



New Year's Resolutions Every High School Senior Should Make

If you're a high school senior, 2026 will be a year of *big* changes (not only for you but for your parents as well). As you rang in the New Year, did you resolve to enjoy the remaining days of high school to their fullest? If so, that's great. After all, graduation day is just around the corner. Yet, as you look ahead to your transition from high school to college, here are six other resolutions worth making and (more importantly) *keeping* this year:

1. **Resolve to stay on track for college admissions success.**

By now, you've probably completed the college application process. Maybe you've even received your acceptance letters, too. Yet, even if you've been admitted into the school of your dreams, there are several unfinished chores that need your attention, like:

- ✓ applying for private scholarships,
- ✓ accepting your enrollment,
- ✓ choosing your dorm and meal plan,
- ✓ submitting your deposit,
- ✓ sending in your final high school transcripts,
- ✓ signing up for and attending freshman orientation,
- ✓ and registering for college classes.

So mark your calendar *now* to ensure that all remaining college admission deadlines are met.

2. **Resolve to keep your grades up.**

With only one semester of high school left to go, you may feel a case of "senioritis" coming on. But this *isn't* the time for your grade point average to take a nose dive. Some college admissions departments have rescinded acceptance letters when seniors let their grades slip during their last semester. So, study hard, keep up with your assignments, and stay focused.



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3. **Resolve to take on more responsibility.**

In a few short months, you'll be away at college and on your own. In preparation for this big adjustment, make a conscious decision to become more independent. Take responsibility for some of the things your parents have done *for you* up until now.

For example:

- ✓ Set your own doctor and dental appointments and learn how to refill your prescriptions.
- ✓ Do your laundry and clean up after yourself.
- ✓ Plan your own schedule, set your alarm, and make sure you get to school and to appointments on time.
- ✓ Put together a budget and stick to it. Open and balance a checking account and get an ATM card.
- ✓ Learn to cook some simple meals for yourself.
- ✓ Keep your commitments.
- ✓ And, as appropriate, make decisions and solve problems on you own.

By practicing these life skills *before* you leave for college, you'll be better prepared for campus life.

4. **Resolve to communicate with your parents.**

Life will soon be different for your whole family. Come fall, you won't see your parents and siblings every day. So it's important that you and your parents develop a communication plan before you move to campus.

As a family, decide how often you'll communicate with one another. What format will you use to stay in touch? FaceTime or Zoom on a particular day of the week? A daily text message? Through social media, such as a family Facebook page? What are the ground rules for communicating?

Your communication plan should include specific details about connecting in case of an emergency (when the typical methods you use may not be accessible). Also, select a "go-to" person you can call when you can't reach a parent during an extreme emergency.



5. Resolve to understand how the academic environment in college differs from high school.

You'll soon find out that the academic environment in college is dramatically different from high school. Take time now to learn about these differences so you know what to expect.

- ✓ **Teaching styles:** Your high school teachers explain and summarize what you need to learn from lectures and homework assignments. But college professors will expect and assume that you're keeping up with and understand the assigned reading materials.
- ✓ **Tests / exams:** High school teachers gauge your mastery of subject matter by assessing how well you're able to reproduce what you were taught — *in the same format in which it was presented to you*. At the college level, mastery requires that you're able to solve new kinds of problems by *applying what you've learned*.
- ✓ **Grades:** In high school, teachers usually structure courses to reward *good-faith effort*. If you try, you'll earn some points! But, at the college level, only the *results* count. In other words, when you demonstrate effort, your professor may be more willing to help when asked. But, your final grade is determined by the *results* you achieve (not the effort you put forth).

6. Resolve to spend time thinking about your college and career goals.

You don't need to have your career plans in place right now. But you should have a plan for college success. What steps will you take to explore and choose a major that supports your career goals if you haven't done so already? How will you learn about careers of interest to you and choose a career direction?

Last, but certainly not least, identify the specific actions necessary to achieve your college and career goals. After all, "*A goal without a plan is just a wish!*" (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry).

Are You a Career Vision Research Member?

Kick off the New Year with a solid plan to keep your college readiness plan moving forward. Career Vision research members are encouraged to schedule a follow-up appointment with a career consultant. Call us at 630.469.6270.