

HCS Freshman Year Timeline

Grade 9

- 1. Create a four-year high school plan.** Once settled into ninth grade, introduce the idea of preparing an overall plan for high school that relates to your child's goals.
 - Make sure you and your child know what high school courses are required by colleges, and that your child's ninth-grade courses are on the right track.
 - Map out when these courses should be taken.
 - Familiarize yourself with the various levels of courses offered by your child's school.
- 2. Start your child thinking about careers.** Encourage your child to develop a tentative career goal. Of course it will change — often — but it's the thought process that counts.
 - Help your child to identify interests — likes and dislikes — not just in academics but in all areas. This will help your child focus on goals.
 - Encourage your child to discuss career options with others, such as the school counselor, teachers, recent college graduates who are working, professionals in the community, etc.
- 3. Suggest extracurricular activities.** Encourage your child to actively take part in a sport, school club, music or drama group, or community volunteer activity.
 - If your child may want to play sports in college, research the National College Athletic Association eligibility requirements. The NCAA requires completion of certain core courses; you can find the specifics at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.
- 4. Meet with the school counselor.** The school counselor knows how to help your child get the most out of high school. Make sure your child has an opportunity during the school year to discuss post-high-school plans with the school counselor and map out courses to take during the rest of high school.
- 5. Save for college.** It's still not too late to start a college savings plan, if you haven't already. Every little bit helps!
 - Investigate state financial aid programs and 529 plans.
- 6. Obtain a social security number for your child if you don't already have one.** This is often required for applications, testing, scholarships and other opportunities.

HCS Sophomore Year Timeline

Grade 10

1. **Meet with the school counselor.** Students will meet with their School Counselor to ensure that he or she is enrolled in challenging and rigorous courses.
2. **Sign up to take the PreACT-** The PreACT gives students an indication of their college and career readiness and how they may score on future ACT exams.
3. **The PSAT/NMSQT® is offered to 10th-graders.** While this test is usually taken in the 11th grade, it is also often offered in the 10th to students who are on an advanced math sequence.
4. **Explore BOCES Programs** – Students will take a field trip in the fall over to the Madison-Oneida BOCES Complex. They will be able to explore programs that may be of interest. They should let their Counselor know if they would like to enroll in a program by March.
5. **Is your child interested in attending a U.S. military academy?** If so, he or she should request a precandidate questionnaire and complete it. Your school counselor can help with this.
6. **Attend college and career fairs.** These often take place in the fall, at your school or in your area.
7. **Support your child's participation in a school activity or volunteer effort.**
Extracurricular activities help students develop time-management skills and enrich the school experience.
8. **Tour college campuses.** If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel opportunities to visit colleges and see what they're like.
 - Even if there is no interest in attending the college you are visiting, it will help your child learn what to look for in a college.

HCS Junior Year Timeline

Grade 11

Fall

- Start with you: Think about your abilities, social/cultural preferences and personal qualities. List things you may want to study and do in college.
- Learn about colleges. Look at their websites (www.collegeboard.org, www.bigfuture.org). Talk to friends, family, teachers and recent grads of your school now in college. Browse college guide books. List college features that interest you.
- Consider attending the College and Financial Aid Night at HCS.
- Listen for announcements in Forum for College Representative visits. This is a great way to get more information about a college and made a first impression.
- At school, sign up early to take the PSAT/NMSQT, which is given in October.
- Make a file to manage your college search, testing and application materials. There are many organization tools on the HCS webpage.
- If appropriate (for example, if you're interested in drama, music, art, sports, etc.), start to gather material for a portfolio.
- With your family, start to learn about financial aid. Read the Department of Education's *Funding Your Education* (about federal aid programs). Use *Getting Financial Aid* published by the CollegeBoard and the financial aid calculator at www.collegeboard.org to estimate how much aid you might receive.

Winter

- Meet with your counselor to talk about your senior year and post-graduation planning.
- Sign up to take college admission tests (SAT/ACT) this spring. Register online at collegeboard.org or actstudent.org. Fee waivers are available for students with financial need. To prepare, local prep courses and online materials are available. School/CEEB Code: 332-240.

*** Students with documented disabilities should apply to SSD to find out if they are eligible for College Board test accommodations. Approval can take up to six weeks, therefore please see your Guidance Counselor for a consent form to request accommodations at least SIX WEEKS PRIOR to your chosen test date.*

- Begin a search for scholarships. National sources include the *College Board Scholarship Handbook* and electronic sources. Don't overlook local and state aid sources (ask your counselor or check your public library).
- Think about which teachers/coaches/mentors you will ask to write letters of recommendation.

Spring

- Visit some local colleges — large, small, public and private. Get a feel for what works for you. The junior class will travel to the NACAC College Fair at OCC.
- Develop a list of 10 to 15 colleges that attract you. Request viewbooks and information about financial aid and academic programs that interest you. Plan campus visits. It's best to go when classes are in session.
- If you are considering military academies or ROTC scholarships, contact your counselor before leaving school for the summer. If you want a four-year ROTC scholarship, you should begin the application process the summer before your senior year.
- Complete Senior Self-Assessment "pink sheet." This can be turned into the Counseling Center at any time.

Summer

- Plan summer activities early. Enrich yourself by volunteering, getting an interesting job or internship, or signing up for special summer learning programs.
- If you are an athlete planning to continue playing a sport in college, register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (www.eligibilitycenter.org).
- Find a full-time or part-time job, or participate in a camp or summer college program. Visit colleges. Take campus tours and, at colleges you're serious about, make appointments to have interviews with admissions counselors.
- Create a resume — a record of accomplishments, activities and work experiences since you started high school.
- If you are applying to a visual or performing arts program, work on your portfolio or audition pieces.

HCS Senior Year Timeline

Grade 12

September

- Senior Conference with your School Counselor to narrow down list of colleges to 5 to 10 and discuss application process. Plan to visit as many of these colleges as possible.
 - Attend College and Financial Aid Night at HCS. The application process, how the Counseling Center supports and applying for Financial Aid will all be discussed.
 - If not yet done, complete Senior Self-Assessment “pink sheet.” Turn into the Counseling Center.
 - Ask for teacher/mentor/coach recommendations if you need them.
 - Take or (Retake) the SAT and/or ACT.
 - Create a master list or calendar that includes:
 - tests you’ll take and their fees, dates and registration deadlines.
 - college application due dates.
 - financial aid application forms required and their deadlines. (Note: Aid applications may be due before college applications.)
 - other materials you’ll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.).
 - your high school’s own application processing deadlines.
- **Many of these resources can be found on the Counseling Center Webpage**
- If you can’t afford application or test fees, a counselor can help you request a fee waiver.

October

- Try to finalize your college choices.
- Prepare Early Decision, Early Action or rolling admission applications as soon as possible. Pay very close attention to due dates!
- CSS Profile becomes available October 1. Refer to www.collegeboard.org/cssprofile for more information.
- If you’re submitting essays, write first drafts and ask teachers and others to read them. If you’re applying for Early Decision, finish the essays for that application now.
- If you have not had your test scores sent to the college to which you are applying, be sure to contact the appropriate test organization to have them sent.
- Submit any applications due.

November

- Complete your application essays, proofread them rigorously for mistakes.
- Counselors send transcripts to colleges. Give counselors the proper forms at least one week before colleges require them.
- Submit any applications due.

December

- FAFSA becomes available in December. Get PINs for the FAFSA for both yourself and one of your parents from www.pin.ed.gov.
- As you finish and send your applications and essays, be sure to keep copies.
- Submit any applications due.

January

- Submit any applications due.

February

- No senioritis, please! Accepting colleges do look at second-semester senior grades.

March

- Keep active in school. If you are wait-listed, the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and learned of its decision.
- File income tax returns early. Some colleges want copies of your family's returns before finalizing financial aid offers.

April

- You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April. If you've not done so yet, visit your final college before accepting. As soon as you decide, notify your counselor of your choice.
- If you have questions about housing offers, talk to your counselor or call the college.

May

- May 1: Colleges cannot require a deposit or commitment to attend before May 1. By that postmarked date, you must inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid. (Questions? Talk to your counselor.)
 - Send your deposit to one college only.
 - Wait-listed by a college? If you will enroll if accepted, tell the admissions director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask whether funds will be available if you're accepted.
 - Work with a counselor to resolve any admission or financial aid problems.

June

- Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college.

Source: The College Board, HCS Counseling Center