

NYACK HIGH SCHOOL'S JUNIOR POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING GUIDE



**PROVIDED BY NYACK HIGH SCHOOL
GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT**

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INTRODUCTION

It's your junior year! This is an exciting time when you may be enrolled in very challenging academic courses. You are probably trying to balance the time you spend with clubs, activities, sports, community service and employment, and socializing. Now is a great time for you to think about your life after high school in a concrete manner - do you plan to attend a four-year college, two-year college, technical school, or pursue other possibilities? Your counselor is here to help you sort through the decision-making process by providing information. Furthermore, your counselor can help you to investigate many options, and then to focus on specific goals. By the end of your junior year, you should have a working plan for senior year, including what you need to do to graduate, schools that you may apply to, and/or careers that you may pursue.

This booklet has information about the college selection process. We want to assist you step-by-step throughout the year. The purpose of this book is to help you approach the process in a logical, realistic and sequential manner. If you follow the timetables, complete the checklist, use the guidance materials (computers and reference books) and confer with your counselor you will do much to lessen the anxiety associated with your post-high planning.

Although you cannot be guaranteed acceptance to a particular college, if you take an active and responsible role in the college admissions process, choose realistically and seek help when needed, you will certainly have a better chance of being successful in "matching up" with the right college for you. Good Luck!

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NOTE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

Most experts agree that active participation by the family is vital in preparing students for the best possible college experience. Your participation is also crucial for your child for career planning.

We at Nyack High School aspire to assist you through the process by providing information in writing, through our personal contact with you and through meetings scheduled during the junior and senior years. Many students do not know exactly what major or career that they wish to pursue. However, by pursuing their education, they will have the ability to access the best professional opportunities in the future. Although we encourage all students to consider study at a four-year college, every year we assist students who are interested in career areas that may be studied at a community college or technical school. For all students, we act as consultants to find the most appropriate settings for academics, personal growth and career access. With college and career planning, we also consider the unique qualities and talents of your child.

Please read this brochure and discuss it with your child. Come to our evening meetings (see school calendar and watch for mail from the high school). Don't hesitate to call your child's counselor with any questions or concerns.

We welcome families in the post-high school planning process and look forward to working with you.

TIMETABLE FOR COLLEGE PLANNING – JUNIOR YEAR

JANUARY	Check your schedule against graduation requirements be sure your program includes courses needed for a Nyack High School Diploma (Regents, Advanced Regents or Local). Listing of graduation requirements can be found in the Program of Studies. Obtain a Social Security number if you have not already done so. You received the results of the October PSAT in December and used them as data in Naviance.
FEBRUARY	Meet with your counselor for post-high school planning and to research colleges and careers. Course requests for senior year will also be reviewed at this time. Update resume and begin personal profile.
MARCH	Make it a habit to check your school email. We will communicate with you using this account in Naviance. Register for May SATI/SATII. Official test scores must be sent to colleges by student. Junior parent evening meeting.
APRIL	Ask your teachers to write a letter of recommendation for you. You will need two. Call or e-mail colleges for bulletins, brochures, etc. Take virtual college tours through Naviance. Register for June American College Test (ACT). Register for June SATI or SATII.
MAY	Take Advanced Placement Examinations, if applicable. Confer again with your counselor to “refine” your post high school plans. Arrange college visits for the summer when colleges are in session.
JUNE	Prepare well for your exams.

JULY/AUGUST Earn and/or learn and/or travel. Consider doing community service. Make appointments to visit colleges in the Fall. Continue to update your resume.

AUGUST Establish your Common Application account online. Match your common application account with your Naviance account.

NAVIANCE STUDENT CONNECTION

Naviance student is a web-based computer technology program that helps you, your parents and your counselor with the college admissions search and application process. It keeps us all connected, which is extremely important as we embark on this journey together.

You and your parents have already established an account in Family Connection at connections.naviance.com/Nyack. Please continue to use Naviance by taking a college search on the Super Match College Search. Place colleges that interest you onto the "Colleges I'm Thinking About " list. During meetings with your counselor, this will be extremely useful information for both of you, so you may begin to make some plans and have serious discussions about schools you might apply to.

Please start to build your college resume on "Resume Builder. Your counselor will read your resume which he or she will use when writing your letter of recommendation. There might still be schools that require a hard copy of documents sent to them via the US Postal Service. No worries, we are equipped to handle your application this way as well.

Many colleges and universities will allow your application to be submitted on "The Common Application". Please consult with your counselor on how to register for the Common App through our Naviance Program. It is VITAL that you register this way in order for your school data to be submitted to schools you are applying to electronically and accurately.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

You should identify two teachers who know you well as a student to write a letter of recommendation on your behalf. In person, you should then ask them to write your letter. Even though you will request a teacher recommendation electronically in Naviance, it is respectful and courteous to speak personally to your teachers and continue to update them regularly with the schools you are applying to. Please also thank them for their letters.

THE COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR

Your course of study should be a broad based "college preparatory" program. Remember to make your Senior year program full and challenging. College admissions counselors often say they are not favorably impressed when Senior programs are "light". You should carry more than the minimum of 5 1/2 credits.

Your extra-curricular activities should reflect your diverse interests. Keep a listing - you'd be surprised how often students forget to include activities in which they participated in previous years.

Standardized tests are usually required. Find out which ones are needed for the schools you are considering.

Summer activities should include travel, community service, school or work experiences.

YOUR COUNSELOR

1. Communication is vital for college success. Contact your counselor. When counselors are informed of your plans, know your priorities and are included in your decision-making, we can better act as a liaison between you and the colleges. We cannot guarantee your acceptance, but we do help direct you to explore possibilities you may not have considered and can help in the application process.

2. Counselors can bring to the attention of colleges facts about your background (financial hardship, illness, family concerns). Please share your circumstances with us so that we can help you.

3. Take advantage of the "browsing area" in the guidance office where information is available on colleges, technical schools, and careers in the military.

ORGANIZATION OF DATA

1. Start a file of materials about colleges about which you want to learn more.
2. Keep all correspondence.
3. Make a copy of everything.
4. Keep standardized test results.
5. Keep record of cancelled checks.
6. Take notes on phone conversations, with dates, name, content, etc.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

It is strongly urged that your parents be consulted in every stage of your college planning. This includes meeting with your counselor in the spring of junior year.

SUMMER

Speak to friends who are home from college. Visit colleges where you are vacationing. Read newspaper and magazine articles about colleges and education. Call during the summer to set up appointments for fall interviews to be sure that you get the date and time you prefer. If possible, arrange visits to colleges when classes are in session.

JUNIOR CHECK LIST FOR GETTING STARTED

- Work hard in all your classes. Discuss your course selection for senior year with your counselor.
- Keep up with your studies, working to the best of your ability and develop systematic study habits.
- Participate in valuable extra-curricular or community activities. Keep track of what you have done since ninth grade.
- Read, read, read! Find materials that you enjoy (books, magazines, newspapers) to read outside of school assignments.
- Become familiar with the format and types of questions on the SAT I and *ACT*. See your counselor for review materials.
- Attend school every day. If you are sick, make sure you have a buddy in each class for homework assignments.
- Obtain and memorize your social security number.
- Discuss your college and career options with your parent/guardian. Plan to meet with the counselor for more information.
- Attend meetings with college representatives who visit the high school. Also, stop by the college tables in the fall.
- Attend the College Fair at Rockland Community College in the fall. Approximately 250 schools will be represented.

- Ask your counselor how you can research college and careers.
- Work with your counselor to review your academic progress and plans for the future. Being undecided is fine, so don't worry if you are not sure of a college major or career area yet.
- Plan to visit out of town campuses in the spring, summer or next fall (preferably when students *are* on campus).
- Register and take the SAT I or *ACT* before the end of junior year. Check with your counselor to determine if you need to take the SAT II tests. Watch the deadlines for test registration!
- Listen to daily bulletin announcements about college conferences, open houses, and college representatives who visit our school.
- Regularly check your school email account.
- Regularly check the Guidance web page

TWENTY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A COLLEGE

1. How many full time students are enrolled in the college?
2. Where do most of the students come from?
3. Do students have similar academic motivation to yours?
4. Do students participate in similar social and extracurricular activities to yours?
5. How many PhD's are on the staff? Do they teach freshman classes?
6. What is the faculty's most important goal - teaching or research?
7. How large are the classes?
8. Do faculty members regularly attend student activities and make themselves available to students?
9. What is the school calendar - semester, trimester, winter-term?
10. Is the curriculum flexible?
11. Are course assignments and graduation requirements related to your specific goals?
12. What are the opportunities for study abroad?
13. Is the surrounding community involved with the college?
14. Is there a cooperative education program? Are internships available?
15. Do students have any voice or power in decisions that affect them? Is there an active student government?
16. Does the administration maintain close and informal relations with students and faculty?
17. What percentages of students live on campus?
18. Do students stay on campus during weekends?
19. Do students have a choice in living arrangements?
20. Is the food plan a good one for you?

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF A CAMPUS VISIT

Visiting prospective colleges can be a big help in selecting the right college. The purpose of the visit is to provide you with first hand impressions about people, programs and facilities. It is not too soon to visit colleges in the spring of your Junior year and the summer following your Junior year.

The admissions interview (which varies from college to college) does not count as much as most applicants think. But your presence and the information you provide about yourself and your college plans, and the questions you ask about the college are important indications of your interest in the college. Please note that a few very competitive colleges require alumni interviews, which are very important in the admissions process.

PRELIMINARY STEPS

1. Become acquainted with the school by looking through the college website.
2. Talk over your ideas about college with your family and your counselor.
3. Call or e-mail the school's admission office for a catalog, which contains information on programs, admissions requirements, finances and the like. Study the catalog before you visit.
4. To save time and money, plan to visit schools in the same geographic locale.
5. Make tour and interview appointments in advance. Some campuses allow you to stay in their dorms at no cost to you. Inquire when you call or write for an appointment.

TIPS ON YOUR VISIT

1. Be prompt for your interview. Allow time for a tour and to speak to students.
2. Bring an unofficial transcript.
3. Pick up additional information.
4. Discuss finances, scholarship and work opportunities.
5. Feel free to ask for an estimate of your chances for admission - but don't expect a firm commitment.

SOME " MUSTS" TO INCLUDE IN YOUR CAMPUS TOUR

1. The academic facilities - sit in on a class, if you can.
2. The college library.
3. Living quarters and dining facilities.
4. Students - feel free to ask the student tour guide questions.

PARENTS

Should they accompany you? This is up to you. Parents are usually welcome on campus, but interviews are usually with you alone.

AFTER THE VISIT

1. Make notes - they'll be helpful to you in comparing various schools.
2. If you are interested in the school - proceed with applying in the fall of your Senior year.
3. Write a thank-you note to the interviewer.

SUMMARY

In visiting a college you learn a lot. If you remain interested, you may decide to apply. If you are not, you have learned what you DO want and what other colleges are likely to expect of you.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK AT AN ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW

The answers to many of these questions can be found in college viewbooks or catalogs. You will probably have a chance to ask only a few of these questions so select those which you most want answered.

1. What is the size of your student body? Male/female ratio?
Student/faculty ratio?
1. What is the average class size?
2. What are the college's strongest majors?
3. Has the school been successful in the area of job placement?
4. What percentages of graduates go onto graduate schools?
5. What percentage of your faculty has Ph.D's, MA's, etc?
6. Must you live on campus? Do you have a choice of roommates?
7. What is the availability of transportation?
8. How selective are you in the admissions process?
9. Do you have early admissions?
10. When can I expect to hear from you concerning my admissions Status?
11. What percentages of your students are on financial aid?
12. How does one apply for financial aid?
13. Do you offer scholarships on academics alone?
14. When should I expect to receive word from the Financial Aid Office?
15. What subjects would I be required to take?
16. Can a student take a course pass/fail?
17. Do you accept Advanced Placement Exams?
18. How do you set up your calendar year (semester, trimester, quarterly)?

19. What counseling services are available?
20. How is the college food?
21. Is the Student Government Association active?
22. What is the tuition/cost per credit?
23. What are the room and board expenses?
24. Given my academics what are my chances for admission?

QUESTIONS COLLEGE INTERVIEWERS MAY ASK

A student should come to an admissions interview prepared in order to insure the interview is meaningful. Hopefully, the questions listed below will be of assistance in your preparation.

1. How did you first become interested in us?
2. Do you know any students on campus?
3. Are you acquainted with any of our alumni?
4. What kind of student have you been?
5. What is your class rank?
6. Have you taken the SAT I or ACT?
7. What were your scores on the SAT I or ACT?
8. What are you planning to major in?
9. Why have you chosen this of study?
10. What courses are you presently taking?
11. What would you like to do after college?
12. What is you favorite subject?
13. Are you interested in writing or music or art?
14. What interest, hobbies or activities do you have outside the classroom?
15. What books have you read - not required by classroom teachers during the past?
16. Do you prefer science fiction or mysteries?
17. What subjects do you dislike most and why?
18. Who were the greatest influences in your investigating our college?
19. Have you talked to your guidance counselor about your plans?
20. What other schools have you applied to?
21. What do you like best about the college?
22. What are you looking for in a college education?
23. Are we your first-choice school?

24. What other colleges have you visited?
25. What do you do in the summer?
26. How many are in your family?
27. Do you plan to apply for financial aid?
28. Are you interested in scholarship monies?
29. Do you intend to work while you're in college?
30. Do you have any brothers or sisters at another college?
31. What questions would you like to ask me?

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

All colleges and universities expect you and your parents to contribute as much as you can to the cost of your education. But they realize that college costs may strain your family's budget. They'll do their best to bridge the gap between what you can afford and what the college costs. Financial assistance comes in several types: grants and scholarships, loans and work-study.

Grants and scholarships are outright gifts or money. Most of the time, they are based upon need. Sometimes, though, they are awarded for academic excellence and promise, or for special achievements or abilities.

Loans are a significant part of most aid packages. They must be repaid, but most often not until after you graduate. Interest rates are competitive with other types of loans. The payback period on college's loans varies from two or three year up to 10 years.

Work-study is a part-time job on campus. For instance, you might work in the library, or as a resident advisor, lifeguard or food-service worker. The job is arranged through the financial aid office.

Funding for financial aid comes from the federal government, state government, private sources and the colleges and universities themselves. Colleges determine what you can afford on the basis of information you and your family provides on confidential forms. You can pick these forms up at your high school guidance office.

To be considered for federal grants and loans, you must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Some colleges and universities require that you submit the Financial Aid Profile of the College Scholarship Service to be considered for the college's or university's grants.

Read each college's brochures carefully to find out which form(s) to submit and when to apply for assistance. Make sure you don't miss important deadlines. Also, keep a copy of every financial aid form you send out.

If you and your family will not be able to support the full cost of your education, you should apply for assistance. At many high-quality colleges and universities, one-half to three-fourths of the students receive financial assistance.

Although it is increasingly difficult to do so, many institutions are still committed to "need-blind" admission. This means the admission decision is made separately from the assessment of your financial aid application. In "need-blind" admission, the amount of financial aid you need will have no effect on whether or not you'll be admitted.

It's beyond the scope of this booklet to outline all the sources of financial assistance. To find out more, talk to your high school counselor or check on the resource materials in the Guidance Office.

INFORMATION NEEDED TO COMPLETE YOUR STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In the spring of your Junior year, you will be given a Personal profile to be completed and returned to your counselor.

Along with your transcript (your official academic record of courses completed and final grades), the counselor sends a comprehensive letter of recommendation. The counselor letter discusses your strengths as a student, your activities, and your special personal qualities (for example, friendly, hardworking, courageous, etc.)

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

<https://hs.nyackschools.org>- Go to the departments tab and then go to the guidance tab. Anything you need to know is there.

<http://connection.naviance.com/nyack> - Your one stop place for all things college.

www.collegeboard.org Sign up for the SAT here.

act.org ACT registration website

commonapp.org Site for the common application

suny.edu State University of New York website

www2.cuny.edu/ City University of New York website

going-to-college.org Resource for students with disabilities

thinkcollege.net Resource for students with disabilities

ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/eligibility-center
(Official website for student athletes)