

COLLEGE & CAREER

PLANNING CHECKLIST

9TH
GRADE

Track the steps you should take each year to set yourself up for College & Career success!

FALL

- ☐ **Visit Student Services and meet your school counselor and college and career counselors.** Staying in contact with the counselors throughout your 4 years of high school is important, so know where they are and how to get in touch with them. Ask about special diplomas, honors societies, merit-based awards, and certifications and how you can qualify for them.
- ☐ **Log into your school email and check it daily.** Make sure you're connected with StudentSquare so you can stay on top of all announcements and easily communicate with your teachers.
- ☐ **Know what academic help West High offers and take advantage.** Make sure you can access the Freshman Counseling Canvas course, which includes a link to the FRAC Tutoring Schedule. Try out different organizational and study methods to find what works for you. Access free AP resources at collegeboard.org if you're taking AP classes.
- ☐ **Make the most out of Freshman Seminar.** Participate fully in all the self-awareness and career-related experiences to help you make the best academy and pathway decisions in the spring.
- ☐ **Get involved.** Extracurriculars are a fun part of high school, but they also promote good mental health and prepare you for your postsecondary plans. Explore sports, groups, and clubs that match your interests at the West Club Fest in August, and then join!
- ☐ **Start thinking about your IB plans.** Attend one of the IB Information Nights this fall or winter to learn about all the ways IB is for you.
- ☐ **Set up your [SCOIR](#) account.** Log in to our college and career readiness platform and invite parents. Begin to research the different types of colleges and costs. If you will be a first-generation college student, make sure you mark that on your SCOIR dashboard.
- ☐ **Take the YouScience Career Aptitude Assessment.** You will do this with your Freshman Seminar class. Review your YouScience reports with your family or mentors. This is a great time to schedule your first appointment with the career counselor to talk about career exploration.
- ☐ **Register for the 9th Grade Industry Field Experience.**

SPRING

- ☐ **Check in with your school counselor** to review your grades, complete your High School & Beyond Plan, and start planning for your 10th grade course selections. Senior year is a long way off, but this year's grades matter! Visit the [Course Registration](#) page for all the information you need to think about the next steps in your 4-Year Plan. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- ☐ **Start talking with your family about your post-secondary plans.** Are you thinking about college, the military, vocational training? Sites like myfuture.com can help you learn about how much your options might cost and how to pay for them.



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- ☐ **Start entering activities in SCOIR.** Click on the activities side-tab and log your high school activities. When it comes time to apply for jobs, scholarships, or colleges you can use SCOIR to automate a resumé based on your entries.
- ☐ **Select your 865 Academies Pathway and celebrate at the Pathway Reveal.**
- ☐ **Learn about the MYP Personal Project and brainstorm topics.** The personal project is your chance to explore something that inspires or fascinates you, and you will work on it through January of 10th grade, so make the most of it!
- ☐ **Make summer plans.** There's nothing wrong with a summer of nothing but relaxation, but summer months offer opportunities for you to gain valuable experiences from working, studying, or volunteering. These experiences may open up new opportunities and interests for you and make you more competitive when applying for college, scholarships, or training programs after graduation.
 - Want a job? Check out the WHS Job Board outside Student Services or on the [College & Career](#) webpage. Make an appointment with your career counselor for help with the application and interview process.
 - Want to volunteer, explore new interests, or participate in a summer learning experience? Try a new hobby during summer break, or explore local volunteer opportunities and summer programs on our [College and Career](#) webpage.

SUMMER

- ☐ **Make sure you complete any summer assignments your 10th grade classes might require.** Check the [West High website](#) for more information.



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FALL

- ☐ **Review your course selections and make an appointment with your counselor.** Discuss your pathway and career interests, and make sure you know about the IB Diploma Programme, the Career-related Programme, Ready Graduate, etc. Knowing your end goals will allow you to backwards plan and guarantee that you are making the best choices for your future.
- ☐ **Explore new extracurricular activities and stay involved with clubs and/or sports from last year.** Every year we offer new activities, so check out the club and sports lists on the website and visit the Club Fest in August. If you are already involved in an organization you love, consider taking on more responsibility or a leadership role this year.
- ☐ **Kick off your MYP Personal Project.** You'll work on this in Advisory throughout the fall, so take advantage of all the resources the school, our community, and your project supervisor can offer you.
- ☐ **Make your IB plans.** Our IB Coordinator will talk to all sophomores this year about the IB Diploma and Career-related Programmes and how all our students can take advantage of IB offerings. Look for information about IB Information Nights this fall and winter and make plans to attend.
- ☐ **Consider signing up for the PSAT.** Sites like [The Princeton Review](#) can help you decide if the PSAT might be a good choice for you this year. Our testing coordinator will send an email about signing up in early August, so be on the look-out because we have limited spots available and priority goes to juniors.
- ☐ **Complete the PrinciplesYou and Career Inventory assessments in SCOIR.** Discuss your results with your family and explore schools that might be a fit for your personality and career interests. Save at least three schools to My Colleges. Make an appointment to talk with the college and career counselors about your results and your post-secondary plans.
- ☐ **Choose the destination for your 865 Academies Post-Secondary Experience carefully.** Every sophomore will participate in a post-secondary field trip in 10th grade, so choose the institution that most closely aligns with your possible career interests.
- ☐ **Cultivate relationships with teachers who may write letters of recommendation for you.** Talk with them about your goals and ask for feedback to better prepare you for your post-secondary plans. The more they know about you, the better their recommendations will be.

SPRING

- ☐ **Present your MYP Personal Project at the Personal Project Showcase.** Take this opportunity to show off your hard work to our school and community.
- ☐ **Log activities in SCOIR.** Keep updating your activities to ensure you've included everything when it comes time for applying to colleges. Consider joining a new club or sport next year if you need more activities. Talk to your counselor or Advisory teacher if you need feedback on the strength of your high school resumé and how to improve it.



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- ☐ **Check in with your school counselor** to review your grades, update your High School & Beyond Plan, and start planning for your 11th grade course selections. Think about early post-secondary opportunities like AP, dual enrollment, IB, NIC, or work-based learning.
- ☐ **Start making a plan for the ACT next year.** Research ACT test prep options and make a plan for how many times you might want to take the ACT to achieve your target score. Your college counselor can help you make a strong plan.
- ☐ **Make summer plans to align with your post-secondary goals.** For job postings, volunteer opportunities, and summer learning info, visit our [College and Career](#) webpage. Check in with the career counselor if you need help thinking through your options, building a resumé, writing a cover letter or professional email, or completing an application.

SUMMER

- ☐ **Make sure you complete any summer assignments your 11th grade classes might require.** Check the [West High webpage](#) for more information.
- ☐ **Start visiting college campuses.** If you travel over the summer and are near a college campus, consider driving through or taking a walk on campus to get a feel for different types of schools. Even spending a short time at a school can help you figure out what you like and what you want to avoid.



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FALL

- ☐ **Review your selections and make sure you're challenging yourself.** Consider early post-secondary opportunities (dual enrollment, IB, AP, or NIC courses), and make sure you are on track if you are planning to pursue the full IB Diploma or a Career-related Programme Certificate.
- ☐ **Consider signing up for the PSAT or the ASVAB.** Taking the PSAT as a junior can qualify you for a National Merit Scholarship. Be on the look-out for the sign-up email because we have limited spots available, but priority goes to juniors. Visit the [College Board Blog](#) for tips on preparing. By taking the ASVAB you gain access to the Career Exploration Program (CEP), an excellent resource, and a score of 31 counts as an early post-secondary opportunity and helps you attain the Ready Graduate designation. ASVAB scores are good for 2 years if you decide to enlist in the military after graduation.
- ☐ **Continue your career exploration.** Many websites such as [CollegeforTN.org](#) and [CareerOneStop.org](#) have good assessment and career search tools. Check the [College & Career](#) page for other options, or schedule an appointment with the career counselor.
- ☐ **Begin researching post-secondary scholarship opportunities.** Check out the [College & Career](#) page for scholarship info and links to reputable scholarship and financial aid websites.
- ☐ **Attend the KCS College & Career Fair in September.** Look at the list of participating colleges/organizations ahead of time and do some research to make the most of your time at the fair.
- ☐ **Take the ACT.** Experts recommend preparing for the test up to 3 months before you take it, so explore test prep options including free online resources, purchased test prep curricula, in-person or virtual courses, etc. Talk to your counselor or our testing coordinator if you need help.
- ☐ **Stay on top of registration deadlines and requirements for AP or IB exams.**
- ☐ **Visit colleges.** If possible, schedule visits to the top 4-5 colleges you are interested in. Read up on some [Campus Visit Tips](#) before you go. If you can't visit in person, search for virtual tours and online college forums. Students are allowed 2 excused absences for college visits, and forms to document your visits are available in the main office.
- ☐ **Participate in Job Shadowing.** Get an inside look into a career of your choice by registering for our 865 Academies Job Shadowing Experience. The career counselor can also help you find additional job shadowing opportunities if you are interested.
- ☐ **Attend college visits to West.** Stay on top of what college reps will be visiting West High, and sign up to attend in SCOIR. Do your research before the visit and come prepared with questions for the rep. Meeting with college reps is a great way to narrow down your list of college options and to show your interest to schools that are among your top choices.
- ☐ **Identify 2-3 teachers who might write a good letter of recommendation for you.** Talk to them about it before the end of the school year.
- ☐ **Consider applying for one of the Tennessee Governor's Schools or other summer learning programs.** Check out our list of Summer Opportunities on the [College & Career](#) page, and make sure you stay on top of deadlines.



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SPRING

- ☐ **Check in with your school counselor** to review your grades and start planning for your 12th grade course selections. Discuss your ACT scores and make a plan for senior year re-takes if necessary.
- ☐ **Attend the Dual Enrollment meetings.** If you are considering dual enrollment courses in your senior year, make sure to attend the DE meetings as they are announced.
- ☐ **Log activities in SCOIR.** Keep updating your activities, and reflect on your high school activities so far. Check in with your college counselor if you have questions about how to strengthen your resumé.
- ☐ **Sign up for a Mock Interview Workshop.** Join the college and career counselors and community members for a workshop that will prepare you for job, college, and scholarship interviews.
- ☐ **Attend the KCS Hiring Expo** where many local employers will be interviewing for summer employment, full- and part-time employment, youth apprenticeships and internships, registered apprenticeships, and work-based learning. Dress for success and come prepared with an introduction and a resumé.
- ☐ **Write a draft of a college essay, personal statement, or cover letter, and get feedback from a teacher or counselor.**
- ☐ **Contact your counselor to review your course selections for 12th grade.** Make sure your coursework is challenging and aligned with your post-secondary plans.
- ☐ **Make summer plans to align with your post-secondary goals.** For job postings, volunteer opportunities, and summer learning program info, visit our [College and Career](#) webpage.

SUMMER

- ☐ **Make sure you complete any summer assignments your 12th grade classes might require.** Check the [West High](#) website for more information.



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- ☐ **Accept the invitation to the College Connections Canvas course.** Spend some time exploring the resources there, and ask your college and career counselors if you have questions. Continue researching post-secondary options and scholarships.
- ☐ **Attend the Senior College Night in August.** Join the counselors and our Knox Access Coach for an overview of what this year holds for seniors. Ask questions and stay in contact throughout the fall and spring as you finalize your plans for after graduation.
- ☐ **Check your school and personal email accounts daily.** Missing out on emails from your counselors or post-secondary admissions/recruitment staff can derail your plans, so check emails frequently and respond promptly.
- ☐ **Stay on top of registration deadlines and requirements for AP or IB exams.**
- ☐ **Meet with your college and career counselors.** Whether you're 100% certain about your post-secondary plans or still need help narrowing down career pathways, school choices, or scholarship opportunities, your counselors can help.
 - If you're planning to attend a 2- or 4-year college, our college counselor can ensure that you're on the right track with deadlines and assist with the application process.
 - Considering the military or going straight into the workforce? Schedule an appointment with our career counselor to connect with a military recruiter or explore your options for apprenticeships or local training programs that support recent grads.
- ☐ **Continue your college visits and nail down your list of colleges/programs to which you want to apply.** If you're planning to pursue vocational training, use our Local Apprenticeships database or work program resources on the [College & Career](#) page. Contact the career counselor for help.
- ☐ **Apply for the TN Promise Application.** Your college and career counselors and our Knox Access Coach will visit senior classes and help all students apply for TN Promise, a scholarship and mentoring program that provides students a last-dollar scholarship at any of the state's 13 community colleges, 24 colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institutions offering an associate's degree program.
Deadline to apply: November 1
- ☐ **Log activities in SCOIR and complete your FERPA releases.** Make sure your activities list is accurate and complete so that your resumé is as strong as it can be when you are applying for colleges and scholarships. Without the signed FERPA releases, we can't release information like transcripts or recommendations to colleges, so don't forget those.
- ☐ **Participate in an 865 Academies Internship or Work-Based Learning.** Listen for details about opportunities that help bridge the gap between the classroom and the workforce. Contact the Academy Coach for guidance.
- ☐ **Take the ASVAB.** Even if you're not considering a career in the military, by taking the ASVAB you gain access to their online Career Exploration Program, and you may earn a credit toward the Ready Graduate distinction at graduation.



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- ☐ **Complete and submit your application essay.** Attend one of our college essay workshops or check out resources on the [College & Career](#) webpage.
- ☐ **Apply to at least one college, technical school, or job.** Attend one of our College Application Blitz events during school for assistance with college applications. Don't forget that most Tennessee schools waive application fees during Free College Application Week in September, and some are free for the whole month.
- ☐ **Complete the FAFSA.** Attend one of our many FAFSA help sessions.

SPRING

- ☐ **Participate in senior traditions.** Celebrate every milestone!
- ☐ **Attend TN Promise meetings.** Contact our Knox Access Coach if you need help. Our [College & Career](#) page has a volunteer spreadsheet that can help you get connected for the volunteer hours requirement.
- ☐ **Finalize your post-secondary plans.** Consult with parents/guardians to review financial aid options and academic outcome data for institutions to which you've been accepted. Commit to the institution that is the best fit for you. See the college counselor if you need help. If you're planning to enter the workforce or an apprenticeship program, check in with the career counselor to make sure you are taking advantage of all the resources our school and community can offer you.
- ☐ **Complete the Exit Survey in SCOIR.** This helps us know how we can improve our counseling services in the future.
- ☐ **Graduate and Celebrate!**

