

EMPOWER MY HOOD®

Checklist for Rising High School Freshman

Create a four-year high school plan

- ☐ Think about what you'd like to accomplish in the next four years.
- ☐ Make sure you know which high school courses are required by colleges, and that you're taking the right classes as early as the ninth grade. You can ask your counselor about what those "right" classes are.
- ☐ Get to know the levels of courses offered by your school.
- ☐ Take the PSAT™ 8/9. If your school offers it, sign up to take the first of the College Board assessments to set a baseline. Get familiar with the PSAT-related assessments and SAT®. Most four-year colleges consider applicants' scores on college admission test. **Participate in extracurricular activities**
 - ☐ Remember that colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity instead of a loose connection to several.
 - ☐ If you're interested in playing sports in college, research the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility requirements. The NCAA requires completion of certain core courses; you can find the specifics at ncaaclearinghouse.net.

Start thinking about your life after school

- ☐ Identify your interests, likes and dislikes, not just in classes but also in every area. This will help you focus on your goals.
- ☐ Talk to other people, such as your school counselor, teachers, recent college graduates who are working, professionals in the community, etc., about careers you might find interesting.

Meet with your high school counselor

- ☐ Your counselor knows how to help you get the most out of high school. Be sure to take some time during the school year to discuss post-high-school plans with him or her.

Save for college

- ☐ It's not too late to put money aside for college. Every little bit helps!

Learning about financial aid early on can also help you down the road.

Explore summer opportunities

- ☐ Look for a job, internship, or volunteer position that will help you learn about a field of interest.