

SOPHOMORE CHECKLIST

No longer a Freshman! You need to think about the importance of taking challenging courses and the impact of extracurricular activities, community service and leadership experiences on your college admissions and scholarship applications. Your teachers might tell you that the road to college is paved with good grades, and that is true. But that road is also paved with a lot of paperwork and little tasks that are best completed way before it's time to exit high school. If you don't believe it, take a look at all the things that you've got to get going on if your future includes college. It's a long list, but a little advance planning and goal-setting can keep you from becoming one of those high school seniors who is frantically trying to get things done the month before graduation.

- ✓ Review your PLAN scores that you will receive before Christmas. What areas do you need to work on?
- ✓ Next September, see your counselor about signing up for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), which will help prepare you for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The PSAT will also establish your eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Program next year as a junior. There's nothing better than free money for school!
- ✓ Begin studying for the SAT or the ACT. These tests measure your ability in math, problem solving and verbal comprehension. Your score can be key in determining your admission into college. Check out www.collegeboard.com for the SAT Question of the Day, and www.actstudent.org for the ACT Question of the Day. Both great ways to study!
- ✓ Have you decided on a career path? Or, are you still stumped? Can't decide between Filmmaker and Software Engineer? Discuss career choices with your parents, teachers, counselor, friends and relatives. Do some investigating on MCIS – you know your password!
- ✓ Talk to your high school guidance counselor about your aspirations. Counselors have the resources and knowledge to help you identify your interests and natural talents. Develop a “Wish List” of potential jobs you can see yourself doing in a few years.
- ✓ Research career options on the Internet. Check out MCIS for a ton of information on careers. You have the log in information your counselor gave you. If not, stop in and pick up another copy.
- ✓ If you know of a particular career that you are interested in, maybe arrange to shadow a person in that occupation for a day at their work. Your guidance counselor can help you make arrangements to do that.
- ✓ Have you narrowed down your career options or picked a career? Good. Now, think about your high school courses. Are you taking classes that are appropriate

for the career(s) you are considering? Look at the 16 Career Pathways on the BHS website http://www.baker.k12.mt.us/career_pathways.html.

- ✓ Start thinking about colleges. Talk to your school guidance counselor. What colleges offer the best programs for your career choice(s)?
- ✓ Consider volunteer work. It will stand out on your college application.
- ✓ Our school has “college track,” or “rigorous core” classes that meet college admissions requirements. If college is in your plans, it’s time to get on that track.
- ✓ Be ambitious and take tough classes. Flexing your brain now will help you prepare for the academic challenges of college.
- ✓ Don’t slack in the grade department. Freshman and sophomore grades form the foundation of your GPA, which is a factor in college admissions and scholarship awards.
- ✓ Talk with your parents about your college goals and the cost of those goals, and then visit websites to read information about different colleges, financial aid and scholarships. Investigate MCIS.
- ✓ Create a resume’ file in your MCIS portfolio, saving such items as report cards, diplomas and certificates; a list of awards and honors you receive; a list of all school and community activities you take part in; a list of offices you hold in organizations; and a list of volunteer or paid jobs you hold. Update your portfolio every semester.
- ✓ Begin visiting local community colleges, state universities or private colleges with your family and friends. Prior to your visit, call the admission office for information about a campus tour.
- ✓ Have you found a summer job? If you need leads, talk to your friends and family about employment opportunities. Word of mouth is a great way to find a position.
- ✓ Start a college savings account if you don’t already have one.