible more!	It is also important to know your child's academic standing and your financial status to determine the colleges for your child.
Also take the AP tests at the end of the year. The exam is out of 5. If a student takes more than 3 AP Exams and scores 3 or better on them, they get an AP Scholar Award. This award is prestigious. Preparation books are available.	Please visit www.collegeboard.com , the parents section to get complete information about colleges. Just follow the tabs on planning, finding, applying, and paying for colleges.
SAT, one real attempt! (Don't take it more than 3 times max.)	Help your child make a list of colleges that they would be willing to go to and start visiting colleges.
Subject SAT's, try to finish all 3 of them.	
Most importantly, GPA counts for colleges, so keep it up!	
Work Experience: summer! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tutoring Centers ✓ Office internships ✓ Fast Food Centers ✓ Grocery Stores ✓ Hospital internships 	
Keep in touch with academic counselor, and share your plans.	

12th grade

Student

Parents

<p>Seniors try not to relax, just yet!</p> <p>Continue working hard, because colleges still look at the 1st semester GPA!</p>	<p>THE COLLEGE PYRAMID</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Private Colleges (If affordable) 2. UC System = Berkley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Merced, Riverside, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, San Diego, San Francisco (Graduate School) 3. State System 4. Community Colleges <p>If, community college is the only option, then it is important to maintain a high transfer GPA.</p>
<p>Make a list of colleges to apply.(20 max) Apply to 10-15 colleges that you are sure to be accepted and only 5 that are “dream colleges”.</p> <p>Each application costs at least \$65-150 depending upon the university Visit the Career Services/ask a Counselor of college application information.</p>	<p>For community college: Also, it is advantageous to know the college your child wants to transfer to fulfill all the requirements on time.</p>
<p>Write essays for college applications, and get them proofread by a teacher, and two other people in advance before the deadline</p>	<p>Please visit the financial aid website (fafsa.gov) and apply with your child to help pay for the college.</p>
<p>Start the college application ASAP! Don't wait till the last day, because the server maybe busy or down and your application maybe rejected.</p>	
<p>Wrap all the activities and experiences of the past 3years in high school into the college application.</p>	

Conclusion

Remember:

- These are just basic guidelines for success.
- Changes are possible, depending upon school.
- I hope you make best use of this document.

CONGRATULATIONS!

GOOD LUCK in College!



Congratulations Graduate!