COLLEGE PLANNING

9TH GRADE

Freshman year is a vital time to set the stage for future academic and extracurricular success. At SPIRE Academy, we provide essential tips to help students and parents navigate this foundational year. For students, it's important to choose courses wisely, maintain strong grades, develop good study habits, and get involved in activities. Building organizational skills and keeping a record of achievements are also key. For parents, supporting your child's academic and personal growth, staying informed about school policies, and encouraging a healthy balance between school and downtime are crucial. Use these guidelines to ensure a productive and well-rounded freshman year. Remember, your SPIRE College Counselor is always available to offer support and guidance.

FRESHMAN YEAR – 9TH GRADE

TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- Choose 9th grade courses with care, setting up for possibility of taking advanced courses later in high school, or across all four years.
- Start an informal list or journal to track all activities and approximate time commitments, volunteer experiences and any awards or special experiences.
- Develop or strengthen study habits, calendar use and planning skills.
- Set up a healthy sleep schedule on weeknights.
- Consider setting up a student email account to be used for all college and coach communications.
- Focus on Your Grades: Building a strong academic foundation is key. Aim for good grades in all your classes, as they will be an important factor in college admissions.
- Stay Organized: Keep track of important deadlines, assignments and commitments. Developing good organizational skills now will help you manage the demands of college later on.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Support your child in developing good study habits and prioritizing their academics. Offer assistance with homework or provide resources like tutoring if needed.
- Support your child in setting both short-term and long-term goals for their academic and extracurricular pursuits. Help them break down large goals into manageable steps and celebrate their achievements along the way.
- Stay informed about your child's high school's policies and procedures related to course selection, graduation requirements and college admissions. Attend parent-teacher conferences and communicate regularly with your child's teachers and school counselors.
- Prioritize your child's physical and mental well-being. Encourage a healthy balance between academics, extracurriculars and downtime. Be attentive to signs of stress or burnout, encourage self-care practices and reach out to trusted adults when needed.
- Encourage your student to get involved in on campus activities when time allows. These experiences not only enhance their college applications but also help them develop valuable skills such as teamwork, communication and leadership.
- Encourage your student to take responsibility for their daily routine including practical skills like doing laundry and conflict resolution skills.
- Talk about the importance of social media use. This entails refraining from using profanity, sharing offensive or inappropriate images or content and avoiding the use of vulgar language.