



**RISING
SCHOLARS
PROGRAM**

KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY

STARK

11th & 12th Grade College Planning Checklist

To help you reach your goal, Rising Scholars will provide the tools you need to make college a reality. From advice on preparing for college to information on applying and paying for it, we'll be right by your side throughout the journey.

FALL

- It is never too late to start and keep saving for college. Get a summer job/odd jobs and put half of what you earn in your college fund. Save for items such as transportation (car), everyday living expenses, books, and fees. (Please note that your Rising Scholars Tuition-Free Scholarship covers tuition only.)
- Continue to identify your source(s) of personal, internal, and external motivation that pushes you to do your best, manage or overcome life's challenges/adversity.
- Be sure to consult with your school counselor, who offers advice and assistance to achieve your college goals.
- It's never too late to improve your grades. Some colleges consider improvements in performance as well as grades.
- Sign up to meet with college representatives who visit your high school. Check with your school counselor or college office at your school
- Register and prepare to take the ACT and/or SAT this year. By taking them early, you will have the opportunity to re-take them and improve your scores, if desired, before college applications are due. Talk to your school counselor about prep courses and fee waivers for each test.
- Attend local college fairs. See your counselor for dates and times.
- Develop your leadership skills by taking on more responsibility in your groups and activities. Participate in projects that help your school or community.



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- Make sure you take challenging courses covering all the graduation and college admission requirements, including English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Fine Arts, Phys. Ed./Health and Technology, as well as your Elective and Internship credits.
- It's not too late to consider College Credit Plus (CCP), which allows you to earn college credit while in high school. Talk to a counselor to learn more about these options and opportunities at your school. For more info, visit <https://www.kent.edu/stark/college-credit-plus> or email us at ksustarkccp@kent.edu, and we will respond to your question promptly.
- When you plan your senior class schedule, sign up for a full course load, including those courses you still need to graduate and prepare for college. If you make it a bit tougher on yourself now, you'll have an easier time later.
- Keep up with current events by reading whenever you can.
- Stay informed by using the Internet to gather information from various sources.
- This year has a lot of deadlines. Be sure to keep things up to date in your student planner (or planning app), so you can stay on top of schoolwork and extracurricular commitments.

WINTER

- If you haven't done so yet, register for the ACT and/or SAT in the spring.
- Start thinking seriously about where you would like to go to college. Consider the size, cost, location, and academic programs.
- Visit colleges that you are considering. Talk to students and alumni from those colleges about their experiences.
- Research information about scholarships and financial aid. Keep a list of possible scholarships and their requirements in your college binder.



SPRING

- Take the ACT or SAT and discuss your scores with your counselor.
- Even though it's a busy time, read, read, read—books, newspapers, magazines. Many are available online.
- Participate in summer academic enrichment programs.
- Create a list for your college binder, including your high school sports, clubs, work, and community service experiences, along with honors, awards, and AP or CCP classes. These will be important to include on college and scholarship applications.
- Register with NCAA Clearinghouse if you are interested in participating in college sports. See your high school Athletic Director for details.
- Begin aligning your future goals with the colleges that will help you reach them. Meet with your school guidance counselor to help guide you in your research.

SUMMER ENTERING 12TH GRADE

- Attend the **Rising Scholars Summer Institute** the summer going into your Senior year of high school. Attend other college workshops (in person or virtually) with your family to learn more about getting ready for college and how to make the most of your high school years.
- Register for the ACT or SAT if you are seeking a higher score.
- Look into college tours and visits you can make during your summer break. Narrow down your college list to about 4-6 schools.
- Apply to the colleges on your narrowed list. Keep an open mind on your school choices based upon acceptance and affordability.
- Begin your Community-based Outside Scholarship search. (ex. Stark Community Foundation)



- Begin writing college essays and looking at college websites for their academic and admission requirements. Note these in your college binder. (For tips, YouTube the “College Essay Guy.” You can research other sources as well.)
- Be prepared to pay for college application and test fees in the fall. **(Your application fee to apply at Kent State Stark will be waived.)**
- The FAFSA opens October 1st every year! **Apply for the FAFSA (Free Application For Federal Student Aid) in October!!!**
- **Do your best to maintain the highest GPA possible during your senior year.** This is not a year to relax academically because lower grades will have a negative effect on your cumulative GPA.
- **Apply to Kent State Stark by December of your senior year!**
- Always consult with your guidance counselor, college and career connector (if you have one in your school), Rising Scholars Coordinator/Advisor, or any caring adult who will provide sound advice and strategy for the high school to College/“Real-World” transition.
- **May 1st is the National College Decision Date.** Do your best to select your “Best Fit College” by May 1st!

This document was created to provide a suggested checklist and action steps for junior and senior participants to be on track to access your Tuition-Free Scholarship Opportunity at KSU Stark.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Mr. Sanders.

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