

Sophomore Year

Student To Do List:

Meet with your school counselor or mentor to discuss colleges and their requirements. Update your counselor about your career and college major interests and reaffirm that high school course selections remain appropriate. Formulate your junior year college prep course schedule.

Consult your guidance counselor about registering for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and take in your sophomore year. Your junior year scores may make you eligible for the National Merit Scholarship Program and certain other scholarships. Taking the PSAT test in your sophomore year is a great way to familiarize yourself with the test and identify your strengths and weaknesses so you can work towards bringing your scores up and aim for the qualifying National Merit score in your junior year. Take a look at [Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test \(PSAT/NMSQT\)](https://www.collegeboard.org) and take practice tests by going to www.collegeboard.org or <https://www.khanacademy.org>.

Plan to use your summer wisely: Work, volunteer, or take a summer course (away or at a local college). Continue to participate in school and community service activities to be a more attractive college admissions candidate and improve opportunities for scholarship awards.

Begin thinking about career options and research majors that might be a good fit with your interests and goals.

Learn the differences between grants, loans, work-study and scholarships at <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types>.

Parent To Do List:

Find out whether your child's school has college nights or financial aid nights. Plan to attend those events with your child.

Recalculate an estimate of your child's financial aid. Sophomore year will be the "base year" for determining potential aid. At the website <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/> parents can use the Federal Student Aid Estimator to determine if eligible for need-based financial, and whether legal repositioning of income and assets to increase eligibility is feasible and warranted.

Learn about the tests required in your state by visiting <https://www.educationadvanced.com/blog/list-of-standardized-tests-by-state>. These tests are offered at different times depending upon which state you live and some favor one exam over another.

Review the brief overview of financial aid from <https://studentaid.gov/>.