Willowbrook High School
Guidance & Counseling Department
4 Year College Planning/Preparation Checklist

Your high school years will be some of the happiest and most care-free of your life. Keep them that way! Be attentive to the advice below, but don’t let the college admission process dictate how you live your life. Keep things in perspective. Live a healthy life. Be a good, honest person. Work hard in school, always do your best. Challenge yourself. Get involved in your school and in your community. Take advantage of opportunities. If you do these things, the college process will be a natural next step, and you'll be well prepared to handle it successfully.

**Freshman Year**
- Get to know your school counselor
- Get involved in school activities; do what you enjoy!
- Get involved in community activities and service
- Earn the best grades you can
- Take the most challenging courses you can
- Read, even when not assigned for school, on a regular basis
- If your family travels over spring break or during the summer, and you pass near a college campus, stop and take the tour
- Attend Freshman College Visit Field Trip (Spring)
- All Freshmen will take the PLAN in September and April
- Participate in College/Career Awareness Week in March — talk to reps during lunch periods
- Use resources as needed including ARC (open during lunch periods or before/after school), Warrior Time Resource Pass, NB leaders/tutors, teachers, etc.
- Participate in Support Group if needed. All students will have the opportunity to participate in a support group. Students are given a survey in the fall where they can select a group if needed.
- All Freshmen will meet individually with their counselor to complete their Freshman Interview. During this time, they will begin working on a 4 year plan, choose classes for Sophomore year, review grades and transition to high school and discuss post high school plans

**Sophomore Year**
- Stay in touch with your school counselor
- Remain involved in school and community activities; follow your passions!
- Earn the best grades you can
- Continue to take the most challenging courses
- Continue to read for pleasure
- If you are taking an AP Course this year, you may want to consider taking an SAT II: Subject Test at the end of the school year; talk with your counselor for more information
- If you would like the practice, you can sign up to take the PSAT in the fall. Speak to your counselor if you have questions.
- Continue to take advantage of college visits if your family is near a college — just to get a feel for the different types of colleges
- Career Unit in Speech class: Counselors will teach students how to use Naviance to search for careers, colleges and will complete a personality assessment and interest inventory linked to careers.
- All sophomores will take a practice ACT exam in September and February
- Participate in Support Group if needed. All students will have the opportunity to participate in a support group. Students are given a survey in the fall where they can select a group if needed.
- Start collecting information for your Resume/Brag Sheet. This includes all extracurricular activities, clubs, sports, work, volunteer experience, awards, honors societies, etc. This information will be used as a senior when completing college applications and requesting letters of recommendation.
- Use resources as needed including ARC (open during lunch periods or before/after school), Warrior Time Resource Pass, NB leaders/tutors, teachers, etc.
- Participate in College/Career Awareness Week in March — talk to reps during lunch periods
- Sophomores will meet individually with their counselor in February to review their 4 year plan and choose classes for Junior year

*See back for Junior and Senior Year*
**Junior Year**

- This is a very important year academically: do your best, challenge yourself appropriately
- Continue to remain involved in activities; try to move into positions of responsibility or leadership
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall if you would like practice for the SAT and/or to qualify for National Merit Scholar
- Sign up for ACT prep classes in January
- Begin college visits—juniors have 1 college visit/day
- Take advantage of college representative visits to your school. The visit schedule is posted in Naviance, Counseling Office, College & Career Center, announcements and bulletins.
- Use Naviance to research colleges, collect information and begin narrowing down list of colleges. Make sure to add all schools of interest to your list on Naviance. Counselors will pull this information to invite students to events, college rep visits, etc. Counselors will provide training to Juniors on how to use Naviance to search for colleges.
- Junior Next Steps presentations—counselors will present information on colleges, careers, and testing in all Junior English classes
- Attend Senior Parent Night with your parents... hopefully this will spark a conversation between you and your parent(s) about college
- Attend College Search Assistance during Warrior Time on Tuesdays & Thursdays in the Spring
- Juniors will meet individually with their counselor in February to review their 4 year plan and choose classes for Senior Year.
- All Juniors will meet with their counselor to complete a junior interview. During this time, they will review credits, GPA, courses for senior year and discuss career and colleges.
- Participate in Support Group if needed. All students have the opportunity to participate in a support group. Students are given a survey in the fall where they can select a group if needed.
- Develop an initial list of colleges during the spring
- Take SAT or SAT Subject test if necessary
- Participate in College/Career Awareness Week in March—talk to reps during lunch periods
- Attend "Conquering the Challenges of College Costs"
- Continue to update Resume/Brag Sheet or with any new information
- Use your summer vacation time productively; visit colleges during the summer; have your list of colleges you are planning to apply by the end of summer if possible!

**Senior Year**

- All seniors will participate in a "College Application Process" presentation given by Counselors during their English Class
- Attend relevant Breakout Session Presentations including "Highly Selective Schools," "Common Application," and "COD"
- Maintain your grades—colleges will ask for a mid-year report and final transcript
- Remain in close contact with your counselor
- Attend College Search and Application Assistance during Warrior Time on Tuesday & Thursday during first semester
- Remain involved in activities which you enjoy, assume leadership positions and more responsibility
- Continue to add or subtract colleges from your list as you learn about schools, make visits, etc. Move schools from "interest" to "applying" on Naviance. Counselors will pull this information to invite students to relevant events, college rep visits, etc.
- Be attentive to in-school deadlines and procedures established by the counseling office
- Continue to take appropriate tests as you need to take them (standardized testing schedule)
- Request Transcripts and send ACT/SAT/AP scores as needed; PSAT ACT scores will be on your WB Transcript
- Meet with college representatives who visit your school in the fall; attend evening programs in your community which are hosted by colleges in which you are interested
- When you are able, continue to visit colleges in which you are interested when you have time off from school during the fall
- Finalize Resume/Brag Sheet
- Review admission requirements for schools of interest... GPA, Test scores, required testing, essay/personal statement, letters of rec, etc.
- Request letter of recommendation if needed. Ask the person directly, provide Resume/Brag sheet and complete Teacher or Counselor Rec Form. Additionally, request letters on Naviance as soon as they are sent electronically. GIVE AT LEAST 2 WEEKS NOTICE!
- If you are applying early, be aware application deadlines
- If you are applying to Highly Selective or Private schools, check to see if the CSS Profile (Financial Aid Form) which is due in Fall
- In December, attend Senior Financial Aid Parent Night with your parents
- Before the holiday break, be attentive to early deadlines and/or preferred or recommended application deadlines for state universities, honors programs, rolling admission schools, and scholarship programs
- Give yourself plenty of time to work on applications, especially essays... this can be the one opportunity to make your application stand out
- After Jan 1 and taxes are completed, complete FAFSA. If needed, attend FAFSA Completion Workshop in Feb
- Search and Apply for Scholarships... Use Naviance or Fastweb.com to search for National Scholarships. Check with schools of interest to see if there are scholarships available as many have early deadlines. Local scholarships typically come out after Jan 1... you can find these in announcements, bulletins, website, Counseling Office and College & Career Center
- Take advantage of interviews when given the opportunity
- After your applications are completed, continue to work hard—senior slump can have disastrous consequences
- As you receive decisions, update on Naviance, inform your counselor, teachers, and others who helped you; thank them
- In April, consider participating in the open house/accepted student programs hosted by colleges
- Have your one deposit at the school you will attend by May 1
- If you are on a waiting list, get advice from your counselor
- Enjoy senior year responsibly!

*There may be additional presentation and/or events so listen to announcements or view bulletins*