



COLLEGE CHECKLIST:

A Resource for Students and Families

Compiled by True North



This checklist covers all of the metrics you would ideally meet at each grade level (starting pre-high school). If you haven't checked off a task but would like to – ask for help.

True North is available to help you develop a plan to complete every task on this checklist. Your guidance counselors and teachers are also available to help.

YOU CAN DO THIS!

Contact us:

info@truenorthyouthprogram.org | 970-708-1986

Telluride College Counselor [website](#)

Norwood College Counselor [website](#)

Nucla College Counselor [website](#)



COLLEGE CHECKLIST

Pre-High School

Start the conversation about academics between family and student

- Make a plan to check-in regularly about schoolwork.
- Celebrate good grades. Help student address academic concerns.
- Ask for help. It is okay to not understand, or to struggle with a class or concept. Student should start getting used to asking teachers for help - that's what they're there to do!

Start the conversation about college

- Open a college savings account.
Your local bank can answer questions and help you open a 529 college savings plan. More information about 529 college savings plans can be found [HERE](#).
- Take PSAT if available.
- Create a My Colorado Journey account. There is a High School Planning timeline that starts with recommendations for 7th grade. Link [HERE](#).
- Set goals for high school academic performance. What are your expectations for yourself/your student?

Identify strengths early.

- Complete our Career Match Worksheet Here
- Complete our other Worksheet Here



COLLEGE CHECKLIST



9th Grade



Introduce yourself to your guidance counselor.

Links to the counselors for each school's counselor pages are available on page 1 of this document.



Review the Identifying Strengths worksheets with them.

Ask what opportunities are available to you.

Set ambitious and realistic academic expectations.



Register for courses in academic areas (English, math, science, history, and foreign language) required for college entrance



Try hard academically. Remember: freshman year grades affect GPA, and therefore count for college! Freshman year also sets a student's own expectations of what they are capable of, and what standard they will hold themselves to.



Ask for help and support (like True North, or teachers!)



Prepare for and take the PSAT 9 test. This will provide you with information on how you are doing academically, and help identify academic interests and weaknesses

Explore extracurricular opportunities.



Get involved in an activity (school sport, out-of-school art class, etc.) that is meaningful to you



Join a club that matches your interests



Volunteer for a service organizations that fits your values

Continue the college conversation.



Continue saving for college.

Consider your summer.



Can you get a job/internship or participate in a trip/activity that could help you develop your strengths/interests?



COLLEGE CHECKLIST

10th Grade

Continue meeting academic standards

- Set goals for yourself based on your freshman year
- Check-in with teachers of the classes/subjects you struggle with.
- Utilize tutoring/supportive services (like True North!)
- Prepare for and take the PSAT 10 test

Broaden and deepen Extracurriculars

- Become more committed to a particular community service organization or project
- Deepen involvement in extracurricular activity/club. Become someone that teachers/leaders recognize as an active participant

Begin to consider your career

- Return to Career Match Worksheet
- Shadow someone in a profession you would consider

Consider your summer.

- In the summer, search for internships/jobs that could help you develop strengths/interests. There may be ways to help you get money for completing an internship
- In the summer, search for trips/programs to help you develop strengths/interests

- Continue saving for college.



COLLEGE CHECKLIST



11th Grade

Start preparing for college admissions

- Search for and start applying for scholarships
(see our scholarship timeline here)
- Attend college fair.
(see available events here)
- Attend college workshops
(see available events here)
- Visit college campuses and take campus tours. Virtual tours are available
- Review online college catalogs/guides
- Ask favorite teachers for letters of recommendation
- Create a tentative list of colleges for consideration (you can find our College Match worksheet here)
 - Contact the colleges on your list to request information (and get on their radar)
 - Get on their mailing lists to receive information about the schools

Put effort into testing

- Prepare for and take the PSAT test and enter the PSAT competition.
Top scorers can qualify for national recognition and college scholarships.
- Prepare for and take the SAT and/or ACT
- Retake the test at least once



COLLEGE CHECKLIST



11th Grade continued

- Take on leaderships roles in community service/
extracurriculars/clubs

Continue to consider career

- Ask True North what resources are available. We may be able to help match you with an employer, or access work shadow opportunities
- Get an internship/job in a field you are interested in

Summer between junior and senior year

- Create a Common App account.
- On August 1, the website updates with new essay prompts. Read over them, and start thinking about what you might write about. Consider starting to brainstorm/write out some ideas.
- Fill out easy info like family details, education background, activities/honors. That way, when the school year picks up, you already have the easy stuff out of the way!
- Carefully consider summer job, volunteer opportunities, internship opportunities, etc.



COLLEGE CHECKLIST

→ 12th Grade

Be proactive about college admissions in the first semester

- Retake SAT/ACT if you need to improve scores
- By the end of September, narrow down college choices (we recommend applying to around 5 or 6 colleges, including a “safety school.”
More info on our College Match worksheet.
- When scores and final college lists are ready, you can start sending official scores to the schools you will be applying to.
- As soon as you’re back in school, approach teachers and confirm they can write letters of recommendation. Follow up, and make sure to have those letters of recommendation ready by late October.
- Create a tentative list of colleges for consideration (you can find our College Match worksheet here)
 - Contact the colleges on your list to request information
Get on their radar! Some colleges track "engagement."
 - Get on their mailing lists to receive information.
Click on the links!
- Prepare your personal essay and have it ready by late October.
- Prepare your supplemental essays. Have them ready by late October.
- Fill out FAFSA/CAFSA and have them ready by late October.
- Attend the Financial Aid briefing offered by True North in collaboration with local college counselors.
- Create your own Scholarship Application timeline.
Which ones are you applying to? When are they due?
- Submit all applications between November and December of your senior year



COLLEGE CHECKLIST

12th Grade continued

- Continue involvement and leadership in extracurricular activities, community service, and clubs

Follow up on your applications

- Check your email regularly. You might receive interview requests. Respond to these in a timely manner.
- Receive and understand your EFC (Expected Family Contribution). Can your family meet that? How much will you need to make up in scholarship money?
- Apply for scholarships
- Consider admission offers and confirm your intent to enroll in April
- Request that a final transcript be mailed to your college of choice and ensure that your college receives it