

## **COLLEGE PLANNING BASIC TIMELINE**

### **Freshman and Sophomores**

Freshman and sophomores are encouraged to maintain good grades. Overall high school GPA is a major factor in college admissions. On average, colleges require a 3.0 or higher. Sophomores will take the PLAN test, a pre-ACT exam, in the fall. Attending a college fair is also suggested, especially for sophomores. Begin volunteering or getting involved either in school or out of school. Many colleges and scholarships look for students who have been involved outside of academics.

### **Juniors**

Juniors are encouraged to attend a college fair. Our area offers the National College Fair and the Christian College Fair, both in the fall. In the spring, the Minnesota Association for College Admissions and Counseling hosts fairs. Please see the website for dates, times, locations and attending colleges [www.mn-acac.org](http://www.mn-acac.org). Take the PSAT offered in October. Take the ACT or SAT in the spring. Try to narrow college choices down to 3-5 schools. Continue maintaining grades and staying involved.

### **Seniors**

In the fall, seniors need to be making decisions on schools and sending out applications. Please note deadlines for individual colleges. Sometimes colleges have early decision deadlines and may waive application fees for applications received by certain dates. Check with the Guidance Counselor to ensure they have met all graduation requirements. They also need to begin applying for scholarships. Seniors are also encouraged to research scholarships on their own. After January 1, they need to apply for financial aid by filling out the FAFSA. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is required by families interested in applying for financial aid. It needs to be filled out with parent's tax information from the previous year.

## **MINNESOTA CAREER AND INFORMATION SYSTEM**

Spectrum High School has access to Minnesota Career and Information System, a website devoted to post-secondary planning. Students and families can do a variety of things including research careers, colleges, majors, financial aid, take interest inventories and skills assessments and learn general information about jobs. Please contact Dan Schmoyer ([dschmoyer@spectrumhighschool.org](mailto:dschmoyer@spectrumhighschool.org)) for information from this resource.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is PSEO?**

PSEO or Post-Secondary Enrollment Options is an opportunity for high school students to earn dual credit. Students take college level courses and earn both high school and college credit. For example, if a student takes college level English it will satisfy an English requirement at Spectrum High School and will also satisfy an English requirement at college.

**Which college entrance exam should I take, the SAT or ACT?**

It depends on the college you would like to attend. Certain colleges require SAT, certain ones require ACT and others will accept both. About 90% of colleges today will accept either one. Contact the individual college to find out for sure.

**What is the difference between the SAT and the ACT?**

The ACT covers four subject areas: English, Reading, Math, and Science with an optional Essay while the SAT is divided into Verbal and Math and Writing sections with the mandatory Essay.

**Where can I go to find some basic information about schools, cost, majors, and locations?**

Here is a list of some websites that can be very helpful with any of the above mentioned interests.

<http://www.collegeboard.com/>

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Prepare/index.html>

<http://www.powerprep.com/collguid.htm>

<http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=CIP1>

<http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/grIndex.cfm>

<http://www.ribghe.org/col-prep.htm>

<http://www.preparingforcollege.com/16.html>

<http://mappingyourfuture.org/>

<http://www.usnews.com/sections/business/paying-for-college/index.html>