

## College Planning Guide for St. Joseph Students



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Planning for college is a team project that requires involvement from the school, the parents, and the student. It can be overwhelming for any single team member but, working together, it does not have to be burdensome.

### Freshman Year

- You are fortunate to attend St. Joseph High School, where our entire curriculum is designed to prepare you for college. Your part is to do the very best you can in each class! Go to tutoring when you need to. Your high school record starts **now**.
- Begin thinking about and investigating careers that interest you. Talk to people who are knowledgeable in the field.
- Start checking into colleges that you think you might want to attend. Watch for summer opportunities at those schools and visit as many as you can. Become familiar with their admission requirements and deadlines.
- Join and participate in extracurricular activities.
- Attend as many college related workshops as you can. Just learning some of the lingo associated with college admissions will give you an edge later on.
- Keep track of your community service hours, activities, honors, and awards.
- This year you will be taking the PSAT 8/9 assessment, the first in College Board's college readiness program (PSAT 8/9-PSAT-SAT). Do your best on the test!
- Visit helpful websites such as [www.collegeforalltexas.com](http://www.collegeforalltexas.com), [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org), [www.collegeboard.org/student](http://www.collegeboard.org/student), [www.edulaunchpad.com](http://www.edulaunchpad.com), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). Each has a wealth of information for finding the right college and paying for it.

## Sophomore Year



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- Hopefully, your transcript this year will show growth over last year. Stay on top of things and do your very best in each class. Ask for help when you need it.
- Begin thinking about and investigating careers that interest you. Talk to people who are knowledgeable in the field.
- Start checking into colleges that you think you might want to attend. Watch for summer opportunities at those schools and visit as many as you can. Become familiar with their admission requirements and deadlines.
- Join and participate in extracurricular activities.
- Attend as many college related workshops as you can. Just learning some of the lingo associated with college admissions will give you an edge later on.
- Keep track of your community service hours, activities, honors, and awards.
- Visit helpful websites such as [www.collegeforalltexas.com](http://www.collegeforalltexas.com), [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org), [www.collegeboard.org/student](http://www.collegeboard.org/student), [www.edulaunchpad.com](http://www.edulaunchpad.com), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). Each has a wealth of information for finding the right college and paying for it. Try the online practice tests.
- Send for a FREE copy of the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation Compendium. This is a comprehensive college handbook that will serve you well.

Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation  
1250 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 810  
San Antonio, Texas 78209-1539

<http://www.everychanceeverytexas.org/>

- You will be taking the PSAT this year. Pay close attention in those classes that will prepare you for the test, especially English and Math and do your best on the test!
- Find summer enrichment programs or consider getting a job. Almost anything you do will enhance your resume.
- Consider taking your initial ACT and/or SAT at the end of this year (June).

## Junior Year

This year's academic record is the last one that will be seen by college admissions offices. Make it your best yet!



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- Begin thinking about and investigating careers that interest you. Talk to people who are knowledgeable in the field.
- Try to narrow down the list of colleges that you think you might want to attend. Watch for summer opportunities at those schools and visit as many as you can. Pay attention to their admission requirements and deadlines.
- Join and participate in extracurricular activities.
- Start building your resume from the activities list you've been keeping. You can find examples at these websites: [www.collegeforalltexas.com](http://www.collegeforalltexas.com), [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org), [www.edulaunchpad.com](http://www.edulaunchpad.com), [www.collegeboard.org/student](http://www.collegeboard.org/student). You will also find help with choosing a major and/or career choice.
- If you haven't already done it, send for a FREE copy of the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation Compendium. This is a comprehensive college handbook that will serve you well.

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- You will be taking the PSAT again this year. **The score you earn this year could qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship Program.** Do your best and pay close attention in those classes that will prepare you for the test, especially English and Math.
- Register with the NCAA if you plan to play sports at the college level <http://www.ncaa.org>
- Find summer enrichment programs or consider getting a job. Almost anything you do will enhance your resume.
- Take both ACT and SAT during the year; repeat if necessary.
- Consider taking a dual credit class with Victoria College either during the year or this summer.
  - Unless exempted by an SAT or ACT score, you will need to take the TSI assessment prior to registering for a VC class. <http://www.victoriacollege.edu/testingcenter>

- To be exempt you will need an SAT score of at least 480 in math and 530 in EBRW, with a minimum score of 500 each on reading and math OR an ACT composite score of 23, with a minimum score of 19 each on English and math.
- As soon as the new version is available next summer, begin working on your Apply Texas application [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org) and/or the Common Application [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). Each of these websites includes a current list of the colleges and universities that accept either or both.
- Start working on your college essays over the summer. Ask an adult you trust to look them over and make suggestions for improvement.
- Be ready early next year to ask teachers, coaches, and other adults to write letters of recommendation for you.

## Senior Year

**Take a deep breath and keep it all in perspective! Hopefully, you have been planning and working toward this year all along so it won't be as overwhelming for you as it could be. Remember that we are in this with you—don't be shy about asking questions.**

- Keep your grades up. Many schools require a mid-year transcript and school report, so this is not the time to slack off!
- While it's nice to know at this point exactly what you want to be when you grow up, it's not mandatory. Many students will change their major at least once over the next few years. Try to relax about it if you're not sure.
- Continue to narrow down the list of colleges that you think you might want to attend. Watch for campus visits from the admissions reps. Pay attention to admission requirements and deadlines.
- Put the finishing touches on your resume and essays. Have an adult who knows you well look it over for content and/or clarification.
- Continue visiting these websites: [www.collegeforalltexas.com](http://www.collegeforalltexas.com), [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org), [www.edulaunchpad.com](http://www.edulaunchpad.com), [www.collegeboard.org/student](http://www.collegeboard.org/student) for ideas and hints on your essays, resume writing, career planning, and more.
- Repeat the ACT and/or SAT as necessary in the fall semester.
- Consider taking a dual credit class with Victoria College this year.
  - Unless exempted by an SAT or ACT score, you will need to take the TSI assessment prior to registering for a VC class. <http://www.victoriacollege.edu/testingcenter>
  - To be exempt you will need an SAT score of at least 480 in math and 530 in EBRW, with a



minimum score of 500 each on reading and math OR an ACT composite

score of 23, with a minimum score of 19 each on English and math.

- Complete and submit your Apply Texas application [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org) and/or the Common Application [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). StJ hosts workshops for help with these applications—plan to attend.
- Be ready early on to ask teachers, coaches, and other adults to write letters of recommendation for you.
- If you will be looking for financial aid, pay attention to the individual college requirements and deadlines. The FAFSA is your first step; start the online application whenever you can. <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. A couple of recommended websites that have an extensive scholarship database are [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) and [www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com). YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE TO PAY FOR ASSISTANCE WITH THE FAFSA OR FOR ANY SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION. VC hosts workshops for help with the FAFSA—listen and watch for announcements.
- If you haven't already done it, send for a FREE copy of the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation Compendium. This is a comprehensive college handbook that will serve you well.

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- Have you registered with the NCAA? If you plan to play sports at the college level, you must do this. <http://www.ncaa.org>
- Participate fully in StJ's College and Career Day.
- As the year progresses, you will be receiving notices via email from us regarding college information, visits, and scholarship opportunities. Be sure you read all messages and apply for any scholarships that you qualify for!



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