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COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST – GRADE BY GRADE

Checklist Freshman Year (9th Grade):

- Build strong academic, language, mathematics and critical thinking skills by taking challenging courses.
- Study hard and get excellent grades. Use the various school resources available at your school if you are struggling with certain classes. Example: Seek out before or after school math help provided by the teachers or the National Honor Society students. Many High Schools have excellent tutoring programs in the various core or elective classes like the foreign languages.
- Build study time into your daily schedule. Putting off homework creates poor study and preparation habits. Be diligent and stay on top of the work. Don't study for tests the night before the test. Review material over the period of several days. Rewrite your notes on the subject. Research has shown that an individual will retain more information by re-writing ones notes or study guide material versus just reading over the material trying to memorize the information.
- Strengthen your vocabulary by increasing your reading.
- Meet your guidance counselor and discuss your plans for the next four years.
- Browse through college literature or and look at school websites to get an idea of what kinds of schools may be of interest to you.
- Check out what high school courses colleges require.
- Keep an academic and extracurricular portfolio.
- Begin to research career possibilities.
- Take the PSAT. Look over the results of the tests to see the areas that need to be strengthened. At this time the math sections may be above grade level, however the English area will provide an accurate assessment of vocabulary, sentence structure and reading comprehension.
- Know the NCAA academic eligibility requirements if you want to play sports in college. Refer to the NCAA link on the Loudoun College Placement website or ask your counselor for the list of academic requirements. 16 core classes required for graduation
- Participate on high school athletic teams.
- Tryout for the District ODP team. Many have already been involved with the program in the past but it is never too late to seek out higher levels of play.
- Begin to create a Student Player Profile/resume to send to college coaches: include academic and athletic accomplishments.



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Freshman Year (9th Grade) continued:

- At the end of the year, meet with your high school counselor to review your freshman year performance and results. Make any adjustments in your schedule to stay on track to graduate. Consider summer school to either take an academic class to get ahead or to make up a class that you did not perform up to your capabilities.
- Ask your guidance counselor for the Financial Aid Handbook that is available to seniors. Having the handbook will be invaluable if you are looking to help reduce the college costs. Some of the scholarships could pay for a large portion of an individual's college bill if the student qualifies both academically and meets the scholarship requirements. This could also help guide the student to consider fields of study that they may never have considered.

Summer Ideas:

- Look for summer employment opportunities like lawn care, child care, lifeguarding.
- Look for volunteer positions. Local community programs sponsored by churches, hospital, nursing homes etc. These experiences can prove invaluable on a college application.
- Attend summer college soccer camps. You may want to consider soccer camps where several college coaches will be in attendance. Many college soccer camps have just the respective college coaching staff or its players working the camp.

Checklist Sophomore Year (10th Grade):

- Begin to think seriously about the college admissions process.
- Continue to focus on achieving academic success. Make an appointment with your guidance counselor so that you can discuss your plans for high school and college.
- Attend various college fairs and visit colleges.
- Let your guidance counselor know immediately if you are considering a military academy upon graduation.
- Review available courses at the Monroe Technology Center (Loudoun County Residents) with your guidance counselor. Plan to participate in the "Monroe Shadowing Day" program. Excellent career and job opportunities can be found within the Monroe Technology program.
- Participate on high school athletic teams
- Keep record of all academic and athletic achievements and statistics as well as update your resume
- Be sure that you have a social security number. College applications require it.



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- If possible, participate in a summer academic program. These are offered at various colleges and universities and vary in length from 2-3 days to several weeks.
- Participate in a volunteer/service activity and other extracurricular activities both at school and in the community. A depth of involvement is important.
- Take the PSAT. Use the results to evaluate areas that you need to strengthen in the math or English areas.
- If possible, visit college campus and take their admissions tours to gain insight to the type of school settings that may interest you.
- Seek out leadership opportunities and make good decisions with your friends and classmates both in and out of the classroom.
- Build positive relationships with your teachers, coaches, guidance counselor and even your school administrators. They can provide invaluable insights to what you may do upon graduation. They can provide key recommendations for your college application.

Summer Suggestions:

- Look for employment similar to your freshman year and summer camps with colleges that may be of interest.
- Begin to contact college coaches via their respective college website. Be realistic with the colleges you are considering in terms of your playing abilities. Look for those schools that fit your long term goals academically first. Don't choose the college program strictly for the coach. Create a list of 10 colleges. Shoot for the stars on a couple of schools based on your academic profile; then 3-4 school in the middle and then 3-4 "safety" schools. Seek out advice with your club coach or contact Dave Bucciero or Mark Ryan for further assistance or guidance.

Checklist Junior Year (11th Grade):

- Seriously research exactly what you are looking for in a college. Think about: location, student body, academic requirements, size, academic structure, workable majors, campus life & cost.
- As stated at the end of the check list in your sophomore year create a list of 10 colleges that you may consider. During the summer or into the fall of your junior year contact the respective college soccer programs alerting them to the tournaments or camps you may be attending. Write them an email indicating your interest and provide them your resume which should highlight your academic and athletic abilities. **Do not write to inquire about athletic scholarships; that is a major red flag and a real turnoff to the college coaching staff.**



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- This is a critical year for all high school students who are considering attending college. If the first two years were not the best then it is time to really focus in on attaining good grades. Some colleges will consider late maturing students but a demonstrated effort needs to be shown throughout the year.
- Take competitive classes, not just the basic electives. Only the GPA in the core classes will be counted for NCAA eligibility purposes. Non-core electives will not be factored into your NCAA core eligibility GPA.
- Take the PSAT. Your junior year score may qualify a student for the National Merit Scholarship Competition and the National Achievement and the National Hispanic Scholars Program.
- Take the SATs or ACTs twice if possible. Your guidance counselor will be able to discuss the differences between the two tests.
- Take the SAT II subject tests at the end of your junior year if the college you are considering requires an SAT II. Speak with your guidance counselor if you have questions about scheduling the SAT tests. Need help with the SAT or ACT tests? There are educational test preparation centers throughout the area communities. There is a cost for the program and it often requires several weeks or even months of commitment to see positive results.
- If the individual who is self-motivated and is looking for some ACT or SAT fine tuning preparation the following options could be viable:
 - o Books from a bookstore or library on SAT and ACT preparation
 - o Computer Software
 - o Internet: Check out the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com. They have an “SAT Question of the Day”
 - o Some high schools have an SAT prep class that may be helpful, but the student has to be motivated to work
- Assess your grade point average with your SAT scores to the NCAA qualifier index to determine eligibility status. You may need to have a certain GPA as well as SAT score to be a qualifier for NCAA Division I and NCAA II programs which allows you to play in your freshman year in college.
- Participate in a volunteer/service activity.
- Visit with college representatives at your respective High School and attend local college fairs.
- Ask adults who attended college questions such as:
 - o Where did you go to college?
 - o What did you like about it?
 - o What didn't you like?



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o Would you choose the same school? Why or why not?

- Watch where seniors go. Talk to them about their choices.
- Ask your club coach for a realistic athletic evaluation. Which college should you target?
- Create a master list of colleges that you are interested in exploring and research these schools.
- Visit college websites on the internet.
- Read college reference guides and catalogs.
- Visit the Career Center in your high school for assistance with SAT/ACT registration and test preparation, college reference materials (i.e., virtual tours, catalogs, applications, etc.), career resource catalogs and books, financial aid and scholarship reference materials and offerings, summer enrichment programs, and local student job opportunities.
- Prepare a student resume. Include academic, athletic, club, and community service awards.
- If you are interested in a military academy or ROTC scholarship, begin the application process.
- Check out the colleges that are need-based Financial Aid institutions, like school in the Ivy League Conference. See what the family's financial responsibilities are to attend those schools. Division III schools carry merit-based as well as need-based financial aid.
- Use your summer months wisely: participate in a summer academic program (from 1 week to 9 weeks in length); visit college campuses.
- Visit colleges in the summer leading up to your junior year or during the fall breaks or even on the weekends.
- Register for the NCAA Clearinghouse. All student-athletes must register with the clearinghouse to participate in NCAA Div. I or II sports programs. Submit transcript requests to the Guidance Office as soon as you register.

Checklist Senior Year (12th Grade):

FALL

- Meet with college representatives that visit your high school and attend local college fairs. Meet with your guidance counselor regarding college selections and be sure to keep your guidance counselor informed about college decisions.
- Make decisions! Which colleges are you applying to?
- Register, if needed, for the ACT, SAT and SAT II (if required by the college you are applying).
- Write college essays (check college websites for essay requirements).



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- Submit Secondary School Report form from your college application(s) and Transcript Release forms to your guidance counselor for each college you are applying to.
- Make arrangements for final visits to colleges, if necessary.
- If you have not secured a place to play college soccer look to correspond with programs like Division II, Division III, NAIA or even junior colleges. Many are still looking to complete their recruiting classes. You can still seek out playing opportunities, though they may be limited through the spring term.
- Some colleges, as well as some college majors, require an admission interview. Be organized and make sure that you have met all the requirements for the interview.
- Search for and complete scholarship applications.
- Notify your guidance counselor when you receive any Early Decision, Early Action or Regular Decision offers of admission.

WINTER

- Get financial aid forms: Federal Application Free Student Aid (FAFSA); this is required by all colleges (available in December) if you want to be eligible for financial aid. Parents should complete the FAFSA as soon as possible, but not before January 1. The student will need to register for a PIN number as well as the parent/guardian. You will need your tax returns for both the student and the parent/guardian to complete the FAFSA form. Do this no later than March 15; February 15 is usually a good time frame to complete the FAFSA application. The FAFSA website will walk you through what is required.
- Do not delay in waiting to apply for Financial Aid. Financial Aid monies are becoming very tight at the private institutions throughout the country by the beginning of March especially with the rolling admissions colleges. If you delay, you may miss out on an aid package.
- Most of the Virginia State colleges and universities provide little financial aid in the form of grants (aid that does not need to be paid back to the college or university). Aid is generally available in the form of federal loans unless a student qualifies with merit-based aid or an athletic scholarship.
- Meet all other college financial aid deadlines.
- Midyear grades will automatically be sent to all colleges and universities to which you have applied.
- Send an update to colleges of any significant new activities, accomplishments, or changes in circumstances.
- Read your respective Financial Aid Handbook in your county (usually distributed to seniors in February) for scholarship opportunities.

SPRING

- As your decision letters arrive, inform your counselor and continue to think about your options.



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- Review financial aid awards. Speak with the college financial aid officer should questions arise.
- Colleges may revoke a previous offer of admission from any student who is found to have sent tuition deposits to more than one college.
- Inform schools if you will not accept their offer of admission.
- Complete housing and health forms.
- If you are placed on a waitlist, speak immediately with your counselor about follow-up procedures.
- Continue to apply for national and local scholarships.
- **BE REALISTIC...** your second choice school may be your first choice! • **APRIL 15th:** The date all colleges will let you know their decision.
- **MAY 1st:** Candidates Reply Date – The date by which you **MUST** let colleges know your decision. Also, the date by which a deposit must be at the college you will attend.