



Westwood High School Guidance Department

College Planning and Preparation: A four-year plan

9th Grade

Coursework

The only thing ninth grade students should do to prepare for college is put their best effort into their classes – that is it. Students should be in courses in which they can be challenged and successful.

Extracurricular Activities

It is a good idea for students to get involved in extracurricular activities that they enjoy, that fit into their schedules, and that they will likely continue. These can include athletics, performing arts, student government, shared interest groups, community service, or part-time work. Of course, students should prioritize their schoolwork over their extracurricular pursuits.

Guidance Curriculum

The Freshmen Seminar Program will cover topics including: transitioning to the high school, graduation requirements, GPA, college preparatory curriculum recommendations, and a brief introduction to college selectivity.

10th Grade

Coursework

Students should continue taking courses appropriate to their abilities and consistent with their academic interests.

Extracurricular Activities

Students should continue with activities from ninth grade, or consider joining an activity that interests them, if they haven't done so already. Academics should remain the priority.

Guidance Curriculum

The Tenth Grade Career Workshop will introduce students to the process of exploring college majors and career opportunities. Students will complete an on-line career interest inventory and begin a resume.

Standardized Test Options

- *ACT Practice Test (April)*: A practice test for the ACT, includes an English, math, reading and science reasoning section. There is no essay. Test report will be mailed home in January and counselors will review results with students. We recommend that all tenth graders take the ACT Aspire.
- *Subject Test (June)*: Students may opt to take a subject test in Biology, Chemistry, or World History. This is not required, and only a select number of colleges require Subject Tests. Students should consult with their teacher and guidance counselor. Students will have the opportunity again in junior year to take Subject Tests if they do not feel prepared for a particular exam.

11th Grade

Coursework

This tends to be the most challenging year for students, in terms of coursework.

Extracurricular Activities

Students should continue with activities and will continue work on their resume.

Guidance Curriculum

The Junior Workshop is a three-day program covering the college selection process. Students will utilize Naviance, an on-line college search program, and begin to develop a list of safety-reach-realistic schools. There are a number of required forms for students to complete. Students meet individually with counselors, and parents are welcome to attend these meetings.

Events

- *College Planning Night (January)*. This evening is geared toward eleventh grade students and their parents. Tenth grade students and parents are welcome to attend.
- *TEC College Fair (October and April)*. Held at Waltham HS (fall) and Westwood HS (spring).
- *College Visits*. Encouraged during February and/or April vacations.

Standardized Test Options

- *PSAT (October)*: A practice test for SAT, includes a Critical Reading, Math and Writing section. There is no essay. Test report will be mailed home in December and counselors will review results with students. We recommend that all eleventh graders take the PSAT.

During the second semester of junior year we recommend students take both the ACT and SAT, so that they have the option of choosing which one to send to colleges. Colleges accept both the ACT and SAT.

- *ACT with Writing (February, **April**, June)*. We recommend the April test for most students. Includes English, math, reading and science reasoning sections, as well as an essay.
- *SAT (January, March, **May**, June)*. We recommend the May test for most students. Includes Critical Reading, Math, and Writing Sections, as well as an essay.
- *SAT Subject Test* (January, March, May, **June**)*. We recommend the June test for all students for whom the subject test is required. Each subject test is one hour and students can take one, two, or three subject tests in one administration.

*Test not required for all colleges, students must check requirements for individual schools.

12th Grade

Coursework

Students should continue in the appropriate level coursework and have a strong year.

Guidance Curriculum

Senior Seminar reviews “nuts and bolts” of college application process. Individual meetings with counselors continue.

Standardized Test Options

We recommend that students repeat their better test from junior year.

- *ACT with Writing (**September**, October, December)*. We recommend the September test.
- *SAT (**October**, November, December)*. We recommend the October test.

Events

Continue campus visits and meet with college representatives at the W.H.S. Guidance Office.