

Think about beginning the school year doing the following:

1. *Communicate with important people in your life on a daily basis.* This means that you will communicate regularly with your teachers, your guidance counselor, and your parents. When something needs clarification or you are confused, tired, or need advice, you won't ignore the impulse to talk about it.
2. *Keep a schedule.* Write down everything that needs to be completed and plan the necessary steps to complete this goal. Keep one schedule and refer to it every day, especially first thing in the morning and before you go to bed.
3. *Get exercise.* Commit to some form of exercise every day to clear your head, reduce stress, and gain strength. You will be amazed at what a difference it will make in your attitude.
4. *Stay involved.* Decide early in the year how you will be involved in your school outside of classroom commitments. Do something that holds your interest and that you want to do, not something you think will look good on your resume.
5. *Work hard and participate in class right from the beginning.* Choose to participate actively every day in your classes and get to know your teachers. Be a good, active listener too.
6. *Reflect on how you are doing.* Be sure to check in on yourself at least weekly to assess how you are keeping up with your habits. If something needs strengthening, remind yourself to focus on that habit more the next week.

Every high school year has specific **aspects** that you should focus your attention towards. The following overview will help lessen stress and contribute to a more enjoyable high school career:

**Freshman Year:**

- Develop a “road map” for the next three years of high school by thinking carefully about your curriculum (the classes and subjects you will take and the relative strength of your program).
- Begin to consider your standardized testing plan. If you are taking an advanced course in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, you may want to take an SAT Subject Test at the end of the school year.
- Get involved in a few extracurricular activities that you may want to pursue for the next few years.

## Sophomore Year

- Develop and refine your curriculum plan for junior and senior year to make sure it is appropriately challenging and one in which you can succeed.
- Consider taking the PSATs in October to assess testing strengths and weaknesses and/or potential for National Merit Scholarship consideration as a junior.
- Think about taking SAT Subject Tests in May and/or June, depending on your coursework.
- Stay involved with your extra-curricular activities.
- Develop productive, meaningful plans for your summer.

## Junior Year:

- Fall:
  - Take the PSAT in October (both for consideration for National Merit Scholarship competition and to get a sense of how you will fare on the SATs)
  - If you are planning to take the ACT, register now before test centers fill.
  - Deepen your involvement in the activities you enjoy and get ready to take leadership responsibilities if possible.
- Winter:
  - Consider taking the SAT in January or the ACT in February.
  - Begin to develop a preliminary college list and **make plans to visit some campuses in the spring.**
  - Develop meaningful summer, plans, and **set aside time to visit colleges.**
- Spring:
  - **Visit a variety of colleges that interest you** and continue to stay actively involved in refining your college list.
  - Take SAT/ACT/SAT Subject Tests.
  - Ask two of your 11<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to write letters of recommendation for your college applications.

- Summer:
  - Begin brainstorming ideas for your application essays and plan to have a draft before school begins in September.
  - Continue visiting schools.
  - Create a Common Application account online.

**Senior Year:**

- Fall:
  - Finalize your list of 8-10 colleges and communicate with your guidance counselor about your choices.
  - Advise your teachers who will write your letters of recommendation about where you are applying and provide them with all necessary information to write those letters (brag sheet, resume etc.)
  - Take additional SAT/ACT tests as necessary
  - Send in transcripts and tests scores before they are due.
  - Submit your applications before the deadlines. Be sure your colleges receive your entire application.
- Winter:
  - Submit applications to colleges with later deadlines (if appropriate)
  - Advise colleges of any successes/achievements since submitting your application.
- Spring:
  - Evaluate your acceptances and revisit any colleges to help you decide where to attend.
  - When you decide, be sure to send your tuition deposit to one college before May 1<sup>st</sup> and advise the others that you will not be attending.
  - Don't slack off in your classes! Colleges will look at your final grades and if there is a dramatic drop, they could rescind your acceptance.