

10th Grade College Preparation Timeline

October

Your first PSATs will be given at BSGE in October. Relax—the exam is just an indicator with regard to your critical reading, math reasoning and writing skills that are important for success in college. Scores are on a 200-800 point scale in each section: reading and math. Your results will be available in early December, indicating your strong areas and areas where you need to improve.

November

College Fairs can be a great place to “see” many schools at once. Talk to your college advisor to find fairs near you. Some colleges also offer online tours on their websites. Attend fairs to learn about volunteer opportunities. Participate in extra-curricular activities. Colleges/universities look for highly motivated, well-rounded students. If they haven’t done so already, have your parents put extra money into a college fund (e.g. 529 Savings Plan).

December

While may be too early for an SAT prep class, you should probably do more reading in your free time, take more challenging courses, or practice on old tests. Work on your math. Students who take advanced math in high school are far more likely to attend and graduate from college than those who fail to do so.

January

Look into National Collegiate Athletic Association requirements if you want to participate in sports in college. Consider whether your experience jibes with your college plans: Do schools that interest you field teams in your sport? Do you have a chance of playing on them? Think about extra-curricular activities that interest you, whether they be arts-based (i.e. music, art, dance, drama, creative writing) and/or community service. Begin researching scholarships and identify college admission requirements for competitive universities. Submit your fall community and service reflection forms with necessary verification letters.

February

Teacher’s pet? Keep it up. Your grades are the single most important facet of the college admissions process. You also need teachers to write your college recommendations.

March

Decide if you want to take an SAT II subject test. It's often better to take the exam as soon as you've completed the relevant class, instead of waiting until later. Consider and apply for summer academic and arts programs on college campuses. It's never too early to get a feel for college life. Many CUNY, SUNY and competitive private colleges offer partial or full scholarships to these respective programs. Begin discussing the CAS requirement with Peter Wilson and identifying CAS opportunities for the summer and fall.

April/May

Talk to your guidance counselor and your parents about whether you should take summer-school classes to improve your grades, fit in a needed course or delve further into a subject you like. Figured out you don't need summer school? Look around for other constructive ways to spend your time off. Apply for volunteer positions and or summer employment at interesting sites. Try an arts or academic camp. Submit your final community and service reflection forms and other documentation at the end of May. Speak with college admissions officers at spring college fairs about their respective admissions requirements and available financial aid.

June

Take the ACT or the June SAT IIs, if appropriate. But remember, once you request that your SAT scores be sent to a college, that school will see scores from every SAT II you've previously taken. There is no rush.

July

Spend some more time researching colleges and universities. Can you begin to narrow down a list of the types of schools that are appealing to you? Urban or rural? Big or small? Public or private? Begin looking at the SAT Reasoning test for content and format. You'll be taking your second PSAT in October.

August

If you're close to a university, consider dropping by and walking around. Even an hour-long visit will give you a feel for a college. You'll also get a sense of your own likes and dislikes. Sign up for fall shadow days and campus tours. Begin to identify and register SAT preparation programs for fall and spring.