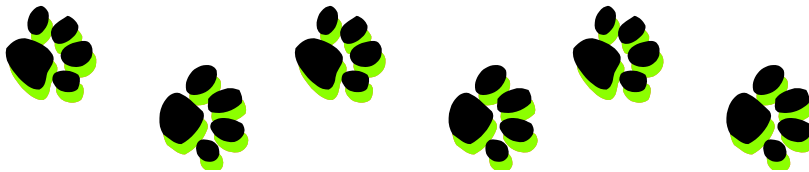


Pathway to Graduation and Beyond:

A Quick Reference Checklist for Graduation and Game Plan for College



Tiger Tracks To Success!



Warsaw High School

Introduction

This guide is designed to assist students and their parents with the college selection process. The guide outlines the steps that college bound students should follow to insure that they are prepared to attend college and that the college selected will meet their academic and personal needs.

The guide summarizes a plan suggested for all students to follow that will prepare them for college. Choosing a college is an important decision. Yet it is often an overwhelming one for students and their families. This guide presents a game plan that students and their parents can follow to win the college admissions game.

Academics



The most important aspect of college selection is to choose a college where the student can be successful academically. Teachers, school counselors, and the principal are people who know the student's academic work best and can help him/her decide which schools are appropriate academically.

College admissions officers evaluate candidates according to high school average; class rank; qualifying examinations, such as the SAT and ACT; counselors' and teachers' recommendations; extracurricular activities, athletics, and interviews with prospective candidates. It should be emphasized that different schools use different methods to select students.

It is important that all students take a strong academic course load in high school. This will insure that they will be prepared for college level work. **The importance of taking a strong academic course load beginning in ninth grade, the time when a student's permanent record actually begins, cannot be emphasized enough.**

Extracurricular Activities

Colleges are looking for interesting students who excel in many areas, not just academics. They want students who will be active members of the campus community. One way for students to do this is through extracurricular activities, such as the school play, student council, athletics and various clubs. When you participate in your school and your community you are showing the college that you are a well-rounded person. Choose activities that show off your best skills. How can you make yourself unique?





Plan for Freshmen

Welcome to Freshman Year!

College may still feel far away, but it is sooner than you think. The following is a plan that Warsaw recommends to all college-bound students. The plan will help guide you through the many steps you must take to be sure you are prepared to attend the college of your choice when you graduate.

Academics:

- ✓ Take challenging courses. Colleges prefer students who have taken four years of English, social studies, math, and science.
- ✓ All grades count! Remember that every grade you get will go on your permanent transcript that colleges will see.

Extracurricular

- ✓ Start keeping a list of your activities, awards, community service, and other unique educational experiences to add throughout high school. This will serve as the beginning of a resume that you can use when writing college and scholarship applications.

College

- ✓ Begin to look at college catalogs, websites, and other information.
- ✓ Ask your parents about how much they think they can help you with paying for your future education.
- ✓ Start saving for college, either on your own or by contributing to a savings plan that your parents have established.

When you can, visit a college campus! Simply driving through will give you a feel for different campus settings.



Plan for Sophomores

Welcome to Sophomore Year!

The following is a plan that Warsaw recommends to all college-bound students. The plan will help guide you through the many steps you must take to be sure you are prepared to attend the college of your choice when you graduate.

September

- ✓ Listen to the morning announcements for college reps who are visiting the Counseling Center and see your counselor if you would like to know more.

December/January

- ✓ Attend the 10th grade career fair in order to gain valuable information regarding a potential career choice.

February

- ✓ Register to attend the 10th grade BOCES visitation to help with future/career planning.
- ✓

April

- ✓ Register for the June SAT II: Subject tests, if you are considering applying to colleges that may require them (very competitive or ivy-league colleges). These are one-hour exams testing you on academic subjects that you have already completed. Many colleges require three SAT II: Subject tests. Two of these should be in a math and writing subject. It's a good idea to take these tests in your junior year, but if you want to take your third test in a subject that you've studied this year (i.e. biology or chemistry), you may want to complete that exam now, while the subject is still fresh in your mind.

May

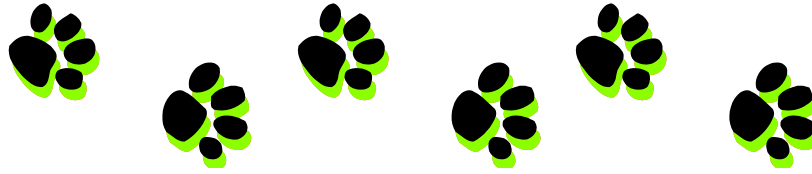
- ✓ Consider a summer course or program. Make wise use of your summer. If you work, be sure to save some of your earnings for college.

June

- ✓ Take SAT II: Subject Tests if appropriate.

Summer

- ✓ Ask your parents to take you to visit college campuses. If you're on vacation with your family, check for schools that may be in the same vicinity.



Plan for Juniors

Welcome to Junior Year!

The following is a plan that Warsaw recommends to all college-bound students. The plan will help guide you through the many steps you must take to be sure you are prepared to attend the college of your choice when you graduate.

September

- ✓ Take the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) and participate in the Career Exploration session follow-up.
- ✓ Register for the PSAT (given during the school day in October).
- ✓ Begin investigating potential sources of financial aid.

October

- ✓ Take the PSAT/NMSQT to prepare for the SAT I and II, and to be eligible for the National Merit Scholarship competition.

November

- ✓ Begin narrowing your choices of a college major.
- ✓ Start doing research on government, as well as private, financial aid programs.

December

- ✓ Receive results of the PSAT/NMSQT.
- ✓ Meet with your school counselor to review your scores and ask teachers to help determine how you might improve.

January

- ✓ Begin to make a list of colleges you would like to explore.
- ✓ Show the list to your parents and discuss their ideas and preferences about the kind of college you should attend.
- ✓ Meet with your school counselor to review your courses and plan for your senior year.

February

- ✓ Meet with your school counselor to begin preparing a list of colleges to explore.
- ✓ Sign up for the March SAT I and/or the April ACT, if appropriate. Begin to prepare for the SAT I or ACT.

(Juniors continued)

March

- ✓ Send letters or e-mails to the colleges on your list requesting information, and evaluate the materials they send you. Share the materials with your parents.
- ✓ Take the SAT I, if appropriate.
- ✓ Continue your research on private scholarships by finding out what awards students in the area are receiving.
- ✓ Plan visits to colleges during your spring break holiday so you'll be on campus when classes are in session. Be sure to call the admissions office before you visit a campus. The admissions staff will schedule you for a special program for visiting high school students.
- ✓ If possible, schedule an appointment with a financial aid counselor to learn more about the college's financial aid opportunities.
- ✓ Be sure to bring your parents – their opinions are important, and they can gain very valuable information by talking with a financial aid counselor.

April

- ✓ Sign up for the May/June SAT I and/or SAT II: Subject Tests, as needed.
- ✓ Take the ACT, if appropriate.
- ✓ Look into summer jobs or internships.
- ✓ Continue to evaluate colleges and begin to eliminate some choices from your list.
- ✓ Attend college fairs and sessions with college representatives at school to get more information. Be sure to ask questions about financial aid, as well as the academic programs, student life, etc.
- ✓ Take the SAT II: Subject Tests and Advanced Placement exams, if appropriate.

May

- ✓ Consider enrolling in an academic course at a local college, pursuing a summer school program, or working as a volunteer – make wise use of your summer. If you work over the summer, put aside some money for college.

June

- ✓ Take the SAT I and/or ACT, if appropriate.

July/August

- ✓ Write for private scholarship applications.
- ✓ Polish your resume and, if the schools or scholarships you are interested in require them, begin to assemble writing samples, portfolios, or audition tapes.
- ✓ Work on college application essays.
- ✓ If you are interested in an athletic scholarship, contact the coaches at the colleges where you plan to apply and talk to the Athletic Director at school.



Plan for Seniors

Welcome to Senior Year—this is it!

The following is a plan that Warsaw recommends to all college-bound students. The plan will help guide you through the many steps you must take to be sure you are prepared to attend the college of your choice when you graduate.

September

- ✓ Meet with your school counselor to review your college plans and evaluate them in light of your test scores and junior year grades. It's a good idea to involve your parents in this meeting and to discuss your prospects for financial aid at this time.
- ✓ If you have not already taken the necessary test, or you and your counselor have agreed that you should take it again to try and improve your score, sign up for the October ACT or October/November SAT I and or SAT II: Subject Tests.
- ✓ Write to colleges on your list and request admissions, financial aid, and, if appropriate, housing applications.
- ✓ Keep a checklist with all the admissions and financial aid deadlines for the colleges you are considering.
- ✓ Check with the Counseling office to make sure your transcripts and other records are up to date and accurate.
- ✓ Ask teachers, employers, or coaches to write you letters of recommendation. Give them any forms that colleges require and follow up to make sure the letters are mailed on time.
- ✓ Pick up a copy of the CSS Profile Registration Guide from the Counseling office to see if any of the colleges on your list require this financial aid application form. If so, register for the Profile service.
- ✓ **Create a calendar of deadlines for tests, admissions, and scholarships.**

October

- ✓ Attend a regional college fair to further investigate the colleges on your list.
- ✓ Make sure that your transcript and test scores have been sent.
- ✓ Set aside plenty of time to draft, edit, and re-write application essays.
- ✓ Be sure to give your parents enough time to help you fill out any college financial aid forms, such as the CSS Profile.
- ✓ If applying for "early decision," send in your application now.
- ✓ Sign up for the December/January tests if necessary.
- ✓ Begin to send in applications; be sure to keep copies of everything you send, with the date on which it was mailed.

(Seniors continued)

November

- ✓ Continue to file admissions applications.
- ✓ Obtain the Free Application for Federal Student Financial Aid (FAFSA) online (www.fafsa.ed.gov) or from the counseling office.

December

- ✓ File your last college applications. (If you've applied for early decision, you should have an answer by now.)

January

- ✓ Work with your parents to complete the FAFSA on or as soon after January 1st as possible. **Send it in no later than February 15th.** If the financial aid processor requests additional information in order to process your application, submit it promptly. **You and your parents must first obtain a PIN in order to file the FAFSA online. You can get this at: www.fafsa.ed.gov.**
- ✓ Monitor your applications to make sure that all materials are sent and received on time.
- ✓ Review your Student Aid Report (SAR) for accuracy. If necessary, correct any inaccurate items on the SAR and return it to the FAFSA processor (if you had a college transmit your FAFSA data directly, you must notify the college of any changes or corrections.) If you have not received a SAR four weeks after you file your FAFSA, call 1-800-4FED-AID to inquire about your application status.

February/March

- ✓ When a corrected SAR is returned to you, review it one more time. Then, if it is correct, keep a copy for your records. If a college requests your SAR, submit it promptly. Do this even if the SAR says you are not eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant, as the college may be able to offer you other aid based on the information in that report.
- ✓ If you haven't decided on a favorite campus, try to arrange a second visit. Talk to students and sit in on some classes so you can make that informed decision.
- ✓ Review your financial aid award letters with your parents; be sure that you understand the terms and conditions that apply to each type of aid offered.
- ✓ Decide on the one college that you will attend and send in your tuition/housing deposit.
- ✓ Notify in writing the other colleges that accepted you that you have selected another school. This is an important step – other students will be hoping to receive your spot! Be sure to respond by May 1st.

(Seniors continued)

April

- ✓ If your first choice college places you on its waiting list, do not lose all hope. Some students are admitted off the waiting list. Contact the college, let the admissions office know you are still very interested, and keep the college updated on your activities.
- ✓ Remind your parents to check their eligibility for the HOPE and Lifetime Learning tax credits when they file their taxes. Next year, they may be eligible to reduce their taxes by up to \$1,500 by claiming one of these credits for college expenses.

May

- ✓ Work with your parents to establish a budget for your books, supplies, and living expenses. Determine how much of that budget grants and scholarships will cover, how much your parents will contribute, and how much you will need to supply. Then determine how much of your contribution will come from savings, from a student loan, and from what you might earn at a job. Then, if necessary, complete a loan application form. Be sure you understand the terms of the loan before you and/or your parents sign a promissory note.
- ✓ If you want to live on campus, and have not already done so, complete a housing/meal plan application.
- ✓ Take Advanced Placement exams, if appropriate.
- ✓ Request that a copy of your final transcripts be sent to the college you will attend. Notify the college of any private grants or scholarships you will receive.

June

- ✓ Find out when payment for tuition, room, board, etc. will be due and investigate whether your college offers a tuition payment plan that lets you remit these charges in installments.
- ✓ Be sure you understand how financial aid will be disbursed and whether you can defer bill payment until the funds are available.
- ✓ Apply for a summer job. Plan on saving a portion of your earnings for college. Really.

July

- ✓ Look for information from your new college about housing, orientation, course selection, etc. If your financial aid package included a Federal Work-Study award, it may be your responsibility to find an appropriate job.
- ✓ Plan to follow up with the financial aid office as soon as you arrive on campus.

Financial Aid

There are two need-based aid applications – the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the College Scholarship Service's (CSS) PROFILE. In order to be eligible for financial aid (including scholarships), all students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). However, some schools may also require students to fill out the CSS PROFILE application. If you do not know which form to use, please check with your college.

The purpose of financial aid is to make up the difference between what a school costs and what a family can afford to pay. This difference is called the Expected Family Contribution (known as EFC).

Once students have been classified by the FAFSA or the CSS, students will be notified about the amount it determines the students and their family can afford to pay toward college expenses. When completing the FAFSA or CSS, students should list the schools they wish to receive the information.

Financial aid comes in several forms:

- **Grants:** Grants are money that the student does not need to repay. They are based on financial need and come from the federal or state government, or the specific college
- **Scholarships:** Scholarships are based on merit and come from a variety of sources.
- **Loans:** Loans are money that must be repaid with interest. They come from the government or private lenders.
- **Work-study:** Work study is a federal program that offers money for part-time work on campus.



Once a student qualifies for financial aid, an aid package can include a combination of loans, work-study and grants. Remember that financial aid packages can vary significantly from college to college.

Scholarships

Students should begin looking for scholarships during their junior year. The bulletin board outside the Counseling Center office is a good place to find up-to-date information on available scholarships for Warsaw students. Students should also listen to the daily announcements for scholarships. Another source is the Counseling Center link on the high school's web site. Additionally, each year the Warsaw Central School District offers a variety of scholarships to students.



Scholarships are not just based on grades. Scholarships are often granted based on a student's hobbies, extracurricular activities, prospective career, or major in college. The most important thing is to apply to as many scholarships as possible.

Some of the best places to find scholarships are in the community. Many employers offer scholarships to their employees or the children of their employees. Be sure to find out if they have tuition reimbursement plans. Similarly, many organizations offer scholarships to members. This is where a student's extracurricular activities might be very useful.

Many Internet sites offer scholarship information. They include:

- FastWeb (www.fastweb.com) is an excellent site to identify potential scholarships. Students must register and complete an online profile. FastWeb will match students with scholarships based on that profile.
- Peterson's (www.petersons.com)
- College Board (www.collegeboard.com)

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are used to enhance your application. They should provide insight into your personal qualities, career potential, and your potential to succeed in the classroom. Recommenders should be familiar with your work, history, credentials, and career aspirations.



When choosing someone to write you a letter of recommendation, it is important that this person has all the necessary information about you. Provide the recommender with your student profile or a resume. This person should feel comfortable and confident in preparing this important letter for you.

Please provide each recommender with a stamped envelope correctly addressed to the college, university, or scholarship you are applying to. You should allow the person at least a week to prepare the letter and be sure to ask two weeks prior to the deadline.

NCAA Eligibility

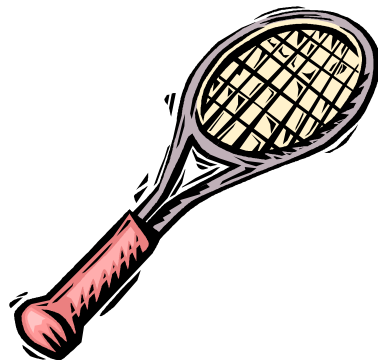
1. Potential Division I and Division II student athletes need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (www.ncaaclearinghouse.net) at the beginning of their junior year. There is a \$60 fee for this; fee waivers may be available for qualified students.
2. After registering, be sure to complete the amateurism questionnaire. Log into www.ncaaclearinghouse.net and click on “Enter/Update Amateur Questionnaire.” Answer the questions and log out.
3. Next, print the Transcript Release Form, sign it, and take it to the Counseling Center. The Counseling Center will send your official transcripts to the eligibility center. Have your transcripts sent at the end of your junior year and immediately following graduation. Log in to www.ncaaclearinghouse.net and click on “Transcript Releases” on the left side of your screen to access the Transcript Release Forms.
4. Enter code “9999” when registering for the SAT or ACT. This submits a request for your official test scores to be sent directly to the eligibility center.
5. Log back in during your senior year and sign the 10.1 statement to request final amateurism certification. *After April 1 for students enrolling in the fall semester; and after October 1 for students enrolling in the winter/spring semester.

6. Keep on track to graduate “on time” meaning that if your high school graduation takes place on June 1, you graduate June 1. If you do not graduate June 1 with the rest of your high school class, you have not graduated “on time.”
7. If you do not graduate with your class in eight semesters, no core courses taken after the eighth semester will count toward your NCAA academic eligibility requirements. Also, be sure to have your counseling office update its list of NCAA-approved core courses.

Division 1	Division 11
4 years of English	3 years of English
3 years of math	2 years of Math (Algebra 1 or higher)
2 years of natural/physical science	2 years of natural/physical science
1 year of additional math, English Or natural/physical science	2 years of additional English, math, or natural/physical science
2 years of social science	2 years of social science
4 years of additional courses	3 years of additional courses

For a complete list of Approved Core Courses:

Log onto www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. Select “Prospective Student-Athlete.” Then select “List of Approved Courses” on the left side of the screen. Follow prompts to select school by name.



Visiting Colleges

The best source of information about a college is a visit to the campus. From the time of arrival at the college until the time of departure, the student should make a list of the positive and the negative aspects of the visit. It is best to visit while classes are in session. Such visits will give the student a better idea of what is going on.



Contact the Admissions office to schedule a visit. Most colleges have organized tour days where prospective students can meet current students, attend lectures, and even spend the night in a dorm.

Consider the following factors while visiting the college:

- ✓ Rural, suburban, or urban campus.
- ✓ Size of enrollment, coeducational, etc.
- ✓ Distance from home, travel expenses, opportunity for family visits.
- ✓ Degrees and courses offered, faculty, size of classes.
- ✓ Estimated total cost for each year.
- ✓ Room size, library, student union, cafeteria.
- ✓ Campus activities, entertainment, places to visit.
- ✓ Type of people there. Will the student fit in?
- ✓ Is this the type of school with which the student wishes to identify for years after graduation?

The student should record what aspects left the most and the least impression. It is good to take notes and compare them later. A total picture is what must be considered. Finally, after the student has completed visits, a rank of the schools and discussion of experiences with parents is important.

Communication at this time between the student and parents is most important. Students should share feelings and their concerns with their parents and be considerate of the financial obligations which schooling will place on their families. This is a big decision in the lives of students, as well as their parents and parents want what is best for the student and his/her future.

SAT & ACT – At a Glance

Many colleges require students to take a standardized test. These tests are used to determine whether a student is ready for college. They are also used to predict a student's probability of success in college. The most common of the standardized tests are the following:

- **SAT:** The SATs test students in three areas - verbal, mathematics and writing. Each section is scored from 200 to 800. A perfect score is 2400.
- **SAT Subject Tests:** The subject tests measure a student's knowledge in a specific subject area. Some colleges require one or more subject tests.
- **ACT** – The ACT asks questions on English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning. Each section is scored from 1 to 36.



Which test should you take?

The answer depends on where you will apply to college. Most students are encouraged to take both the SAT and the ACT. A student may do better on one than the other. Colleges will usually accept either test, so a student can increase his/her odds of getting into a more competitive school. Genesee Community College prefers that students take the ACT, however, many community colleges do not require either the SAT or the ACT. They have their own placement tests that they use to evaluate students. The student should contact the specific school he/she wants to attend to find out their requirements.

Registering for the SAT or ACT

- By Mail: Forms are available in the Counseling Office. The application must be postmarked by the deadline.
- Online:
To register for the SAT: www.collegeboard.com
To register for the ACT: www.actstudent.org

If registering online, registration must be by midnight on the deadline date.

Comparing the ACT and SAT I

	ACT	SAT
Cost	The basic cost is \$32, which includes sending scores to four colleges. The basic registration fee for the ACT with the writing section is \$47.	The SAT I (Reasoning test) costs \$45, which includes sending scores to four colleges.
Type of Test	An achievement test based largely on what students learn in their classes.	A reasoning test assessing general ability.
Sections	Four sections: One English One math One reading One science reasoning One optional writing section One experimental section	10 sections: Three critical reading Three math Three writing One experimental section
Length	Two hours and 55 minutes, plus an additional 30 minutes for the writing test.	Three hours and 45 minutes.
Penalty for Wrong Answers	No.	Yes.
Scoring Method	1-36 for each subject, which is averaged for the highest possible score of 36.	200-800 per section with 2400 the highest possible score.
Test Dates	National test dates are in September, October, December, February (not available in New York), April, and June.	Seven test dates between October and June.
Required to Submit Scores to Colleges?	No. Students can choose which schools will receive their scores and which scores the schools will see.	Yes. If a student requests a score report to be sent to the colleges of their choice, the report will automatically be sent and will include scores for every SAT the student has taken.
Web Site	http://www.act.org	www.collegeboard.com

Finding Information on Colleges



Websites

There are many web sites that have information on colleges. Here are just a few:

College Board

www.collegeboard.com

Princeton Review

www.princetonreview.com

Peterson's

www.petersons.com

Books

Here are a few suggested books to help in the college search:

Fiske Guide to Colleges, 2009

College Board's Book of Majors

College Board's Handbook 2009

College Representatives

Many colleges send representatives to Warsaw to meet with students. These visits are announced on the morning announcements. There is also information on the bulletin board outside the Counseling Center.

College Fairs

College fairs are held each fall and spring throughout this area. The Western New York Consortium of Colleges and Rochester Area Colleges visit Warsaw each fall as a group.

Still have questions????

Make an appointment to talk with your counselor. The counselor is there to help you through this challenging and rewarding process.

Good luck!!