



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

(The answers to your most wanted questions – keep this handy! It is your guide for the next year and beyond.)

Sophomore Year

Spring

- Stay on track with your courses. The number one item in the review process for college admission is course selection and grades in those courses. Doing well in high school is the most important preparation for success in college and for success on standardized exams.
- Explore potential careers. In the sophomore year, each student spends a homeroom period completing the exercise, *Strengths Explorer*. This instrument is based on the Clifton Strengths assessment and brings personal talents and career interests together to give the student a preliminary list of careers that may be of interest. There is an additional resource titled, 'career interest profiler', available in Naviance.
 - Attend meetings with the career speakers in a wide variety of careers. Each year, we provide career speakers in the College and Career Center. These speakers are advertised in the Daily Bulletin that is emailed to the students each day and in their Naviance accounts. All sophomores are welcome to attend these meetings!
- Stay involved. Continue to be involved in your extra-curricular activities at Holy Angels and in your community. Look toward leadership opportunities within these involvements. Try new activities, if you haven't yet done so. Keep your eye on the Sports and Activities section of the AHA website, the Daily Bulletin and the boards around campus for all the activities and involvements that are available at Holy Angels.
- Attend the College Fair at Holy Angels. Each spring, AHA invites sophomores and juniors to attend a college fair on our campus or Saint Thomas Academy. This year it will be held on Monday, April 17 at Saint Thomas Academy. We will have about 110 colleges from around the country available to talk to our students. This is a great time to understand all the options available to you, to ask questions about academic programs, athletic, music or theater options, and to get on colleges' mailing lists. Colleges will begin to invite juniors to on-campus college events as well as receptions offered in the Twin Cities. You will only know about these if you are on the mailing lists of the colleges.
- Update your resume in Naviance with all your clubs, service, and activities at AHA and outside of school.

Junior Year

Fall

- Stay on track with your courses. The number one item in the review process for college admissions is course selection and grades in those courses. Doing well in high school is the most important preparation for success in college and for success on standardized exams.
- Attend College Planning Night on October 3, 2023. This event offers students and families the opportunity to attend college related breakout sessions that are of interest to them. Examples of breakout sessions that have been offered in the past are: Financing College, Attending a Catholic College, Attending Large Public Colleges, Campus Visits, NCAA and Athletics in College, and Highly Selective Colleges.
- Attend the National College Fair at the Minneapolis Convention Center on October 4, 2023, from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. This is the largest National College Fair in the country where you can anticipate seeing hundreds of colleges from around the country in one location. More information from the College and Career Center will be forwarded next fall.
- Start a preliminary list of colleges of interest. Add these colleges to your "colleges I'm thinking about" list in Naviance.
- Take the Practice ACT and PSAT at Holy Angels. Taking the PSAT test qualifies you for the National Merit Scholarship program. (*Only a very small percentage of PSAT takers each year are qualified for the*

National Merit Scholarship program.) The real reason for taking the PSAT is that it is great practice for standardized exams and the SAT. It is important to do your best on this exam, so that you gain a realistic idea of your academic areas of strength, as well as skill areas in need of improvement.

- MEA Weekend. Visit a college or two to learn what you might like or dislike in a college campus. This could be a day visit to a few local colleges. It doesn't need to be the colleges where the student may apply. The goal is to explore college options. Aim for variety – large public and small liberal arts, for example. Keep notes about what you like and don't like about the colleges visited. Trust us – you will forget!
- Attend Financial Aid Night. On the evening of Tuesday, October 17, 2023, beginning at 6:30 pm, we host an opportunity to hear from a college financial aid officer on the federal financial aid process. Junior families are invited as a primer for what to expect senior year in regards to college financial aid.

Winter

- College Planning Meeting with your College Counselor. In January a letter is sent to you with the time and date of your college planning meeting. Write this on the calendar and complete the instructions for filling out the college planning surveys, so that your counselor can make the most of your time together.
- Sign up for College Entrance Exams. You and your college counselor will discuss this in your college meeting. Typically our students take the ACT and take it a couple of times. There are three ACT dates in the spring. Review these dates and sign-up for those exam dates that work for your schedule. We advise that you pick two dates from the February, April and/or June tests. Register for the ACT through www.act.org or the SAT through sat.org/register. For a small fee, **on the April, June and September ACT, students can order a copy of their test book and answer sheet for review.**
- Prepare a Challenging Schedule for Senior Year. This will be discussed in the College Planning Meeting with your counselor. One of the most important components of college admission review is a student's course selection, particularly senior year. Do not load up on easy electives.
- Attend 'Jumpstart Your College Planning Day'. In January, all the juniors will be attending a day-long college planning session. Each junior attends sessions during the day on Career Planning, Resume Writing, Essay Writing, a mock admission committee, Finding a College Fit and how to maximize college searches through Naviance. At the end of this day, each junior receives an assignment where they are required to submit a completed portfolio (in April) to their college counselor that includes: a written essay, a completed college application, a typed resume, a job shadow or interview, a college search project, and a college application worksheet.
- Prepare for Standardized Tests. This will be individual for each student. In the College and Career Center, we offer a free pamphlet with two practice exams, books for check-out, and an on-line test preparation tool through Naviance, Methodize Test Prep. Each year, for a nominal fee, the Academy of Holy Angels also offers a prep-class coordinated by Ms. Kjorstad. The College and Career Center website also offers a list of external prep resources.

Spring

- Have a Family Conversation. Have a discussion about the colleges that your student is considering and what they might want to study, if they know. Discuss concerns regarding location, cost, etc.
- Plan More College Visits. Hopefully, students will have more thoughts about colleges that may 'fit' what they want. Visit more colleges during the spring of junior year to solidify opinions on where they may be submitting applications in the fall.
- Hand in Your College Planning Portfolio. This is the College Planning Portfolio that is assigned at the *Jumpstart Your College Planning Day*. The due date for this is always in April of the junior year.
- Attend the College Fair. AHA will offer the Spring College Fair again for juniors.
- Pick up Your College Planning Portfolio. Your college counselor will be reviewing all the submitted documents in your College Planning Portfolio and giving you feedback on your essay, resume, completed application, etc. Make sure that you pick this up from them so that you can make any needed adjustments to these documents before the fall when you really need them!

Summer

- Narrow the List. Look at college research, finish college visits, and decide the colleges to which you will apply.
- Make sure tests are done. Look at college list to make sure all the tests required are completed. If you still need to complete ACT or SAT make a plan now for fall testing dates.

Senior Year

Fall

- Schedule a Check-In Meeting with your College Counselor. During the first week of school, each student should schedule a meeting with their college counselor to discuss potential applications.
- Get organized. Make sure you have all your college materials organized. Does your college require you to complete the CSS Profile in addition to the FAFSA for financial aid? Keep track of all admission requirements with a spreadsheet to help you keep track of all the details. There will be different requirements for each school. It is good to get a plan early of how you will keep track of when and where items are mailed.
- Make decisions on ACT/SAT test results for colleges. Most colleges are continuing to be test optional, however you may want to report your scores. Each college will have a different policy: whether you self-report them or if you need to order official scores to be sent through ACT or SAT. If your college requires them to be official and you need to order them, it typically takes four weeks for scores to arrive and be processed by your colleges of choice – plan ahead.
- Request transcripts. At Holy Angels, students must request transcripts for college applications and scholarships **at least two weeks before an application deadline.** Over 1000 transcript requests are processed each fall, including writing letters of recommendation, collecting teacher letters of recommendation, etc., and it takes time to get everything gathered that is needed for each student's request. If a transcript is not requested at least two weeks before the deadline, the student is at risk for not meeting their college deadlines.
- Complete any additional college visits. Use MEA break of senior year to finish any college visits. This is a very popular time for college visits – make your college tour reservations by mid-September.
- Submit College Applications. Keep track of your deadlines and make sure that you are submitting all the needed documentation to a college by their deadline.
- Apply for your FSA ID. Each student and one parent will need an FSA ID to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). You will apply for your FSA ID at: <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>
- Apply for Financial Aid. Submit all financial aid documentation before the colleges' priority financial aid deadlines. To complete forms like the FAFSA, it is helpful to have your tax forms completed (they do not have to be filed). The FAFSA will be advising you to pull numbers from specific lines from tax forms. The FAFSA will be live typically around October 1.

Winter

- Start Looking For Scholarships. There are several search engines for scholarships listed within your Naviance account. Scholarships that come into the College and Career Center are listed under 'updates' on your Naviance home page for students to see immediately upon logging into their account.

Spring

- Bring in Acceptance and Scholarship Letters. We keep an official file for each student and require that they bring in a copy of any acceptance and scholarship letters for their individual file. We rely on this information for year-to-year data, the end of year celebrations and the Graduation Program.
- Make a decision. Most colleges require that students submit a deposit to hold a spot in the freshman class by May 1 of their senior year. After May 1 colleges are not required to hold the spot offered through their acceptance letter.
- Contact Colleges You are Not Attending. It is important to close your file at colleges that are no longer considering as soon as you have made that decision. This allows colleges to contact wait-listed students and advise them that a spot may now be available.
- Graduation! The College and Career Center will send a final transcript to the college you choose to attend.