



High School Planning Guide

9th grade:

- Create a four-year high school plan with the school counselor.
- Map out courses that should be taken to fully prepare for college.
- Begin to develop good study and work habits. Always follow teacher directions and complete assignments on time. These “work attitudes” will serve you well throughout high school and college.
- Always seek out your teacher(s) when you don’t understand the lesson, homework assignments, etc. Teachers truly appreciate students who take the initiative!
- Attend local college fairs as announced by the school counselor
- Begin college and scholarship searches and participate in age-appropriate scholarship competitions. www.cfnc.org is a great place to begin this process.
- Begin to consider career options in light of your current interests and abilities. Take the career interest inventory on www.cfnc.org, and research those areas in which you have the strongest interests.
- Become involved in school, church, and community activities. Keep a log of your community service activities.
- Assume leadership positions when opportunities are available. Leadership and community service are key elements that are important for future college and scholarship opportunities.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall. This is for practice only. HGBCS requires this of all freshmen. It will prepare you for future SAT’s and ACT’s, both of which are college admissions tests.

10th grade:

- Review your four-year plan with the school counselor to insure 9th grade academic objectives were met. Make adjustments if needed.
- Continue attending local college fairs as announced by the school counselor.
- Continue to work diligently and strive for excellence in all subjects. Remember, you are building your “college portfolio” by making the best grades you can achieve.
- Continue college scholarship search at CFNC.org.
- Continue researching career interests and options with assistance from the school counselor.
- Become an active participant in a club, not just a mere member. Be proactive rather than reactive!
- Continue looking for opportunities to either serve or to lead.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall. This is for practice only. HGCS requires this of all sophomores. It will prepare you for future SATs and ACT’s, both of which are college admissions tests.

11th grade:

- Continue reviewing your four-year plan with the school counselor to maintain your track for graduation and college admission. Keep grades up all year long!
- Continue attending local college fairs as announced by the school counselor.
- Start getting serious about meeting college representatives when they visit HGCS throughout the year.
- Begin in earnest to investigate college scholarship/financial aid opportunities. Continue on line searches and apply when appropriate.
- Continue meeting with the school counselor to narrow the scope of college choices in our area, the state, and outside North Carolina.
- Continue seeking leadership roles both in and outside of school.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall. This is the qualifying year for the National Merit Scholarship competition. HGCS requires this of all juniors. It will prepare you for the spring SAT and ACT, both of which are college admissions tests.
- Take the SAT in the winter/early spring of this year. Follow in late spring/early summer with another SAT or an ACT (American College Test). The ACT has a science test; the SAT does not have a science test.
- Create a resume (see the school counselor for a high school sample).

- Begin making college visits during the spring semester and continue into the summer months. NEVER choose a college without first making a visit!
- Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse in June after you get your report card if you plan to participate in Division I or II college athletics. Submit Copy 1 of the downloadable transcript request to the school counselor. The web site is www.eligibilitycenter.org.
- Meet with the school counselor in the spring to finalize senior year plans. Encourage your parents to come in with you. After all, they will have a direct role in this planning process, especially the financial end of things (paying for college!!) as you prepare to go off to college.

12th grade:

- Initiate a parent/student conference with the school counselor to finalize plans if this did not happen in the spring of your junior year.
- Attend local college fairs if still undecided about college choices.
- If displeased with your junior year SAT and/or ACT scores, register for the earliest fall test date and try to improve your scores.
- Complete college visits during early to late fall and narrow your choices between 3 to 5 colleges. Seek God's will for the "best fit" college. Thorough planning and decision-making will be important for your future happiness and success.
- Start the college application process in early fall. Most colleges have either "early notification" or "rolling admissions" standards. They will clearly state deadlines for submission. Pay attention please!
- Apply on line. Have a credit card available to pay for the admissions' fee.
- See the school counselor immediately after submitting an electronic application. Fill out the "Transcript Request Form" located in the guidance office. It will free the counselor to mail off your official high school transcripts. It will serve as a "paper trail" for when transcripts are mailed.
- Be very careful about making "early decision" applications. Often, when admitted to a college, the decision is binding. This means you would have to withdraw all applications for other colleges, even if you change your mind and want to attend one of them. See the school counselor for more information about this process.
- Actively pursue scholarships and financial aid opportunities, beginning in the fall and progressing through the winter and spring. Listen carefully for scholarship announcements over the intercom and follow up emails concerning scholarships.
- Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) after January 1st. Like college applications, this can be done on line. The web site is www.fafsa.ed.gov. Many

merit-based scholarships require this process now, whether or not you qualify for federal aid. March 1 is North Carolina's deadline for submission. See the school counselor for more details and/or registration materials.

- ❑ Continue maintaining active involvement in school extracurricular activities, leadership positions, and community service projects. Colleges and scholarship sponsors will review resumes very carefully for senior year participation.
- ❑ Notify the college you plan to attend no later than May 1. Usually a deposit will “seal the deal” with your chosen college. Additionally, send “thank you notes” to colleges that admitted you. Simply explain that you are planning to attend another college. This will keep you in good stead with these colleges, especially if you reapply as a transfer student or later desire to attend graduate school at one or more of them.
- ❑ Complete a “Final Transcript Request” form and give to the school counselor to send your final grades to the college you plan to attend.

As God's word promises in Jeremiah 29:11,
*“For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare
and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”*

(New American Standard Bible)