

COLLEGE GOALS	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Academics The goal isn't the highest-level class, the goal is to seek appropriate challenge and build intellectual confidence.	Choose right-fit classes, don't accelerate before you are ready.	These grades carry more weight than 9th. Consider a tutor or academic coach if you're struggling.	These are the most important grades. Take rigorous courses, but balance challenge with sustainability	Senior year grades still count — don't let up. First-semester grades are submitted with all applications.
Activities Colleges aren't counting clubs; they're looking for curiosity, commitment, and character. Discover who you are outside the classroom.	Try something new; high school opens many doors.	Dive deeper into a few high-interest activities. It's OK to change direction. 4 years of one activity is not required.	Take on leadership roles, when appropriate, in your extracurriculars.	Stay present and engaged in your high school community. Colleges seek engaged community members.
Advocacy The ability to ask for help, own a mistake, and navigate a hard conversation is one of the most transferable skills for college success.	Practice self-advocacy skills. Ask questions. Go to office hours and tutoring blocks. Seek the help that you need.	Continue to ask for support, go to office hours, and expand your horizons.	Begin college research: academics, geography, and extracurriculars. Articulate what makes a “good college” <i>for you!</i>	Pull research into a final college list. Draft essays that share your authentic voice and values.
Adult Mentors Relationships with teachers, coaches, and advisors open unexpected doors — and produce vibrant letters of recommendation.	Connect with a school advisor or trusted teacher. Build at least one positive relationship	Continue to connect with adults in your high school (advisors, teachers, coaches).	Build authentic relationships with junior year teachers (they'll write your recommendation letters).	Use the resources of your school's college counseling office.
Summers No single activity is required.	Seek opportunities that let you: interact with people outside your family, be responsible to someone new, explore a passion, and learn something.			