

Winter Park High School College & Career Center

# Sophomore Year College Search Guide

*(modified College Preparation in 10<sup>th</sup> Grade by Allen Grove on [www.about.com](http://www.about.com))*

Your college applications are still a couple years off when you start 10th grade, but you need to keep your long-term goals in mind. Keep your grades up, take challenging courses, and gain depth in your extracurricular activities.

Visit the WPHS College and Career Center in room 109 and fill out a yellow information card. Explore the College and Career Center web page ([www.wphs.ocps.net](http://www.wphs.ocps.net); the center is listed under the *Guidance* tab) for links to common forms and helpful articles. Be sure to “like” WPHS College and Career Center on Facebook for up-to-date resources and information. The volunteers in the Center are here to help you with your questions.

## **1. Continue to Take Challenging Courses**

Your success in challenging academic courses provides the college admissions folks with the best evidence of your ability to succeed in college. In fact, many admissions officers will strip out your less meaningful grades when they calculate your high school GPA.

## **2. Grades, Grades, Grades**

Throughout high school, nothing matters more than your academic record. Work on self-discipline and time management in an effort to earn the highest grades possible. Review the test, GPA, and community service requirements for the Bright Futures scholarships at [www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org).

## **3. Put Effort Into Extracurricular Activities**

Begin to focus more on the activities that have become the most meaningful to you, but do not be afraid to try something new. Get a jump start on completing community service hour requirements.

## **4. Create an Ongoing High School Resume**

Compile a list of activities, talents, honors, leadership positions, interests, and job experience and put it in a resume format. This will save you time (and help you remember everything) in the future when you fill out your applications for colleges and scholarships. A template for this resume can be found on the College and Career Center web page ([www.wphs.ocps.net](http://www.wphs.ocps.net); the center is listed under the *Guidance* tab).

## **5. Analyze your PSAT Scores**

Add a zero to each of your PSAT section scores and you will have an idea of what your SAT scores might look like. Use the online access code located on your PSAT test score report to access My College QuickStart at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org), where you can learn more about what questions you got wrong. This site also offers information on college majors and related careers as well as a free personality test.

## **6. Consider College Majors You May Wish to Study**

Research careers that may spark interest in a specific major; talk with your parents and other adults. Some helpful sites include [www.mymajors.com](http://www.mymajors.com), [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org), and [www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org).

## **7. Take SAT, ACT, and SAT Subject Tests as Appropriate**

You are more likely to take these exams in your junior and senior years, but more and more students are taking them earlier, especially as more students take Algebra I in middle school. Many competitive colleges require two SAT Subject Tests. Take these soon after your coursework so that the material is fresh in your mind.

## **8. Visit Colleges and Browse the Web**

Your sophomore year is a good time to do some low-pressure exploration of the college options out there. If you find yourself near a campus, stop by and take the tour. Nearly all schools offer informative virtual tours on their websites. Browse the web to learn more about different types of colleges. Carefully and honestly consider your interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Some helpful websites include [www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com), [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org), [www.mycollegeoptions.org](http://www.mycollegeoptions.org), and [www.collegeanswer.com](http://www.collegeanswer.com).

## **9. Keep Reading**

This is good advice for any grade. The more you read, the stronger your verbal, writing and critical thinking abilities will be. Reading beyond your homework will help you do well in school, on the ACT and SAT, and in college. You'll

be improving your vocabulary, training your ear to recognize strong language, and introducing yourself to new ideas.

**10. Have a Summer Plan**

There's no formula for what defines a productive summer, but you should make sure you do something that leads to personal growth and valuable experiences. Research summer enrichment programs at colleges, internships, volunteer opportunities and summer jobs.

HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR SOPHOMORES

[www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org](http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org)

[www.mymajors.com](http://www.mymajors.com)

[www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

[www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org)

[www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com)

[www.mycollegeoptions.org](http://www.mycollegeoptions.org)

[www.collegeanswer.com](http://www.collegeanswer.com)

