

9TH GRADE CHECKLIST

Build the foundation: grades, habits, exploration, involvement, and knowing where to get help.



NEASE SCHOOL COUNSELING | 2026-2027 | Use this throughout the year - not just at registration time.

ACADEMICS + GRADUATION

- ☐ Know the 24-credit graduation framework and how semester credits are earned.
- ☐ Protect your GPA from the first quarter; every semester grade becomes part of the transcript.
- ☐ Build strong attendance, organization, time-management, and study habits.
- ☐ Ask teachers for help early; use retakes/remediation when available.
- ☐ Learn to advocate for yourself and communicate respectfully with teachers/counselors.
- ☐ Remember: standard diploma includes ELA, math, science, social studies, financial literacy, HOPE, fine/practical/CTE, and electives.

XELLO + SELF-DISCOVERY

- ☐ Log in to Xello through Clever and complete assigned 9th-grade tasks.
- ☐ Complete interest, personality, and skills assessments in About Me.
- ☐ Explore careers and save options that sound interesting - plans can change.
- ☐ Begin connecting careers to majors, technical programs, military pathways, and workplace options.

GET INVOLVED + BUILD YOUR STORY

- ☐ Join clubs, athletics, arts, academies, or organizations you genuinely enjoy.
- ☐ Focus on meaningful involvement, not joining activities just to build a list.
- ☐ Start community service in meaningful ways and keep documentation.
- ☐ Explore part-time work, family responsibilities, hobbies, projects, and other experiences that build skills.
- ☐ Track activities, awards, service, leadership, jobs, certifications, and accomplishments for later applications.

BRIGHT FUTURES + COLLEGE AWARENESS

- ☐ Learn the difference between graduation requirements and Bright Futures eligibility.
- ☐ Know that Bright Futures considers approved coursework, GPA, testing, and service/work hours.
- ☐ Understand that Florida public-university admission generally expects 2 sequential world-language credits even though world language is not required for the standard diploma.
- ☐ Start learning what colleges value: rigor, grades/GPA, testing, involvement/work, essays, and recommendations when required.

FAMILY + SCHOOL-YEAR TASKS

- ☐ Review grades together at a reasonable cadence without taking over student responsibility.
- ☐ Ask: "What is your next step?" and help the student build independence.
- ☐ Talk about interests, strengths, clubs, careers, and possible pathways - no final college decision is needed yet.
- ☐ Use the Nease Counseling page, Schoology, email, and newsletter for accurate information.
- ☐ Attend or review 9th-grade classroom counseling lessons (planned for November, 2nd week).
- ☐ Attend Acceleration Night (planned December 10 at 6:00 PM in the PAC) to learn about course options and rigor.
- ☐ Know how to schedule a counselor appointment before a problem becomes urgent.

BY THE END OF 9TH GRADE

- ☐ Student can log into Xello independently.
- ☐ Student has a strong academic foundation and knows where to get help.
- ☐ Student has explored careers and tried meaningful activities.
- ☐ Family understands graduation, Bright Futures, and future course-planning basics.

FAMILY CHECK-IN

Ask: What are you interested in right now? What is going well academically? What is one next step you can own this month?
The goal in 9th grade is exploration and strong habits - not having a final college or career plan.

NEASE RESOURCES

- School Counseling page + counselor appointment links
- Schoology join code: 3NJ5-V58F-8NJN2
- Monthly Nease School Counseling Newsletter
- Xello through Clever

Requirements and dates can change. Use current Nease, SJCS, Florida DOE, and Bright Futures guidance.

10TH GRADE CHECKLIST

Explore with purpose: protect the transcript, increase rigor appropriately, and connect interests to pathways.



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ACADEMICS + COURSE PLANNING

- ☐ Review graduation progress and make sure required credits are being earned on time.
- ☐ Keep grades strong - transcripts post letter grades, so remediation/retesting can matter when available.
- ☐ Choose appropriately challenging junior-year courses; rigor matters, but the schedule must remain sustainable.
- ☐ Consider Honors, AP, AICE, Dual Enrollment, academy, and CTE options when appropriate.
- ☐ If interested in Dual Enrollment, check current eligibility/test-score requirements on the Nease counseling webpage.
- ☐ Continue building organization, resilience, self-advocacy, attendance, and work habits.

XELLO + EXPLORATION

- ☐ Complete assigned 10th-grade Xello tasks and update About Me.
- ☐ Revisit careers, majors, and pathways as interests evolve.
- ☐ Explore colleges/programs by major, location, size, and career connection - do not build a final list yet.
- ☐ Heart/save schools, careers, and programs you want to revisit.
- ☐ Use Xello to explore technical, state-college, university, military, and workforce options.

EXPERIENCE + RESUME BUILDING

- ☐ Build depth in clubs, sports, arts, service, employment, or leadership instead of chasing quantity.
- ☐ Look for meaningful summer plans: work, volunteering, extra coursework, camps, internships, job shadowing, or skill-building.
- ☐ Track hours, awards, responsibilities, leadership, and accomplishments in one place.
- ☐ Continue meaningful community service and keep documentation for possible Bright Futures use.
- ☐ Explore career/technical pathways such as FCTC programs if hands-on training interests you.

TESTING + BRIGHT FUTURES

- ☐ Learn the SAT, ACT, and CLT formats and which colleges accept each test.
- ☐ Use free test-prep resources and begin preparing before junior-year testing.
- ☐ Review current Bright Futures FAS/FMS GPA, test-score, coursework, and service/work-hour requirements.
- ☐ Check whether your current course plan includes the academic coursework needed for Bright Futures and Florida university admission.
- ☐ Keep service/work documentation and understand the Nease submission process.

FAMILY + SCHOOL-YEAR TASKS

- ☐ Have an early conversation about possible paths after high school: 4-year, 2-year, technical/trade, military, apprenticeship, workforce, or gap year.
- ☐ Discuss cost, in-state/out-of-state preferences, transportation, and what the family can realistically support.
- ☐ Review grades and graduation progress while keeping the student responsible for communication and follow-through.
- ☐ Attend/review 10th-grade classroom counseling lessons (planned for December, 7th week).
- ☐ Attend Acceleration Night (planned December 10 at 6:00 PM in the PAC).
- ☐ Use Nease Counseling Schoology, newsletter, Outlook/email, and the counseling webpage for updates.

BY THE END OF 10TH GRADE

- ☐ Student understands graduation progress and junior-year course rigor.
- ☐ Student has several career/major/pathway ideas saved in Xello.
- ☐ Student has meaningful involvement and an emerging activities record.
- ☐ Student has begun test preparation and understands Bright Futures expectations.
- ☐ Family has started talking about postsecondary fit and affordability.

FAMILY CHECK-IN

Talk about what comes after high school before junior year gets busy: university, state college, technical training, military, apprenticeship, workforce, or another path.
Help the student research options and costs while keeping responsibility with the student.

NEASE RESOURCES

- School Counseling page + counselor appointment links
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- Monthly Nease School Counseling Newsletter
- Xello through Clever

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11TH GRADE CHECKLIST

Research + prepare: junior year should reduce uncertainty before senior application deadlines begin.



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ACADEMICS + SENIOR-YEAR READINESS

- ☐ Review graduation requirements, GPA, testing/concordant-score needs, and any missing credits.
- ☐ Keep junior-year grades strong - they are especially important in postsecondary planning.
- ☐ Plan senior courses intentionally with appropriate rigor and required prerequisites.
- ☐ Check Dual Enrollment eligibility and deadlines if it fits the student's plan.
- ☐ Continue using teacher help, remediation/retesting, and strong attendance/work habits.

XELLO + COLLEGE/CAREER RESEARCH

- ☐ Complete junior Xello tasks and update interests, careers, majors, and saved schools/programs.
- ☐ Research universities, state colleges, technical programs, apprenticeships, military, and workforce options.
- ☐ Use Xello and the Florida SUS Matrix to compare programs, admission profiles, size, location, deadlines, and cost.
- ☐ Use College Navigator, FloridaShines, BigFuture, MyFloridaFuture, Get There, ASVAB, and Apprenticeship.gov as additional tools.
- ☐ Visit campuses/programs or attend information sessions when possible.

BUILD A BALANCED LIST + APPLICATION PREP

- ☐ Build an initial researched college/program list based on fit, not name recognition.
- ☐ For selective colleges, understand reach, match/target, and likely/safety options.
- ☐ Compare major availability, cost, distance from home, housing, class size, graduation/retention rates, and campus environment.
- ☐ Learn application types: Early Decision (binding), Early Action, Regular Decision, and Rolling Admission.
- ☐ Create or update an activities/honors résumé with clubs, sports, work, service, leadership, awards, family responsibilities, and certifications.
- ☐ Identify teachers who could write a strong recommendation and build those relationships before senior year.

TESTING + BRIGHT FUTURES

- ☐ Take the SAT, ACT, and/or CLT as appropriate after Algebra 2 / when academically ready.
- ☐ Review testing policies for each school - requirements differ.
- ☐ Use free test preparation and plan retests strategically if needed.
- ☐ Review current Bright Futures progress: GPA, required coursework, approved tests, and service/work hours.
- ☐ Submit/organize service and work-hour documentation according to Nease procedures; keep copies.

FAMILY + TIMELINE

- ☐ Have a detailed family conversation about affordability, financial aid, location, travel, housing, and realistic application choices.
- ☐ Attend Junior Parent Night (planned January 12).
- ☐ Use spring/summer to visit schools, refine the list, research majors, and understand application requirements.
- ☐ Know what will happen in senior year: Common App, Xello, FERPA, counselor/teacher requests, transcripts, portals, STARS/SPARK, FAFSA, and Bright Futures.
- ☐ Start researching scholarships in Xello, BigFuture, college websites, and reputable free scholarship sites.
- ☐ Watch Schoology, the counseling newsletter, email, and Nease Counseling page for workshops and deadlines.

BEFORE SENIOR SUMMER ENDS

- ☐ Know your likely postsecondary path(s).
- ☐ Have a realistic initial college/program list.
- ☐ Understand testing needs and application deadline types.
- ☐ Have an updated activities/honors résumé.
- ☐ Know which teachers may be asked for recommendations.
- ☐ Understand the family budget/financial-aid conversation.
- ☐ Know the major senior-year application steps before August.

FAMILY CHECK-IN

By the end of junior year, families should understand the student's likely pathways, application list, testing plan, and affordability range. Junior year is the time to ask hard questions about fit and cost - before applications are submitted.

NEASE RESOURCES

- School Counseling page + counselor appointment links
- Schoology join code: 3NJ5-V58F-8NJN2
- Monthly Nease School Counseling Newsletter
- Xello through Clever

Application policies, test requirements, and admission ranges vary by institution and can change. Verify every school individually.

12TH GRADE CHECKLIST



Execute + verify: apply accurately, use the correct Nease process, check every portal, and finish graduation strong.

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GRADUATE + FINISH STRONG

- [] Meet with your counselor and confirm graduation requirements, credits, GPA, and assessment/concordant-score status.
- [] Resolve missing or incomplete requirements immediately, including virtual/online coursework.
- [] Keep senior grades strong - admission remains conditional on completing high school successfully.
- [] Maintain attendance and communicate early about academic concerns.
- [] Complete all graduation, enrollment, and final-transcript steps before leaving Nease.

APPLICATIONS + ORGANIZATION

- [] Finalize your college/program/career list and know every application deadline.
- [] Keep a tracker for each application, login, deadline, fee, testing requirement, recommendation, supplement, and portal task.
- [] Use a professional email address you check regularly.
- [] Understand Early Decision, Early Action, Regular Decision, and Rolling Admission before choosing an application plan.
- [] Preview every application/PDF before submitting and verify school information, courses, grades, activities, and essays.

COMMON APP + XELLO + DOCUMENTS

- [] If using Common App, create the account, add colleges, and complete the FERPA Release Authorization.
- [] Link Common App and Xello early and confirm the connection is successful.
- [] Add/request YOUR assigned Nease counselor in Xello.
- [] For a Nease teacher recommendation: ask the teacher first, then request through Xello when the college accepts recommendations.
- [] Outside recommender (not at Nease): use Common App when appropriate. Do not request the same recommender in both places.
- [] For direct applications, add the application in Xello and follow transcript-request instructions.
- [] Do not send a transcript when the college requires self-reported academics instead.
- [] For Dual Enrollment, request an official college transcript from the college that awarded the credit when required.

SELF-REPORTING + PORTALS

- [] Use an accurate transcript from HAC/Parchment when entering courses and grades - never rely on memory.
- [] Enter courses, credits, levels, and grades exactly as shown; do not round or "improve" school information.
- [] For Florida public universities, check each applicant portal for STARS or another self-reported academic record requirement; UCF uses SPARK.
- [] After EVERY application, create/login to the university applicant portal and complete every required item.
- [] Verify residency, supplements, fees, test scores, self-reported grades, and documents show as received/complete.

TESTING + FINANCIAL AID + SCHOLARSHIPS

- [] Register for SAT/ACT/CLT retesting if needed; follow each college's score-reporting policy and allow processing time.
- [] Apply for Florida Bright Futures when the FFAA opens; review FAS/FMS requirements and submit service/work-hour documentation through Nease.
- [] Complete the FAFSA when available and review each school's financial-aid requirements.
- [] Search scholarships in Xello, Schoology, college financial-aid pages, BigFuture, Going Merry, Fastweb, and reputable free sources.
- [] Compare admission offers using total cost, grants/scholarships, loans, program fit, and outcomes - not just sticker price.
- [] Complete deposit, housing, orientation, placement, registration, and other enrollment requirements by the college's deadlines.

NEASE SENIOR SUPPORT + KEY EVENTS

- [] Senior individual counselor meetings begin September 14 during the school day; students are called down and do not need to schedule.
- [] Common App + Xello EXCEL help sessions begin September 16 for three consecutive Wednesdays.
- [] Attend additional EXCEL/application workshops offered during fall as needed.
- [] Attend Nease/UNF Financial Aid Night (planned October 29).
- [] Use Schoology, the Nease School Counseling Newsletter, school email, and the counseling webpage for updates.
- [] Make a counselor appointment whenever something in Xello, Common App, a transcript, or a college portal does not look right.
- [] Questions about a college-specific application requirement? Contact that university's admissions office directly.

SENIOR RULES TO REMEMBER

Submitted does NOT always mean complete. Check the applicant portal after every application.
Nease counselor = Xello. Nease teacher = Xello. Outside recommender = Common App when appropriate.
Works at Nease? Request through Xello. Never duplicate the same recommender in both systems.

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College, Bright Futures, FAFSA, STARS/SPARK, and testing requirements can change. Follow official current instructions and ask before submitting when unsure.