

# PLANNING FOR COLLEGE GUIDE

On average, college graduates earn \$22,000 more per year than high school graduates.

Source: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself/five-ways-ed-pays>

# ROADMAP TO COLLEGE

Planning your future

9th Grade

10th Grade

This guide is designed to assist you on the journey from 9th grade until you enroll at the college of your choice.

## 9th and 10th Grade

- Tell your parents, teachers and counselor that you want to go to college.
- Develop strong study habits - pay attention in class, complete your homework on time and ask for help when you don't understand something.
- Get involved in activities after school. Join clubs, play sports, get a job or volunteer in your community.
- Stay involved in these activities throughout your high school career to demonstrate consistency.
- Work with your school counselor to take the PSAT and/or PreACT.
- Be open to explore new possibilities. Here's a great resource to start with: <http://www.act.org/profile>
- Start to gather information about colleges – use college search tools or ask your guidance counselor for resources. Visit: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges>
- Use the Coalition's free college planning tools, including the free online storage locker. Create your account: <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org>

### SUMMER

- Read.
- Take SAT/ACT prep classes.
  - ▶ SAT prep: <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>
  - ▶ ACT prep: <http://www.act.org/>
- Find a job or attend pre-college camps. <https://go.ncsu.edu/precollege>

## 11th Grade

- Make sure you are on track to meet the minimum course requirements for college admission.
- Continue to take challenging courses.
- Register to take the SAT and/or ACT multiple times.
- Narrow down your list of colleges based on where you see yourself. You can research schools on College Board: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/compare-colleges>
- Attend college fairs in your area.
- Find an internship or volunteer opportunity in the field you plan to study.
- Use breaks you have from school to visit colleges.
- Make a list of teachers, coaches, and community members that you may be able to ask for recommendation letters when you apply to college.
- Research scholarship deadlines and requirements for your senior year.
- Remind parents/guardians to prepare tax information for your financial aid application.

## 12th Grade Fall

- Select 3-5 colleges – a reach school, safety school and others you're interested in attending.
- Mark application deadlines on your calendar.
- Take the SAT and/or ACT again before college application deadlines.
- Keep up your good grades.
- If you receive free or reduced lunch see your school counselor for fee waiver options.
- Reach out to your teachers, coaches, and community members for letters of recommendation.
- Aim to apply by early application deadlines.
- After October 1, start and complete your financial aid application – be aware of institutions priority deadlines. Visit: <https://fafsa.gov/>
- Visit <https://fsaid.gov/> to get an FSA ID number to e-sign your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Student athletes: register with the NCAA Clearinghouse for eligibility certification.

## 12th Grade Spring

- Finish your senior year strong.
- Compare admissions decisions and financial aid packages.
- Take AP/IB exams and send results to your future college.
- May 1 is the national deadline to confirm your enrollment – decide which school you want to attend.
- Read your new student checklist.
- Send an official final transcript to your future college.
- Figure out housing arrangements, orientation dates and placement testing requirements.

# PARENTS: HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR STUDENT

- ❑ **Encourage your student to aim higher than completing a high school degree and take charge of their future.** In today's economy, a high school diploma just isn't enough and you can restore what the student thinks is possible. College Board's Five Ways Ed Pays: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/know-yourself/five-ways-ed-pays>
- ❑ **Talk to your student about their future goals.** Ask them questions about their interests, strengths and weakness and begin to formulate a plan with your student that could help them identify what they hope to achieve in college.
- ❑ **Work with your student to identify a support team (i.e. counselor, teacher, administrator, coach, etc.).** This team is a resource for you and your student to stay connected and informed of their progress and the steps they should be making toward their future.
- ❑ **Make sure your student signs up for and takes the SAT and/or ACT.**  
Most colleges require students to submit standardized test scores as part of the application process. Encourage your student to take the SAT and/or ACT at least once before their senior year. This will give them time to take the test multiple times before applying to college.  
  
Register for the SAT: <https://www.collegeboard.org>  
Register for the ACT: <http://act.org>
- ❑ **Explore college costs and make a plan for how to pay for college.** The cost of attending a college is not always what a student actually has to pay. Make sure to ask about and research financial aid opportunities to help offset the total cost of attendance. You can find out what your student can expect to pay at the colleges they are interested in by utilizing the net price calculator to find out what the estimated net price would be for your student. Net Price Calculator: <https://collegecost.ed.gov/netpricecenter.aspx>
- ❑ **Be prepared to fill out the FAFSA which is available October 1 of your student's senior year.** You can create an FSA ID at any time. Make sure to research the scholarship and financial aid deadlines for each institution your student is applying to so they can apply for as many opportunities that are available to them. <https://fafsa.gov>
- ❑ **Set the expectation that it is your student who must ultimately complete the work.** It is their responsibility to meet the deadline, write the essay and complete the application(s). Communicate this expectation so that they fully receive your trust and support.
- ❑ **Ensure your student completes their college experience.** Engage and utilize the resources offered through parent and family services to support your student through their college experience. This service is offered by most institutions to enrich relationships between parents, families, and college students.

**Finally, celebrate with your college-bound student!**

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