



## College and Career Checklist: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

### All Year

**Be mindful of POSTS**, pictures, and comments on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, and all other social media sites. Your digital footprint never goes away, and colleges may have access to some or all of what you post.

**Begin earning volunteer COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS** so you can qualify for college scholarships - check the Champions For Learning website for places you can volunteer.

- Visit your school counselor for approved sites or to get desired site approved prior to volunteering
- Obtain the community service form from your school counselor
- To qualify for the various levels [of Florida Bright Futures Scholarship -](#)
  - You need 30 Community Service Hours to qualify for the Florida Gold Seal Scholarship
  - 75 hours to qualify for the Florida Medallion Scholarship
  - 100 hours to qualify for the Florida Academic Scholarship

### Quarters 1 and 2

\_\_\_ 1. **Start strong.** Colleges look for an upward trend in your grades, so even if 8<sup>th</sup> grade was rocky, you still have plenty of time to prove your academic skills.

\_\_\_ 2. **Practice asking for help.** When you apply to college, you will need to have letters of recommendation from teachers. Get in the habit of raising your hand, adding to discussions, offering to lead group projects, and asking your teachers for extra assistance.

\_\_\_ 3. **Meet with your school counselor.** Ask the following questions and take notes on the answers:

- Can you show me how to calculate my GPA?
- Can you review high school graduation requirements with me and show me how to be sure I'm on track to graduate on time?
- Where do you post information on college visits and planning programs?
- When is the next time I can take the PSAT?
- Do you have a list of places where I can volunteer to earn community service hours?

- \_\_ 4. **Download a planner app**, such as Todoist or Calendly, on your phone.
- \_\_ 5. **Join a club or two!** If you join now – in 9<sup>th</sup> grade – you can easily move into a leadership position by junior or senior year.
- \_\_ 6. **Attend all college nights** and open houses offered by your high school.

### **Quarters 3 and 4**

- \_\_ 7. **Keep your grades up!** Your GPA determines your class rank. Together, the GPA and class rank are important components of your college application.
- \_\_ 8. **Continue researching different career fields** that you find interesting:
- <http://mynextmove.org/explore/ip>
  - [www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)
  - <https://www.floridashines.org/find-a-career/plan-your-future>
  - <https://roadtripnation.com/>
- \_\_ 9. **Register for 10<sup>th</sup> grade classes.** Colleges look for students who take challenging classes. Consider taking additional courses in math and natural sciences and be sure to register for additional foreign language courses beyond the two sequential years of the same language. Computer and public speaking classes will also help you succeed in life.
- \_\_ 10. **Stay alert for announcements about new extracurriculars!** As the school year closes, you'll hear announcements about sports tryouts, new clubs being established, and planning activities for your 10<sup>th</sup> grade year. Volunteer. Try Out. Go for it. You might be surprised by the new adventures you have.
- \_\_ 11. **Polish up your summer plans:** So many opportunities to consider; just make your summer count.
- Summer job: If you haven't started yet, this might be a good summer to start saving money for college. Open a savings account.
  - Take an [online class](#) just for enrichment. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are free online courses where you can learn anything from Japanese architecture to fashion design to Excel. Try [Coursera](#) or [Edx](#).
  - FLVS: Register for a [Florida Virtual School](#) class to get ahead with extra courses or take a class that your school doesn't offer.
  - Check out your favorite Florida college for summer offerings designed especially for high schoolers.
  - Participate in an internship or a volunteer opportunity to gain real-world experience
- \_\_ 12. **Review the 4-year plan** developed in Champions For Learning Lab and make any necessary adjustments.

## Summer After 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

- \_\_\_ 13. **Prepare the documents you'll need to apply for financial aid for college:**
- Apply for a Social Security number if you do not already have one
  - Get your [Florida ID card](#) (can later be replaced by Driver's License) – you'll need to bring your Social Security card ONE of these: US birth certificate, valid US passport, consular report of birth abroad, certificate of naturalization, or certificate of citizenship. Click on the link for more information.
- \_\_\_ 14. **Read at least two books.** If you like contemporary fiction, click [here](#). If you want to read some classics to help develop your reading skills for the SAT, click [here](#).
- \_\_\_ 15. **Begin researching college options** by taking virtual tours of Florida's colleges and universities. See [Florida Shines](#) for these campus tours. Find the average GPA of admitted freshmen at your favorite schools to see how you measure up.

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