

Be prepared! Year-by-Year College and Career Checklist

Visit the College and Career Section of the Polk Schools website for more information on College and Career Readiness and financial aid at polkschoolsfl.com/collegereadiness/. Find more information on our GJHS website at georgejenkinshs.com.

Visit Florida's college and career planning website at Floridashines.org.

- Identify college admission requirements and make a plan for post-secondary study.
- Discover different ways to pay for college through scholarships, grants, loans, and work studies.
- Explore career fields, learn more about yourself, and match careers to your interests and skills.

9th grade

- Know your graduation requirements and monitor your academic progress on floridashines.org.
- Begin to think about what you will do after high school: college, vocational training, and field of study. Look at possible careers and education requirements. Visit floridashines.org/find-a-career/
- If you're thinking about college, know the Bright Futures Scholarship Program (www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org) and state university admissions requirements
- Plan challenging high school courses based on post-secondary plans.
- Consider taking a course on FLVS (www.flvs.net) to satisfy the virtual GRADUATION REQUIREMENT and/or explore other areas of interest.
- Maintain good attendance, grades, and citizenship. Take school work seriously because every year and course counts.
- Apply to the Community Service program through student services.
- Make a commitment to one or more extracurricular activities. Get involved!
- Create a portfolio (a file or folder). Keep samples of excellent school work, copies of report cards, special awards, letters of commendation and recommendation, and any other materials that document your successes.
- Take advantage of after school tutoring if needed.

10th grade

- Continue to explore possible career options. Begin to gather college information. Utilize internet resources, college websites, and floridashines.org.
- Check your academic progress and re-evaluate your course selections.
- If you haven't already, consider taking a course on FLVS (www.flvs.net) to satisfy the virtual GRADUATION REQUIREMENT and/or explore other areas of interest.
- Challenge yourself with honors courses. Consider Advanced Placement courses.
- Take the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) given in October. Use the College Board resources with Khan Academy to get personalized feedback, practice and college planning based on your PSAT scores on www.collegeboard.com.
- Evaluate your time management skills. Make sure you have a balance between school, work, and play.
- Maintain good attendance, grades, and citizenship.
- Update your portfolio of achievements.
- Make a commitment to one or more extracurricular activities or a job. Employers and colleges like to see active students.
- If you haven't already done so, begin a savings account for college.
- Look into summer academic programs that might be of interest. Colleges offer many programs.
- Do you want to play college athletics? Talk to your coaches and go to www.eligibilitycenter.org for NCAA information.
- Take FSA preparation seriously...it's a graduation requirement. Testing is in the spring.

11th Grade

- Monitor your academic progress and status toward meeting your requirements. Utilize floridashines.org.
- **Take the PSAT.** This test, and other criteria, could qualify you for a National Merit Scholarship.
- Meet with your School Counselor in the spring to review your course work, plan for your senior year, and discuss a list of colleges you would like to explore.
- If you haven't already, take a course on FLVS (www.flvs.net) to satisfy the virtual GRADUATION REQUIREMENT and/or explore other areas of interest.
- Maintain your portfolio of achievements. Continue to challenge yourself with advanced placement or honors courses.
- Attend college fairs, write or call colleges on your list, visit their websites, and begin reviewing their literature.
- Prepare for and take the SAT and/or ACT in the spring. Utilize collegeboard.com and actstudent.org to register and prepare.
- Use the Testing & Education Reference Center (TERC) on our GJHS website for SAT, ACT, AP, FSA, and EOC practice along with research colleges and financial aid.
- Review college admissions requirements for colleges you are considering. Don't be afraid to contact these colleges with questions.
- Use your spring and summer breaks to visit college campuses. Call ahead or visit college websites to schedule visits. Write a thank you note if you participate in an interview.
- Begin thinking about which teachers and others you might ask to write recommendations in the fall of your senior year. Prepare a resume based on the information in your portfolio.
- Maintain good attendance, grades, citizenship, and commitment to extracurricular activities and/or job. **Junior year is most important when applying to college!**
- Look into summer jobs, volunteer opportunities, or academic programs offered at colleges. Find an internship or job shadow in a profession that interests you.

12th Grade

- Continue to work hard. Colleges do care about your coursework and grades throughout your entire senior year. Don't slack off!
- Attend the Financial Aid night/FAFSA Lab night at GJHS in October.
- If you haven't already done so, take the SAT or ACT in the fall.
- Meet with your School Counselor to be sure you are on track for graduation.
- If you haven't already, take a course on FLVS (www.flvs.net). It is a GRADUATION REQUIREMENT!
- Narrow down your list of colleges: create a file for each one. Prepare a schedule for each school showing requirements, deadlines, fees, test scores, teacher recommendations, school transcripts, essays, and important names/phone numbers.
- Apply for admissions early in the fall. Write essays and ask teachers to write recommendations. **Watch deadlines!**
- Research and apply for financial aid and scholarships. Look for our scholarship bulletin and visit our website at georgejenkinshs.com
- After October 1, complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) that includes the Bright Futures scholarship program at www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org.
- After October 1, fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) studentaid.gov. This application is your first foot in the door of the college you chosen to attend.
- Check your email for admission decisions. Pay close attention to acceptance deadlines. Also watch for information from the college of your choice on housing, orientation, summer academic programs, and other information that will help with your transition to college.
- Graduate! Congratulations!!!