Activity 9th and 10th Grade Checklist

Planning for college begins as soon as you enter high school. Use this checklist to stay on track as you strengthen your academic profile, explore your interests, and build the support you need to become a strong college applicant.

Start Planning

- ☐ Use a planner to track your assignments, test dates, and extracurricular activities, and to organize and prioritize your work (p.10).
- ☐ Create a college file to save all your notes, correspondence, and important paperwork.
- ☐ Take time out to try new things, explore new interests, and find out what is important to you (pp. 7-8).
- ☐ Begin to build your resumé (pp. 12-13).
- ☐ Find out if you have access to **Xello** through your school and learn how it can help you through the college admissions process (p. 23).

Assemble Your Success Network

- ☐ Talk to your parents or guardians about your college plans (p. 6). Begin to research colleges together.
- ☐ Meet with your school counselor and teachers. Discuss your post-high school goals and plans together. Ask about college prep programs in which you might participate.

Prepare Financially

- ☐ Start learning about financial aid and ways to pay for college (pp. 41-58). Understanding financial aid options early on can help you down the road.
- ☐ If possible, begin to save money for college expenses.
- ☐ Explore the College Board's tools and webinars: **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/get-help-paying-for-college/how-does-financial-aid-work**.
- ☐ Visit **www.educationplanner.org** provided by PHEAA to learn about educational costs and student aid.

Challenge Yourself Academically

- ☐ Make sure you are enrolled in the most challenging academic courses available at your school (p. 9).
- ☐ Learn about college prep supports for high schoolers, like Advance at College, Summer Search, and Upward Bound (p. 68).
- ☐ Read books and newspapers to build your vocabulary and knowledge base (p. 10).

Learn about Standardized Tests

- ☐ Take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) as practice for taking the SAT (p. 30). Ask your school counselor about PSAT scheduling at your school.
- ☐ It is never too early to start preparing for the SAT or ACT (p. 32).

Explore Opportunities and Interests

- ☐ Join clubs or teams that interest you and take on leadership roles (p. 9).
- ☐ Find opportunities to do community service.
- ☐ Begin to explore different careers and visit the U.S. Department of Labor website, **www.mynextmove.org** or **www.miproximopaso.org** (pp. 7-8).
- ☐ Explore the "Roadtrip Nation" website for videos of people who have turned their interests into their life's work. **www.roadtripnation.com**
- ☐ Research volunteer jobs and internships in fields that interest you (p. 9).
- ☐ Visit colleges with your parents or guardians (pp. 24-25). Try to visit two schools each year, either virtually or when students are on campus.