



SOPHOMORE YEAR COUNTDOWN TO COLLEGE CALENDAR

Visit www.ICANSucceed.org or call (877) CPC-IOWA to schedule a free appointment for assistance with college planning or financial aid applications.

August

- Beware of scholarship search and financial aid service organizations that charge a fee. Check with your high school counselor or search for free at www.ICANSucceed.org.
- Get involved! Find an activity at your school or in your community that you enjoy.
- Stay organized by using a planner or electronic organizer.

September

- Attend college fairs in your area and meet with college representatives who visit your high school.
- Go to the Golden Circle College Fair on Sept. 28 from 12:30 to 3 p.m. at the Polk County Convention Complex (501 Grand Ave., Des Moines). It's the largest college fair in Iowa – approximately 150 colleges attend.
- Consider taking the PLAN® (a pre-ACT test) or the PSAT/NMSQT® (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) as practice for the actual college entrance exams.
- Keep your grades up. Colleges look at the grades you've earned each year.

October

- Talk with your parents about your college and career goals and what it will take to attain them.
- Have you attended a college fair yet? You can find a list of college fairs in Iowa at www.ICANSucceed.org.
- Find a mentor that can assist you through high school as well as the college search process, such as a teacher, parent, family member or family friend.

November

- Visit www.ICANSucceed.org for information on tuition and other fees at colleges and universities in Iowa.
- Talk to family members, friends, teachers, counselors and coaches about their college experiences.
- Keep a record of your extracurricular involvement in an activities portfolio – a concise summary of your achievements, talents and interests.

December

- College can be affordable! Through financial aid, most colleges help ensure your out-of-pocket costs are manageable.
- Talk to your school counselor about college admission requirements so you're taking the right classes.
- Education after high school doesn't have to include a four-year degree. There are certificate programs, two-year degrees and other programs. Find out more at www.ICANSucceed.org.

January

- Become familiar with the types of financial aid available for college. Financial aid includes grants, scholarships, work-study and loans. Grants and scholarships don't have to be paid back. Work-study enables students to earn money by working part time on campus. Loans must be repaid.
- What subjects do you like in school? Choices,® the state's designated career-management system, can help you search for careers related to those subjects. For a link to Choices, go to www.ICANSucceed.org.

February

- Begin thinking about college majors. Are there majors that match your skills and interests? Choices is an online program that can help you research college majors. For a link to Choices, go to www.ICANSucceed.org.
- Saving money is the best way to prepare for the cost of a college education. Check out www.ICANSucceed.org for information on college savings plans.
- If you're an athlete hoping to play sports in college, it's important to plan ahead. Find out what the academic requirements are in order to participate at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.

March

- Visit www.ICANSucceed.org for a list of Iowa college fairs taking place this spring.
- Do you know someone who works in a job related to your career interest? Interview them to find out about the educational requirements and what they like most about their work.
- Are you getting a summer job? If so, plan to save some of what you earn for college.
- If your family is planning a summer vacation, try to visit a few college campuses along the way.

April

- Meet with your school counselor to make sure you're scheduling classes for your junior year that meet college admission requirements.
- Get a taste of a future career through job shadowing, volunteer work or a summer internship.
- Participate in hobbies and activities that enable you to explore your career interests.
- Attend a college planning night if your school offers one. Check with your counselor for the date and time.

May

- Check with your school counselor to see if there are AP® classes that will fit into your schedule. Challenging courses in high school can better prepare you for college.
- Ask your school counselor if there are any summer camp programs you could attend to help get you ahead.
- Look for a summer job that's related to your interests. Be sure to save some of your summer earnings for college.

June

- Compare several careers. Consider the required education or training, tasks that have to be performed and starting salary, and the characteristics that appeal to you most. Visit www.ICANSucceed.org for links to career research tools.
- Start a summer reading list. Try reading books that will help increase your vocabulary.
- Have a great summer!

July

- Are you attending summer camp on a college campus? If so, take a look around and see if it's a school you could imagine attending.
- If you're working this summer, set aside your earnings for college.
- Stay in touch with teachers, school counselors, coaches and community members. You may need to ask them to write a letter of recommendation for your scholarship and/or college admission applications.