

*9th Grade
Student
and Family
Planning Guide*

High School

Dear Freshmen:

Welcome! What comes to mind when you think about starting high school? It may seem exciting, or a bit scary, or a combination of the two. One thing's for sure: it will bring a lot of changes. You are part of a new community now, and your school counselor, teachers, administrators (principals, assistant principals) and other school staff are here to help as you explore this exciting new world!

One of the biggest changes you'll notice is your classes. The subjects will be more advanced. There may be more homework, more tests and more projects to do. In high school, you'll have to think harder and work harder. High school also brings new pressures. There's academic pressure, because the grades you get will affect what colleges or other programs you can get into after high school. There are other pressures, too. There might be pressure to fit in with a certain group of people, or peer pressure: people trying to get you to do things that may not be in your best interest and could get you into trouble. At times it will be hard to do what you think is right, or even to decide what is right.

High school is full of challenges, but it will also open up many new possibilities for you! Your classes will be more challenging, but you'll be able to make choices based on your interests. You may discover a favorite subject. The classes you take may lead you to a job or career path. You'll meet a lot of new people in high school, and have the opportunity to make new friends. Some of the people you meet may become an important part of your life. You can also pursue some of your favorite interests and activities in high school; there are many different clubs and organizations you can join, or you can try out for sports. Your high school years will also be a time when you start to become more independent. You'll have more freedom, and also more responsibilities.

In this guide, you will learn how things work in high school – everything from how credits are earned and what tests you will be taking, to how to make friends and how to study. You will get a better idea of what to expect and how to plan for success in high school and beyond. Your high school counselor will help clarify and supplement this information by meeting with you individually, in groups, and in classroom presentations. Your counselor's goal is to help you meet your academic, personal/social and career needs. Please contact your counselor with any questions or concerns. Your counselor is looking forward to working with you!

WELCOME TO HIGH SCHOOL AND HAVE A GREAT YEAR!

WHAT CAN YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR DO FOR YOU?

Coffee County Schools' professional school counselors provide school counseling programs, which address the academic, career and personal/social development and needs of all students. Our goal is to help students explore their skills, abilities and interests, so they can plan and prepare for the future, and set goals to reach their educational, personal and career aspirations. Counselors also work with parents and guardians to keep them aware of and involved in their student's planning.

In other words, your counselor is there to help, guide and support you and your family as you navigate high school and plan for what lies beyond. School counselors are not just there for helping students deal with crises or major personal issues, although that is one service they provide. Get to know your counselor at the start of your freshman year and begin building a relationship, so that he or she can get to know you and help ensure that your high school years are the best they can be!

Here are some ways your counselor can help you:

- Help you deal with problems in social and emotional areas
- Suggest resources for academic difficulties, career exploration, and post-high school education;
- Suggest courses to help you reach your goals, help you stay on track of credits needed for graduation, and help prepare you for post-high school education;
- Be a resource for financial aid and funding for postsecondary education;
- Write recommendations for scholarships, college and summer programs;
- Help your family to understand and support your high school experience, and access additional resources if needed.

*Students can talk with their counselors about issues such as dating, peer pressure, substance abuse, depression and many more topics.

Keep in mind that as you go through high school, you will probably run into some challenges; everyone does. But there are plenty of people who can help you. **Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it.** In addition to your counselor, you can talk to your parent/guardian, teachers, media specialist, nurse, or any other adult school staff you can trust. **If something is bothering you – anything – talk to somebody about it. Nothing gets better by keeping it all inside. Remember: you are not alone!**

9TH GRADE PLANNING CALENDAR

August

- Read this guide and share it with your parents, so they will understand your school responsibilities.
- First day of classes.
- Attend class and do your homework EVERY DAY.
- Have your parents apply for the free or reduced lunch program
- Talk to your teachers and ask questions, either during or after class.
- Explore the extracurricular offerings at your school -- including clubs, sports, plays

and student government -- and get involved in those that interest you. Consider doing community service and volunteer work, too. Remember: quality, not quantity, is important. Genuine involvement in one activity is better than token participation in several.

- Start a portfolio for your high school accomplishments and college/career information. Make separate folders such as: “report cards,” “activities,” “awards/achievements,” “materials from specific colleges,” et cetera.
- Begin building your resume.
- Explore career options.
- Study hard in your classes and complete all of your homework. It’s good for you! **NOTE:** All grades you earn in high school will be included in your final GPA and class rank: important factors in college admissions. Also, when you’re ready to take college entrance exams (ACT/SAT), you’ll be more knowledgeable.
- Set up a routine, distraction-free study time and space for every day.
- Start saving money for college if you haven’t already!

September

- Visit with your school counselor and begin building a relationship.
- Research your career options. What high school courses do you need? What academic preparation or training after high school is required?
- Familiarize yourself with possible college choices.
- Explore opportunities at your school for credit recovery and/or courses for extra elective credit.
- Are you involved in any extracurricular activities yet?

October

- 9-week grade reports issued.
- Parent Visitation Month
- Develop a list of your interests.
- Beginning of 2nd nine weeks. Keep working hard and ask for help if needed.

November

- Explore career and college opportunities through the following means:
 - Visit your school’s counselor.
 - Visit your school and/or public library.
 - Involve your family in your career and college investigations.
 - Become familiar with general entrance requirements.
 - Explore websites.
 - Job Shadow: explore your career interests by volunteering at sites where people work in careers that interest you.

December

- Study hard and good luck on exams! This is the end of your first semester and these grades **will** appear on your transcript. Seek help from your counselor for school resources, if needed.
- Make sure you’re involved in extracurricular activities, and work toward leadership positions. Colleges look for this kind of personal growth and commitment!

January

- Report card with 1st semester grades issued.
- Beginning of 2nd semester. Fresh start – work hard! Keep your grades up. Your Freshman year is 25% of your high school experience!

February

- Continue the college search. What colleges or other postsecondary opportunities are best for your career interest(s)?
- Visit colleges or universities either in person or online, through virtual tours.

March

- End of 3rd nine weeks
- Begin learning the SAT/ACT most frequently used words, and focus on building your vocabulary to help prepare you for the college entrance exams. See: www.collegeboard.com; www.act.org; www.vocabulary.com; www.number2.com.
- READ, READ, READ.

April

- Develop a preliminary list of colleges that interest you and contact them for information.
- Work on your writing skills.
- Update your portfolio and resume.

May

- Investigate summer school opportunities.
- Set up volunteer/internship community service for the summer.
- Make a list of colleges that interest you and why.
- Study hard for exams.
- Begin to study for the SAT/ACT.
- Check dates for registration and first day of school for next year.

June

- READ, READ, READ.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a GPA?

Your Grade Point Average is the average of ALL your semester grades during high school; it is recalculated each time a semester ends and you get new final grades. Your GPA reflects your academic performance and determines where you **rank** in your class. (The student with the highest GPA is #1 in that class; all others follow). Both GPA and rank are important factors in college admissions and many scholarship decisions.

2. What is my class rank?

Class rank is the comparison of your GPA against all other students in your class at your

school. The student with the #1 rank in the class at graduation will be that year's valedictorian. The #2 student will be salutatorian.

3. Is there a limit on the number of honors and AP classes I can take?

Students may take as many AP and honors classes as they like, and there is no limit to how much a student's GPA can be weighted by these classes.

4. How are classes weighted, and what exactly does that mean?

Coursework with academic rigor will be weighted. These courses will include dual enrollment (6 points), advanced placement (6 points), and courses for honors diploma (4 points). Academic dual enrollment classes will be weighted, but career technical dual enrollment classes will not be weighted.

5. How many credits do I have?

You should keep a record of all classes taken and grades and credits earned. Each semester class you pass (for example, August - December, or January - May) earns you ½ credit. You must pass with a D- or above to earn credit. You can request a copy of your transcript from your counselor.

6. What is dual credit?

Dual credit is when a high school student simultaneously earns high school and college credit by taking an approved class at a participating college or university. Talk to your counselor about the dual credit options open to you starting your sophomore year of high school.

7. Do I have to take a foreign language to graduate from high school?

Coffee County Schools' graduation requirements do not include a foreign language **unless** you are working toward an honors or advanced diploma. However, many colleges and universities **DO** require 2 years of the same language as an admission requirement. Check with the college or university of your choice for their language requirements. If it is an admission requirement, don't wait till the last minute to "cram in" two full years of a language!

8. How many credits will I need to be a sophomore?

You will need 5 credits to be classified as a sophomore.

9. How do I get help if I want to know more about career planning?

Talk with your school counselor. Arrange to shadow people whose jobs you find interesting.

10. What's the difference between the ACT and SAT, and do I need to take both?

The ACT (American College Test) is published and overseen by ACT. The SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) is published and overseen by the college board. Virtually all colleges and universities accept either the ACT or SAT (check with the college of your choice), so you do not have to take both tests, although some students choose to do so.

SETTING GOALS

Setting goals can help you achieve more, figure out what you want in life, make plans and take action! Meeting goals in different parts of your life can help you feel good about yourself and help you reach your potential.

It's one thing to decide you want to do something, but setting goals and making a plan to reach them will help you get more done. When you set goals for yourself, you'll see what it takes to reach those goals. Other people can help, but getting what you want is ultimately up to you!

As you set goals, try to keep them realistic, but don't be afraid to reach and challenge yourself. For example, having a goal of playing professional sports is probably not realistic; instead, focus on trying out for the school basketball team.

You can set goals for yourself based on **when** you want to achieve them. Goals can be:

- **Short-term:** These are things you'd like to accomplish by tomorrow, next week, or next month. Some examples are: get an "A" on a test or have a conversation with someone you'd like to meet.
- **Medium-term:** These are things you'd like to accomplish in the next 6 months or year. Some examples are: Get an "A" on your report card or make the basketball team.
- **Long-term:** These are things you'd like to accomplish in the next few years. Some examples are: go to college or get a lead role in the school play by senior year.

Academic Goals: Ask yourself: what do I want to achieve in my school career? Start with the **short-term** goal of getting an "A" on your next test. Now you need a time by which you want to reach that goal. If your test is next Friday, that's when you plan on reaching the goal. Next, you need a plan. What are you going to do to help you get an "A" on that test? You can plan on studying for the test 1 hour each day, and plan on having a friend quiz you next Thursday. A **medium-term** academic goal can be to get an "A" on your next report card for that class. You'll want to achieve that by the time the grading period ends. Your plan can be to complete all homework assignments, study for tests and ask for help if you need it. A **long-term** academic goal might be going to college. Your long-term plan will be to study hard, get good grades and apply to several colleges.

Personal Goals: Apply the same principles of short- through long-term planning and setting time lines for your personal goals: everything from learning to play an instrument to getting a summer job to deciding what kind of person you want to be. **There's no limit to what you can do, as long as you set realistic goals and make a sensible plan to reach them!**

STUDY AND HOMEWORK TIPS

Why should I study?

The more you **know**, the more you can **do**. Good study habits can help you succeed in school and in the future. Many skills that make you a success in school can also help you succeed on the job and in many areas of life.

Studying is *not* the same as **homework**. Studying is re-reading, re-thinking, and re-organizing, all in order to learn the material.

Here are some great ideas that will help you take control of your homework and studies:

- **Create a study routine.**

Complete your homework at the same time each day. Schedule other activities around study time. Choose a time of day when you have lots of energy.

- **Create a “Study Zone” in your home.**

Study in this “zone” each day. Make sure your study zone is free of distractions like TV, phone, music, your siblings, or a window view. Keep the top of your work area free of clutter, and be sure that your zone has good lighting. **NOTE:** If you don’t have a quiet place at home, try staying after school or visiting a public library.

- **Be sure you have good study tools in your study zone.**

These include your textbooks, pens and pencils, paper, your assignment folder or agenda, and a dictionary.

- **Think of school attendance and homework as your job.**

Successful adults treat their jobs as one of their top priorities; you must do the same.

- **Get comfortable, but not too comfortable!**

Avoid studying in your bed. It’s time to study, not sleep!

- **Record assignments daily and keep all assignments together in one notebook.**

If you don’t understand an assignment, ask your teacher for clarification. When preparing to study, review all of your assignments for the day. Make estimates about the length of time each assignment will take and make a study schedule. Tackle the most difficult subject first; you’ll be fresher, and it’s downhill from there! Allow extra time for learning new material or for more difficult subjects.

- **Don’t procrastinate!**

Work steadily on major assignments, like term papers, over several weeks. Divide large assignments into small parts and attack them one at a time. Set goals for completion of these small sections and work steadily toward them. It is also easier to do the next assignment as soon as possible after a class while the subject and your interest are still fresh.

- **Take breaks during your study period.**

Perhaps between subjects, and reward yourself for your efforts. Eat a snack, call a friend, listen to music, or do something physical, like shooting hoops or taking a walk.

- **Maximize in-class learning.**

Attend class regularly and be on time. Sit near the front of the class so you can hear and see. Participate in classroom discussions and listen carefully. Take good notes and review them as soon after class as possible, adding any missing information and writing down any questions you may have. Don’t try to write down every word (unless it’s a quote, rule or law) – listen for **key words**. If your teacher **emphasizes** a point, such as

by writing it on the board, put it in your notes. If your class discusses a topic, note any major **conclusions**.

- **When you study, experience the information in as many ways as possible.**

Read the information aloud, write it down, and explain it to a friend or family member.

Consider creating and using index cards as an extra way to review the material.

- **Organize the information.**

People process information in different ways. Some people like to draw pictures or charts to digest information; others like to read aloud, make detailed outlines or create index cards. Do whatever works for you.

- **Take advantage of any free time.**

If you have a study period or a long bus ride, use the time to review notes, prepare for an upcoming class, or start your homework.

- **Study with a friend.**

Unless it's too distracting, get together with friends and classmates to quiz yourselves, compare notes, and predict test questions.

- **Eat healthy.**

Good nutrition can lead to good grades. Making smart food choices will give you sustained energy and boost your brain power. Low energy and poor concentration can mean it's been too long since your last meal. Be sure to eat three meals a day (don't skip breakfast!) and try limiting sugar, sodas, junk food and fast foods. Eat lean protein and fiber, drink plenty of water, and choose "power foods" (blueberries, walnuts, salmon) whenever possible to keep your brain and body happy and functioning at their peak!

- **Get plenty of sleep!**

Teenagers often go to bed too late and have to be up early. Lack of sleep can make your mind dull and keep you from functioning effectively.

- **Exercise regularly**

Try to get at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week. As well as keeping your body healthy, it will boost your mood, energy and focus.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

1. **Make a "to do" list every day:** Put things that are most important at the top and do them first. If it's easier, use a planner or your agenda to track all of your tasks. And don't forget to reward yourself for your accomplishments.
2. **Use your time wisely:** Taking time to think and plan is time well-spent. If you can get some reading done on the bus ride home from school, for example, you'll kill two birds with one stone.
3. **Know that it's okay to say "no":** If your friends ask you to go out on a Sunday night and you have school the next day, realize that it's okay to say "no." Keep your short and long term priorities in mind, and don't feel pressured to drop your plans to please your friends. Planning in advance to spend time with friends and family can help, but first you must be convinced that you and your priorities are important. Once you are convinced of that, saying "no" gets easier.
4. **Work smarter, not harder:** You'll work more efficiently if you figure out when you do your best work. For example, if your brain handles math better in the afternoon, don't wait to do it until late at night.
5. **Review your notes daily:** You'll reinforce what you've learned, so you need less time to study or cram. You'll also be ready the next day if your teacher calls on you or gives a pop quiz.
6. **Get a good night sleep and eat healthy:** Running on empty makes the day seem

longer and tasks seem more difficult.

7. Are text messages, calls, computer usage or video games proving to be a distraction or time wasters? If so, manage your time so that electronics don't undermine your academics.

8. Don't sweat the small stuff! Have you ever wasted an entire evening by worrying about something that you're supposed to be doing? Was it worth it? Instead of agonizing and procrastinating, just do it. If a project seems daunting and you find yourself avoiding it, try the "Swiss cheese method": break it into smaller tasks and just do one, or set a timer and work on the big task for just 15 minutes. By doing a little at a time, eventually you'll reach a point where you'll want to finish. Also, avoid perfectionism, which can be a form of procrastination.

9. Keep things in perspective: Setting goals that are unrealistic sets you up for failure. While it's good to set high goals for yourself to achieve, be sure not to overdo it. Set goals that are challenging yet reachable.

FREE TUTORING AND HOMEWORK HELP

Talk to your counselor and teachers about tutoring opportunities in your school and community, if you need some extra help. Don't wait until you get behind in classes or feel overwhelmed! Many students benefit from tutoring, extra homework help, or studying assistance outside of their classes. Take advantage of these FREE resources!

PROBLEMS IN CLASS?

Try these suggestions at the first sign of trouble with your classes, schoolwork, homework or tests. You are not the only student having trouble, and you are absolutely capable of succeeding!

- Make an appointment to talk with your teacher. Calmly state your concerns about your work/grades, and that you want to improve. Ask for your teacher's advice on what to do to improve your grades, and be willing to do what it takes.
- Whenever you're having trouble understanding the material, don't hesitate to ask your teacher for clarification. Ask questions during class, or if you're not comfortable with this, write down questions to ask your teacher outside of class time.
- Be in class, on time, every day. Bring the materials you need, and pay attention. Take good notes and review them that evening to make sure you understand what you wrote down, while it's still fresh in your head.
- Cut back on work hours if you have an out-of-school job. School is your #1 job right now. Consider this an investment in really good job when you graduate.

- Get the name and number of someone in your class who's a good student. If you're absent, you can call them to find out what you missed and get any homework assignments.
- Turn in every homework assignment! A 0 on even one assignment will mess with your average. (A 100 and a 0 average out to 50, which is a failing grade.) If you're turning in your homework and still not doing well on it, see your teacher to make sure you understand what you are doing wrong.
- Ask your counselor for suggestions on study skills.
- Find out what resources are available at your school and in your community, such as tutoring, homework help, mentoring, and librarian assistance.
- Teach your lesson to someone else. This will let you know if you really understand the material.

FIGHTING FAILURE!

- Why do students fail? Most students who fail a class don't have to!

Here are the 10 most common reasons students have used to explain failing grades (and none of them has to do with the work being too hard!):

1. I was lazy.
2. There was too much work, and I didn't have time.
3. I didn't like the teacher.
4. It didn't seem important.
5. I still had middle school habits.
6. I was working at my job and didn't have the time/energy for schoolwork at night.
7. I was worried about other problems and couldn't concentrate.
8. I was a full-time mother and didn't have time.
9. The teacher was not a good teacher.
10. I missed too many days of class.

Forty high school students were asked if they had ever failed a class because they couldn't understand the work. Not one person felt this was the real reason that students fail. One boy said, "I failed one class because I thought the course was too difficult. Now I understand that when the class is hard, the only thing to do is work much harder." Another senior boy had similar advice: "I did not want to do the work. I just wanted to play around," he said. "Now I wish I wouldn't have been that way. I wish I had paid more attention to schoolwork. Yeah, I'm going to graduate, but I have to pass everything this year, and that's pressure. And the only college I'm going to be accepted at is a community college, and now I wish I had a choice." Still another senior boy said, "I was just trying to fit in. But it wasn't worth it. Later on, you realize school is the most

important thing. You won't always have your friends, but you can always have your education."

Failing? Don't let it happen.

STUDENT SAFETY TIPS

General Safety Guidelines:

- Know and follow the school's safety policies.
- If you walk to school, walk with a friend.
- If you drive to school, always secure your vehicle.
- Carry your keys in hand. You'll be ready to move into your car quickly.
- Never carry large sums of money with you.
- Always tell your parents where you plan to be before and after school.
- Make sure that your emergency contact card at school is updated.
- Report all suspicious activity whether on or off campus.
- Immediately report any information about a student with weapons.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Investigate the campus during broad daylight. Be familiar with the general layout of the buildings and walkways.
- Walk in groups and stay in well lit areas.
- Carry a whistle with you. If in danger you can blow it to create attention and it cannot be used to harm you.
- Avoid high risk situations and seek help from an adult.
- Speak up about and refuse to participate in negative or criminal behavior.
- Follow instructions of school, law enforcement officials or other emergency response personnel.
- Refrain from teasing, bullying and harassing other students, and be tolerant of their differences.

Use of the Internet:

- Always tell your parents when you are going online.
- Do not go to private chat rooms without your parents being aware.
- Never give out any personal information about yourself, particularly where you attend school, your name, address, or phone number.
- Report all electronic harassment and/or abuse to your parents.
- Never set up meetings with anyone. If someone tries to arrange a meeting with you immediately notify your parent or guardian, and notify local law enforcement.

Cell Phone:

- Never leave your full name on your answering machine.
- Have 911 programmed on your phone.
- Report any threatening text messages.

INTERNET SAFETY TIPS

Review these important tips to help keep yourself and your personal information safe when using your computer!

Tempted to meet someone face-to-face that you know only from online chats?

Remember: anyone can pretend to be anyone online. A skilled predator will pretend to be exactly the type of person you are looking for; otherwise you wouldn't be interested in getting together, would you? If you think you can't come in contact with a predator, think again. Predators go anywhere you go on the Internet. MySpace found 30,000 sex offenders with profiles and they are just the ones who used their real names to register.

Sharing too much information about yourself?

Giving out personal information could lead a predator to your door. Set all online profiles of yourself to PRIVATE or FRIENDS ONLY. You, your friends, and your athletic teams are putting information about you onto the web. If the world can see that information, so can a predator or a stalker. Guard your personal information and ask others to be careful with it as well.

There is another potential problem that you might not consider: *identity theft*.

This is a crime in which someone establishes credit in your name. Unfortunately for you, the credit history that is established will not be a good one and it will take a lot of time and effort to clean up the mess. Giving out personal information should be **your** decision. Just because an interesting website asks for your personal information doesn't mean you should give it out. **Be careful posting photos of yourself on the web.**

Photos placed on public sites can be manipulated and placed back on public sites. Such photos of you might prove to be embarrassing or worse – not the kind of photo you would want a college admissions committee or potential employer to see.

What do you know about intellectual properties?

Do you know that intellectual properties are protected by copyright law? Using another's intellectual properties without their permission is illegal. Many owners of intellectual properties view piracy and plagiarism as stealing. Illegal downloading of movies and music can have serious legal and monetary consequences. The music industry has taken legal action against some offenders, typically costing the person thousands of dollars to resolve.

Here are some examples of intellectual property: music recordings; videos; photographs; drawings; magazine articles; computer games; computer software; books.

Plagiarizing can seriously damage your academic record, which could adversely affect college admission or getting a job.

HELPFUL LINKS

- www.cybercrime.gov/rules
- www.cybercitizenship.org
- www.copyrightkids.org
- www.bsacybersafety.com/index.cfm

PROTECTING YOUR COMPUTER

E-mails from unknown sources may contain attachments that introduce viruses that permanently damage your computer. **Forwarding e-mails** from unknown sources can reveal your friend's email address to the sender and possibly infect your friend's computer with a virus.

File sharing can lead to a virus or provide access to information contained on your hard drive.

Installing a firewall can help protect your computer from the problems created by hackers.

Anti-Virus software can help protect your files.

Disconnecting your Internet when not in use is the best way to prevent anyone from using the Internet's "two way street" to get into your computer.

Posting your e-mail address on public sites allows spammers to find it and send you junk mail.

Remember: Your first and best line of defense in cyberspace is self-defense.

HIGH SCHOOL OVERVIEW: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CREDITS

What is a credit?

Credits are points earned toward graduation. You need a certain number of credits in specific courses to graduate from high school.

How do you earn credits?

- Pass your classes with a grade of D- or above.
- Join extra classes before or after school, as available or summer school. Examples: Driver's Ed, work study (if you have a job and your school offers credit).
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How do you lose or fail to earn credit?

You earn less than a D- in a class, or you repeat a class you have already passed and gotten credit for. Be sure to check your schedule each semester to make sure you are not repeating any classes, and get in the habit of checking your transcript regularly to make sure you are on track with credits.

What is a transcript and how do I get one?

Your transcript is a cumulative record of all classes you have taken, as well as the credits and grades you have earned for each class. Your transcript is important and it is your responsibility to make sure it's correct! Get an unofficial copy from your school counselor and review it on a regular basis to make sure your credits and grades are correct and that you are meeting graduation requirements.

How can I regain credits?

Check with your school counselor for credit recovery options.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Graduation Credit/Coursework Requirements

See Student Handbook for information.

Special Education Students

Special Education students will receive a diploma upon satisfactory completion of the program of study (standard, career readiness, or ability) defined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

CREDIT RECOVERY/EARNING OUTSIDE CREDIT

NOTE: Keep on top of your school's graduation requirements and your credits, and check with your counselor as early as possible if you know you need to make up classes or would like to earn extra elective credits.

Here is a list of ways to earn credit towards graduation:

- **Daytime classes at your high school**

Take required classes during the regular school day.

- **Summer School**

Information, such as course offerings, cost and locations, is typically available in May. There are many courses offered but classes fill up quickly, so listen to announcements and check regularly with your counseling office. Students must obtain registration paperwork from their counselor.

- **Dual Credit Programs**

Students may take classes at approved colleges or universities for elective credit while still in high school.

“Dual credit” means you earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously. Each of the two participating colleges handles dual credit a little bit differently; see below for general information, then talk with your school counselor for details and to arrange testing, enrollment and class registration.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

If you are a student with a disability and receive special education services and support, the following sections offer some important information.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

All students receiving special education services have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This IEP is developed and reviewed at least annually. The purpose of the IEP is to insure that you are receiving the services you need to meet your educational goals. In addition to classroom instruction, you may receive related services such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and/or Adaptive P.E. Age appropriate transition assessment may also be used to help facilitate the transition planning process.

HIGH SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

As a high school student, you will be treated as a young adult. There is increased responsibility for your behavior, attendance, and completion of class work. All students must follow school rules, attend classes, and do their work to earn credits and pass. There are no automatic promotions to the next grade level in high school.

ACT AND SAT FEE WAIVERS

In order to qualify for a fee waiver, a student must meet at least one indicator of economic need listed on the ACT Fee Waiver form (available in the school counseling office). Students who are enrolled in their school's free or reduced lunch program qualify for a fee waiver, as do students on public assistance (welfare). If eligible, you may use up to two fee waivers total, so you can take the ACT or SAT up to twice for free. If you receive a waiver form, follow the instructions on it for your registration method (can be used to register by mail or online). The waiver is considered used once you register, even if you do not test on the requested test date. Fee waivers cover only the basic test registration fee, including reporting to up to four colleges (if you provide valid codes when you register). Waivers do not cover late registration fees, test date/test center changes, or any other fees or services. For more information, see your school counselor. Please note: You can't request a waiver directly from ACT; you must work through your high school counselor.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

It is important to be involved in activities that enrich and expand your life outside of the classroom. These are called extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular involvement will:

- Increase your self-confidence and self-awareness;
- Enable you to meet other students with interests similar to yours;
- Help you determine your future career goals by identifying and developing your talents, values and strengths;
- Improve your communication, leadership, and teamwork skills;
- Enhance your college applications by preparing you academically for college, and enable you to contribute to college campus life as an involved student;
- Increase your chances of receiving college scholarships. Scholarship selection teams look for leaders and students who are involved in, and contributing to, their communities.
- Be lots of fun!

Careful selection of extracurricular involvement and dedication to your chosen activities will enrich your life and develop your talents. What's more, your involvement may even help you be admitted to the college of your choice or to receive scholarships someday.

NOTE: When applying for admission to colleges or for scholarships, **it is the quality of your involvement, not the quantity** that is likely to be noted, and perhaps even rewarded. Admissions officers and scholarship selection committees look for a demonstrated commitment to selected activities over time, not just limited participation in a large number of activities. Involvement which demonstrates a progression of responsibility, the development of specific skills and/or leadership ability is especially impressive.

Familiarize yourself with the extracurricular opportunities at your school and in your community. Don't be afraid to check out several, to see what is a good fit for you. Be on the lookout for posters and announcements, and contact your school's activities department for opportunities. There are many different options out there and something will feel like a good fit for you.

PLANNING FOR TOMORROW

It's never too soon to begin dreaming about and planning for your future beyond high school. In fact, now is the time to start planning for your adult career. Today, only 15 out of every 100 jobs are available to people with no postsecondary education or training. Most careers require some form of education after high school. It is critical that you keep your educational and career options open by making good choices today.

While you certainly do not have to choose a career today, now is the time to identify your interests and broad educational goals. This section will help you begin to identify possible career interests and educational pathways that can lead you there.

Postsecondary Education

Have you started thinking about your plans for after high school? Is college in your future? Trade or technical school? The military? There are numerous opportunities and the financial resources to help you achieve your goals. Read on for more!

Check out this fascinating link about technology and our future!: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nteiqLgZFOU&feature=fvst>

WHY START PLANNING NOW?

Why Go To College? A college education will offer you more money, more job opportunities, and more freedom. On average, a person who goes to college earns more money than a person who doesn't. Over a lifetime, a college graduate can earn over **\$1,000,000** more than a high school graduate! This is most noticeable at higher education levels (see statistics below). The more education you have, the more you earn.

Amount of money earned per class period in high school	Level of Education	Average Lifetime Earnings (35 years)
\$386	Doctorate = .4 years college + 4 years	\$2,184,000
\$309	Masters = 4 years college & 2 years	\$1,750,000
\$248	Bachelors = 4 years college	\$1,403,500
\$196	Associates=2 years college	\$1,109,500
\$188	Some college	\$1,064,000
\$161	High School	\$910,000
	Drop Out	\$689,500

Can't I get a good job now or after high school? Yes, maybe you could, but statistics are against you. Education beyond high school is a big investment of time, money and effort. You'll need to figure out how to pay for your education (which is one major reason to start planning now), but the effort will be worth it. More education equates to more job opportunities, as well as higher earning potential.

Median earnings and unemployment rate for people aged 25 and older		
Level of Education Completed	Unemployment Rate in 2007	Median Earnings in 2007
Less than a high school diploma	7.1%	\$22,256
High school graduate, no college	4.4%	\$31,408
Some college, no degree	3.8%	\$35,516
Associate degree	3.0%	\$38,480
Bachelor's degree	2.2%	\$51,324
Master's degree	1.8%	\$60,580
Professional degree	1.4%	\$74,204
Doctoral degree	1.3%	\$77,844

CAREERS/EXPLORING OPTIONS

“What I know is, is that if you do work that you love, and the work fulfills you, the rest will come.”
-- Oprah Winfrey

There are many exciting careers waiting for those who are interested and prepared. Now is the time to look carefully at your interests and start to explore different careers. People work an average of 35-45 years, so it's important that you select a career you'll enjoy. Don't panic, though; this process takes time and many people change careers an average of three times in their lifetime.

Your freshman year is a great time to begin making plans for your future. It's time to explore your interests and take stock of who you are. Consider your talents, interests, and the things you enjoy doing. Can you build a career around them? How can you learn to set goals to get what you want out of life? Discuss these issues with your counselor, teachers, and your parents, so that you can express your ideas and get a variety of viewpoints and suggestions.

How will I know what career is right for me?

Exploring careers is exciting! As you think about what you might like to do after high school, consider the following:

Interests: What sorts of classes, subjects, or hobbies interest you? Would you prefer working more with things, people, data, or ideas? Use your school's career center/counseling office to explore careers and advanced educational opportunities. Ask your counselor to help you explore your strengths and interests through interest inventories. The following **interest inventories** help you recognize areas that you might be interested in.

- **ASVAB:** given by the military but useful for **military or civilian careers**. Given to sophomores – adults. ASVAB's Career Exploration Program consists of the 3-hour ASVAB test, which is designed to predict future occupational and academic success, plus a 20-30-minute "Interest-Finder": a career interest measure based on Holland's highly regarded theory of career choice. Students also receive results from the OCCU-FIND, where they can see how their interests and skills match with important occupational characteristics of over 400 occupations.
- **Self-Assessment:** Look into the six career clusters listed at this web site. Then take the self-assessment test. www.nycareerzone.org/text/index.jsp
- **Kuder Navigator:** College and career ready interest inventory.

Abilities: Ask yourself: What comes easy to you? What are your strengths? What type of a career would require those abilities and strengths? Some careers require 4-8 years of post-high school education. Do you have the ability to endure the academic rigors of college and possibly graduate school? Some careers require physical strength and coordination, others are very technical, and still others call for strong people skills.

Values: We often forget to consider our own personal values when choosing careers. It's important to think about what you value most in life. It's helpful to choose a career that is compatible with those values. If you love being outdoors, explore careers that

would allow you opportunity to be outside when working. Ask yourself what careers support your values?

Job Outlook: Our world is changing so quickly that it's hard to stay on top of the job market, the jobs that are in high and low demand, and the new careers that will be created. As you narrow down your list of the possible careers that match your interests, abilities and values, you should research the job outlook, availability of particular jobs and in what regions of the country or world they are located.

Explore Careers by Cluster: Because there are so many different jobs out there, jobs are grouped into "career clusters". Jobs in the same cluster are alike in some way. Once you know more about your interests and strengths, you should be able to narrow down the career clusters and jobs within them that might be a good fit for you. (See page 63)

Interviews: Talk to people who work in jobs that interest you. Ask about their work. What do they like about it? What kind of training or education was required? You may do this in person, by phone, through a letter or by e-mail.

Once you've identified your interests, strengths and values, and have narrowed down the career clusters, pathways and jobs that might be a good fit for you, start researching what education and/or training beyond high school will be required to pursue them. Below are some options:

- **Four-Year Colleges:** There are colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and around the world. Alabama has many excellent public and private universities with varying degrees of competitiveness. Check each school for unique programs and majors. Campus housing is available. In most cases, the minimum requirements are a high school diploma and the ACT or SAT. There are varying academic requirements for specific colleges and majors. Some colleges require SAT II subject tests. An application, official transcript, and other documentation must be sent to schools by their deadline. Admissions personnel take into consideration the following in evaluating the candidate's application: GPA, test scores, class rank, teacher/counselor recommendations, essay (if required), extracurricular activities and special circumstances.

What if college isn't right for me? If you feel you would like to explore careers that do not require 4 years of college or more, there are options out there for you:

- **Junior/Two-Year Colleges:** Students may take a one-year certificate or two-year associate's degree program in a variety of vocational and technical fields, as well as liberal arts. Upon program completion, students may go directly into jobs or transfer to a four-year college. Tuition is less expensive than for four-year institutions. Requirements: High school diploma or equivalency and placement testing.
- **Applied Technology Centers – Vocational/Technical/Business Schools:** There are many local private schools offering training in a variety of fields, such as: secretarial work, computer training, travel, court reporting, massage, cosmetology, automotive work, and more. Many of these programs are very expensive and offer little or no financial assistance; however, the training periods may be significantly shorter than a college program, enabling you to enter into a job very quickly.

- Requirements vary according to the program. See your counselor for help in seeking out these training programs.
- **Apprenticeships:** Formal training programs are available in over 800 manual occupations, such as building trades (electrician, carpenter, bricklayer) and manufacturing (machinist, welder, tool and die). An entry-level worker signs a contract to receive supervised on-the-job training and related technical studies. He/she learns the entire range of skills within an occupation over a set period of time (average of 4-6 years). The worker's pay starts low and increases as skills are acquired. Requirements: 18 years old, high school diploma (for most), physically fit, aptitude and/or manual skills. You must go through an application process, requiring a high school transcript, letters of recommendation and an interview. It may take months or years to be placed if accepted. (See following section for more information.)
- **Employment:** If you are planning to go directly into a job after high school, you will want to consider what types of jobs you may enjoy, as well as assess the skills you have already developed, and those you need to continue to work on. The career center or school counseling office at your high school offers many resources to help research careers, such as books and pamphlets, and career searches on the computer. Many jobs offer "on the job training", and some offer pre-employment training programs. Your counselor is available to help you develop a plan of action for pursuing a job during and after high school.
- **Military:** Branches are: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, National Guard, and Coast Guard. For more information about careers in the Armed Forces — both full-time (active) and part-time (reserve) duty -- call to speak to a specialist. Also check out: www.militarycareers.com. (See page 80 for more information.)
- **Armed Services Academies:** U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, West Point, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. These are extremely competitive, and application/nomination must be started in junior year. (See page 81 for more information.)
- **ROTC:** Two- and four-year programs for military training are offered at select colleges and culminate in an officer's commission upon graduation. Educational scholarships are available.

THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE?

Are you thinking about going to college? GREAT! Read on...

What are colleges looking for?

Colleges look for the types of classes you choose to take in high school, your grades, your scores on college admission tests (ACT, SAT) and the extracurricular activities you are involved in. Some colleges require personal essays, letters of recommendation, SAT subject tests, and more detailed applications than others.

There are some things you can do while in high school to keep college costs down. To get ahead and save money for college, you can...

- Take challenging classes in high school to avoid remedial (lower-level "catch-up") education classes in college. When you take remedial courses in college, you have to pay full tuition and it does not count toward graduation (i.e., the courses are required but earn you no credit).
- Earn college credit through dual credit, articulated credit and/or early college student concurrent enrollment courses. There are a number of courses you can enroll in

and the tuition is waived and books are paid for! Check with your counselor for enrollment requirements.

- Take Advanced Placement (AP) classes in high school. When you complete the class, take the AP exam to potentially place out of college courses.
- Explore career options early so you won't have to change majors often in college. Every time you change your major there is a cost you incur in time, effort and money.
- Take career inventories to help you focus on your career choices. The ASVAB is one option; it is free and offered at your school certain times during the year (check with your counseling department). The assessment helps you determine careers that fit your interests and in which you are more likely to succeed.
- Explore the career and technology education course offerings at your high school. See your Parent Student Information Handbook for information on Career Cluster and Programs offered through the Career Technical Education Curriculum.
- Keep your options open for community college, technical colleges, universities, military or the workforce.
- Familiarize yourself with money available to help pay for college, by exploring financial aid options and scholarship opportunities (counseling office, school and public library materials, and many websites (see Resources section at the end of this guide).

UNDERSTANDING COLLEGE ADMISSION FACTORS

The first part of planning for college is understanding what factors colleges consider when looking at a student profile.

What Colleges Consider

- Quality/Rigor of Academic Courses
- Academic Performance/Grades
- Test Scores (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests™, AP® tests, etc.)
- Additional Factors
- Extracurricular Activities
- Essay(s)
- Letters of Recommendation
- Demonstrated Interest

Grades & Coursework

Your high school academic record is one of the most important factors in college admissions. Colleges will look at a few aspects within your academic record:

- **Course selection:** Challenge yourself with a rigorous course load and high-level classes, including AP and/or honors courses.
- **Grades:** Every year counts, starting with freshman year.
- **GPA trends:** Keep improving through every grade.
- **Class rank** (if offered by your high school).

Other Considerations

- Positive recommendations from teachers, counselors and mentors

- Personal statement and essay(s) demonstrating writing ability and self-expression
- A “demonstrated interest” that shows your enthusiasm for the colleges to which you’re applying
- Extracurricular activities, including participation in sports, performing/visual arts, volunteering, etc.
- Community involvement, part-time work or internship
- Interview (if applicable)

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING: WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ACT AND SAT?

The **ACT** (American College Testing) is published and overseen by ACT. The **SAT** (Scholastic Assessment Test) is published and overseen by The College Board. Both are non-profit organizations that also offer other resources to help students prepare for and succeed in college. Check out their websites (listed below) for lots of helpful information.

Virtually all colleges and universities accept **either** the ACT **or** SAT (check with the college(s) of your choice), so you do not have to take both tests, although some students choose to do so.

Below is a chart that compares the two tests and can help you decide which one you’d like to focus on studying for.

	ACT	SAT
Length	3 hours, 25 minutes (incl. 30-minute optional writing test --check with colleges to see if required)	3 hours, 45 minutes
Sections	4 Test Sections (5 with optional Essay): English, Math, Reading, Science, Writing (optional)	10 Sections: 3 Critical Reading, 3 Math, 3 Writing (incl. Essay), 1 Experimental (unscored)
Reading (ACT)/ Critical Reading (SAT)	4 reading comprehension passages, 10 questions per passage	Reading comprehension passages and questions, and sentence completion questions
Science	Science (analysis, interpretation, evaluation, basic content, and problem solving)	Science not included
Math	Math accounts for ¼ of overall score: arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trig.	Math accounts for 1/3 of overall score: arithmetic, algebra, geometry, alg. II

Essay	Last thing you do (optional); 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not included in composite score 	First thing you do; 25 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factored into overall score
	ACT	SAT
Scoring	Total composite score of 1-36 (based on average of 4 tests) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 scores of 1-36 for each test Score of 0-12 for the optional Essay 	Total score out of 2400 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 scores 200-800 for each section 2 sub-scores: 20-80 for Writing multiple choice and 0-12 for the Essay
Wrong Answer Penalty	No wrong answer penalty	Yes, ¼ point per wrong answer (except for Math Grid-in questions)
Test Contact Information	ACT, Inc. (319) 337-1000 www.ACT.org	The College Board 1-866-756-7346 www.collegeboard.com

<u>ACT Score</u>	<u>SAT Score</u>	
32-36.....	2300-2400	
31.....	2210-2290	
30.....	2180-2200	Most Competitive Schools
29.....	2120-2170	
28.....	2060-2110	
27.....	2000-2050	
26.....	1940-1990	Highly Competitive Schools
25.....	1880-1930	
24.....	1810-1870	Very Competitive
23.....	1740-1800	
22.....	1670-1730	Competitive Schools
21.....	1610-1660	
20.....	1550-1600	
19.....	1480-1540	
18.....	1410-1470	Less Competitive Schools
17.....	1340-1400	
16.....	1270-1330	
15.....	1200-1260	
14.....	1110-1190	Non-Competitive Schools

13.....	1010-1100
12.....	860-1000
0-11.....	600-850

MONEY FOR COLLEGE

What types of financial aid are available? Below are the main sources of money for college. Students may receive money from **all** sources!

1. The Government

To qualify for federal and state funding, students must fill out the FAFSA starting in January of their senior year. Your parents (or whoever claims you as a dependent on their taxes) must have done their taxes for the previous year, in order to fill out the FAFSA. Through this process, students may qualify for **grants** (outright financial gifts), **loans** (borrowed funds that must be repaid with interest), or **work-study programs** (student jobs during college). Go to: www.FAFSA.ed.gov. **(DO NOT use other “FAFSA-related” websites!)**

2. Colleges and Universities

The majority of scholarships come directly from colleges and universities. Students may obtain scholarship/financial aid applications specific to each college or university to which you are applying, either by downloading it directly from each school’s website or requesting it through the mail. Some schools require a CSS Profile Application as well as the FAFSA; this is available in your counselor’s office. Scholarships may be based on academics, sports, alumni, music, drama, special talent, financial need, or a specific declared major such as education or engineering. **Be sure to submit both scholarship and admission applications for each college you are considering, and pay attention to deadlines: THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!**

3. Private Monies

Sources include: parents, family members, student savings and employment, trust funds, and scholarships from religious organizations, community groups and organizations, major corporations and small businesses.

Private scholarships – cash awards that do not need to be paid back -- are numerous. Most are for seniors planning to begin attend college the following fall, but several scholarship opportunities are open to juniors, as well. Many scholarship opportunities are available in your school counseling office; there are books listing thousands of scholarships, available in libraries and bookstores; and the Internet offers many free scholarship search engines . To apply for private scholarships, you must either request paper application forms or complete applications online (procedures vary) and submit them by the stated deadlines. Recommendation letters from teachers, advisors or counselors, transcripts from your school registrar, and ACT/SAT scores are often required. Many organizations -- such as Coca Cola and the Elks Club -- send scholarship applications and essay contests to your school’s counseling office every year. Listen for announcements and check with your counseling office for the best way to stay on top of these scholarship opportunities throughout the year. Be sure to plan time to complete your applications and request any required supplemental materials early, so that you do not miss any deadlines!

MORE ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

Did you know...?

- Scholarships are **gifts** and the money does **not** need to be repaid.
- Scholarships vary in amount and are typically awarded in the following categories:

Academic: Generally based on student's cumulative GPA for grades 9-12, but ACT/SAT scores may be combined with GPA or used alone to determine eligibility. Colleges offer most of the academic scholarships; you apply through them. There are also private scholarships available for academic merit; these scholarships usually may be used at any college.

Talent: Art, music, drama, etc. An audition, performance or portfolio probably will be required. The individual department of the college issues talent scholarships. There are also some private scholarships available for talent; these usually may be used at any college.

Athletic: The high school coach and the college generally confer about students who are candidates for athletic scholarships.

Miscellaneous: Memorial scholarships; trust funds; community, professional and religious organizations; employers, unions...just to name a few.

- There are many scholarship **essay contests** open to all students. If you are creative or a strong writer, check these out.
- To increase your chances of being eligible to win scholarships, it is best to: have a high GPA, take college prep courses, get outstanding scores on the PSAT, ACT and/or SAT, and participate in school and community extracurricular activities.
- The majority of scholarship money is awarded by colleges and universities, but there are many private scholarships available, which can usually be used at any college or university.
- Many scholarships are offered only to students going immediately to college full time, which is incentive for you not to "take a break" or just take a class or two each semester after high school graduation.
- Are you buying into these myths about Financial Aid? "My parents make too much money so I'll never get help." (Not true!); "Only smart people get scholarships." (There are many scholarships that are not academically based.); "You can only get financial aid by paying someone to assist you in the financial aid process." (Not true! It's available for everyone, and it comes in all shapes and sizes. You don't need to pay anyone for help – your school counselor can help you.)

There are MANY different scholarships available and they are well worth applying for! Every year, school counselors hear from scholarship committees, saying they haven't received enough applications. Don't let this free money pass you by!

Tips for Applying for Scholarships

- Find out as much as you can about scholarships, the earlier the better. Check books, pamphlets and websites on scholarships and financial aid. These are available in your school's counseling office, career center and library, as well as public and college libraries.
- Speak to your school counselor about the availability of scholarships, which become available at different times throughout the year.
- Every college has its own scholarship programs. Familiarize yourself with their websites, applications and deadlines.
- **It is highly recommended that you take the ACT and/or SAT at the end of your junior year, instead of waiting until senior year. These scores are frequently needed when applying for scholarships.**
- Explore a variety of possibilities for scholarships. For example, ask your family members to inquire about scholarships at their places of employment, and with religious or other civic organizations with which they are involved.

NCAA INFORMATION FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

What is the NCAA?

Many college athletic programs are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association, "a voluntary organization through which the nation's colleges and universities govern their athletics programs. It is comprised of institutions, conferences, organizations and individuals committed to the best interests, education and athletics participation of student-athletes". (www.ncaa.org) NCAA has three divisions: I, II, and III, according to the size and scope of the school's athletic programs and whether they provide scholarships. The NCAA defines a student-athlete as "someone who is looking to participate in intercollegiate athletics at an NCAA Division I or Division II institution in the future".

My goal is to play sports in college and get an athletic scholarship. What do I need to know and do?

- Prospective student-athletes work closely with their coaches and stay in touch with their counselors throughout high school, to make sure they are on track to meet all NCAA requirements.
- If you are planning to enroll in college as a freshman and want to participate in Division I or II athletics, you must be certified by the NCAA Clearinghouse.
- The NCAA has certain core-course, grade and college entrance test score requirements for Division I and II schools. See their eligibility website (below) for detailed information.

To qualify for college athletics through the NCAA, here are the basics of what you must do:

Grade 9:

- Verify with your school counselor and the online core-course listing (see NCAA website) to make sure you are on track.

Grade 10

- Verify with your school counselor and the online core-course listing to make sure you are on track.

Grade 11

- Register with the NCAA eligibility center.
- Make sure you are still on track to meet core-course requirements (verify you have the correct number of core courses and that the core courses are on your high school's 48-H with the eligibility center).
- After your junior year, have your school counselor send NCAA a copy of your transcript. If you have attended any other high schools, make sure a transcript is sent to the eligibility center from each high school.
- When taking the ACT or SAT, request test scores be sent to NCAA's eligibility center (the code is "9999").
- Begin your amateurism questionnaire (see website).

Grade 12

- When taking the ACT or SAT, request test scores to be sent to the eligibility center (the code is "9999").
- Complete amateurism questionnaire and sign the final authorization signature online on or after April 1 if you are expecting to enroll in college in the fall semester. (If you are expecting to enroll for spring semester, sign the final authorization signature on or after October 1 of the year prior to enrollment.)
- Have your school counselor send a final transcript with proof of graduation to the eligibility center.

Find student-athlete information at these NCAA webpages or call their toll-free number if you have questions:

NCAA Eligibility Center:

<https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/common/index.html>

NCAA Student Information Page:

https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/student/index_student.html

NCAA Freshmen Eligibility Standards Information Sheet:

https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/hs/d1_standards.pdf

NCAA Eligibility Center's toll-free number: 1-877-262-1492

MILITARY

Military Service and Career Opportunities

- The U.S. Military offers training in a variety of vocational fields. The **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)** is required testing for military service (see page 52) The ASVAB determines eligibility for different career opportunities in the military.
- A high school graduate who enlists in any one of the U.S. Armed Services (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy, Marine Corps) will have the opportunity to select a military occupational specialty. The military services offer formal and on-the-job training for each of the hundreds of occupational specialties they offer. In a 4-year enlistment, for example, a person can receive the equivalent of a junior (2-year) college education in

occupational areas such as: business management and administration, communications (electronic) technology and operations, police science, fire protection technology, nursing, restaurant management, purchasing, accounting, physical therapy assisting, and many others.

- In some occupational areas, such as engineering and nursing, the military services will send a person through four or more years of college, if that person will agree to an extended period of enlistment. The Army and Navy have programs to aid a person as a civilian through nursing training (4-year college program), if the person will serve an extended enlistment as an officer.
- High school seniors may apply for **ROTC scholarships** to attend any university offering ROTC programs; this scholarship may include room, board, and tuition.
- Students interested in the military as an option can get more information in their school counseling office or by talking with their local recruiting officer. Call the main number of the branch of the military in which you are interested, and ask for the recruiter assigned to your high school.
- **NOTE: If the military is a potential career choice for you, consider the following:**
 - Use the study guides for the ASVAB prior to taking the test.
 - Make a list of questions to ask the recruiter and be sure you are satisfied with the answers.
 - Take the time you need to make a decision. **Do not** allow yourself to be pressured.

Contact Information for Military Branches

- U.S. Army: 1-800-USA-ARMY www.1800goguard.com
- U.S. Navy: 1-800-USA-NAVY www.navyjobs.com
- U.S. Air Force: 1-800-423-USAF www.goang.af.mil
- U.S. Marine Corps 1-800-MARINES www.marforres.usmc.mil
- U.S. Coast Guard: 1-800-424-8883 www.uscg.mil
- U.S. Air National Guard: 1-800-TO-GO-ANG or 1-800-GO-GUARD
- Or call toll-free at 1-800-893-5323 to speak to a military representative.

U.S. MILITARY ACADEMIES

- There are five U.S. Military Academies, located in NY, MD, CO and CT.
- The Academies are **extremely selective**. Acceptance to the Military, Naval, Air Force or Merchant Marine Academy requires a congressional nomination for appointment; application to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy does not.
- Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy and the U.S. Air Force Academy serve at least 6 years of active duty starting as 2nd lieutenants. The U.S. Naval Academy commissions its graduates as ensigns in the Navy or as 2nd lieutenants in the Marine Corps for 5 years. Graduates of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy are licensed as Merchant Marines by the Coast Guard; they are stationed either in the U.S. or abroad to complete their service. Coast Guard Academy graduates are commissioned as ensigns for 5 years in the Coast Guard.
- Academy applicants must be in good academic standing. All academies require applicants to take either the SAT or ACT; it is recommended that these exams be completed early. Applicants must be in good physical condition. Many cadets were involved in varsity sports during high school, as well as other extra-curricular activities or

employment. Admissions officers also look for students who have been successful in their high school's most advanced courses, and have exemplified leadership skills and commitment to community service.

When to Apply

- Interested candidates should **begin the application process in the spring of their junior year**. Juniors should wait until after January 1 of their junior year to request a nomination. At the beginning of the Academy selection process, you should open a pre-candidate file with each of the Military Service Academies to which you seek a nomination.
- Applicants can contact the academies directly for candidate packets. To do this, send your name, address, phone number, Social Security number, birth date, high school name, and year of graduation to whichever one of the following academies to which you plan to apply:

Admissions Office
United States Air Force Academy
HQ USAF/RRS
USAF Academy, CO 80840-9901
(719) 472-2520

Director of Admissions
United States Military Academy
600 Thayer Rd.
West Point, NY 10996-9902
(914) 938-4041

Dean of Admissions
United States Naval Academy
117 Decatur Road
Annapolis, MD 21402-9977

Admissions Office
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, NY 11024-1699
(516) 773-5391

Director of Admissions
United States Coast Guard Academy
New London, Connecticut 06320 (Congressional nomination not required.)

HIGH SCHOOL RESUME BUILDER

NAME _____ COUNSELOR _____

I. Extracurricular Activities

Activity	Grade Level or Year of Participation	Approximate # of hours spent per week and # of weeks involved	Position held or honors received

What extracurricular activity or activities have you enjoyed the most? Briefly describe your involvement, position, and any significant contribution that you have made with the group or activity.

II. Awards (academic, athletic, service, art, music, industrial arts, etc., in or outside of school)

III. Membership in clubs and/or organizations outside of school (e.g., religious youth group, choir, dance, Junior Achievement, Boy Scouts, etc.)

<u>Organization or Activity</u>	<u>Describe Activities</u>	<u>Dates</u>

IV. Volunteer Service: List any volunteer activities in which you have been involved. What did you do?

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone #</u>	<u>Describe Activities</u>	<u>Dates & hours</u>

V. Part-Time or Summer Work

Employer/Supervisor	Type of Work	Dates Employed	Phone #

JUST FOR PARENTS

How do I help my student with homework and good study habits, and how do I motivate my student to achieve? Of course, all kids are different, but here are some tips that might be helpful:

- Encourage and role model healthy habits: a daily study schedule, ample sleep, exercise and a balanced diet.
- Help your student organize a space to store his or her school supplies, so that everything can be located quickly and easily. Provide supplies, such as pens, pencils, erasers and writing paper, and help your child identify resources to use, such as a dictionary, thesaurus, atlas/maps, and educational Internet websites.
- Help him/her set a regular time and a well-lit, quiet place for homework and studying. The best schedule for homework is one that works for your child and your family. Outside activities, such as sports or music lessons, may mean that your student needs a flexible homework schedule; help him/her work it out. If there is not enough time to finish homework, your child may need to limit or drop outside activities.
- Help your student use television, video games and the Internet wisely. Consider limiting “screen time”, especially on school nights. As a family unit, eliminate distractions during designated homework/study time; turn off the TV and music, if distracting, and discourage your child from text messaging or talking on the phone during study time.
- Help your student break large assignments and projects into smaller, more manageable steps, then aim to complete them over time.
- Encourage your child to make outlines of important points from class assignments.
- Make sure that your student understands assignment details and directions, and encourage him/her to talk with teachers for clarification when needed.
- Teach your child how to schedule time for schoolwork and social gatherings.
- Practice setting goals and priorities with him/her.
- When your child is feeling sad about having failed in something, remind him/her of previous school projects that he/she has done well.
- Encourage your student to read on a daily basis. Let your child see you reading, writing, using math and doing other things that require thought and effort. Talk to your child about what you do at work, so that he/she can see that the skills he/she is learning at school are an important part of the things adults do.
- Talk about school frequently. Spark your child’s enthusiasm about what he/she is learning. Tell your child that you absolutely believe he/she can do well in school.
- Show that you think education and homework are important. If your child knows that you care about what is happening at school, he/she will have a good reason to complete assignments on time.
- Offer regular praise and encouragement for your student’s accomplishments and improvements.
- Emphasize positive values and personal traits, such as respect for self and others, hard work, and responsibility. Let your own actions serve as an example of these values. Teenagers often learn more by what you **do** rather than what you **say**.
- Advise your child to listen and participate in class.
- Help your child to realize that homework is a responsibility and an important part of the learning process.

- Help your child avoid last-minute “cramming”. Do backwards planning for tests and larger projects in order to prevent a backlog of schoolwork to be done in a single night.
- Take advantage of after-school programs. Enrolling your child in a program that compliments the lessons learned at school is ideal. Look into tutoring and homework help options (see page 19) as needed.
- For more information on helping your child with homework and supporting his/her learning at home, go to: www.ed.gov and www.pta.org.

My student is on the computer a lot. How can I ensure that he or she is safe in the online world? Monitor your student’s Internet usage and set restrictions to make sure he/she is making good choices. Many parents insist that computers be located in family areas, instead of in students’ rooms.

What can I do if my student feels stuck or frustrated with homework? You can provide verbal prompts to help your child clarify what is frustrating him/her, and brainstorm possible next steps. For example:

- Can you refer to your book or notes?
- Can you state specifically what you don’t understand?
- Is there a classmate you can call?
- What do you think is the next step in finding the solution?
- Are there other parts of this assignment you can do without knowing this item?
- Where can you write your question in order to remember to ask your teacher tomorrow?
- When would be a good time to get additional help from your teacher?

How do I find out how my child is doing in class?

You child’s school will issue parents a password for Parent Portal. Parents can log on and access information concerning their child’s grades, attendance, discipline referrals, assignments, etc. Contact your child’s teachers directly. Go to your school’s website to look up teachers’ phone extensions and e-mail addresses. Because teachers have different communication preferences, you may first want to try contacting them both by phone and e-mail. No Internet or e-mail access? Call your school and leave a detailed message with the best phone numbers and times to reach you.

How do I monitor my child’s grades?

- You and your student will receive report cards after each grading period, either in the mail or through their advisor at parent-teacher conferences.
- You can also call your child’s counselor for information. You can also come in and request that the counselor print a copy of your student’s grades.
- You can log on to Parent Portal with a password provided by your child’s school.

In addition:

- Talk with your student about his/her progress in class. Ask to see returned tests and quizzes. Remind your student frequently of your academic expectations and identify the consequences of not meeting them.

How do I get a copy of my student's transcript?

- **Need an unofficial transcript?**

Have your student ask the school counselor.

- **Need an official transcript?**

Your student or you can request one from the school counselor by filling out a request form. The process takes up to 2 working days, so plan accordingly. You/your student can indicate where they want the transcript mailed or whether they want to pick it up (it will be in a sealed envelope with the registrar's stamp across the seal). If you come to pick up a transcript, be prepared to show a photo ID to the counselor. Check with your counselor as to the number of official transcripts they may issue for free; after a certain number, there will be a small cost.

I'm concerned about my student's behavior or emotional well-being. Who can I talk to?

You and/or your student can contact his/her school counselor or social worker (if your child has an IEP indicating social work services) for social and emotional support and for outside resources.

Can my student change a teacher?

Your school encourages problem solving between student and teacher. Here are some suggestions on how to do this:

- E-mail, call or visit the teacher to communicate your perspective of the presenting problem. He/she will gain an understanding of your point of view, and you can gain insight into their side of the story.
- Identify the means of communication you, your child and the teacher will utilize to stay on the same page in relation to progress in class, deadlines, and/or expectations of one another.
- Identify the teacher's expectations of your child and communicate with them what resources you or your child needs to reach those expectations.
- Ask a counselor or administrator to facilitate a meeting between you and the teacher if you believe it is needed or if it is recommended by the teacher.

RESOURCES: COLLEGE, CAREERS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Websites

- Admissions.com: www.admissions.com

The insider's guide to getting in to colleges – a Monster.com company.

- Adventures in Education: www.adventuresineducation.com

Information on colleges, careers and funding for education.

- Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov/audience/students/htm

From middle school to college and beyond, students can use BLS data in their career exploration and to help with homework and course planning. Students can use BLS resources to enhance curriculum using real world examples such as the latest statistics on employment, prices and wages.

- Career Builder: www.careerbuilder.com

Information and advice on resume building, careers and job listings.

- Career Cruising: www.careercruising.com

An interactive career resource designed for people of all ages.

- Campus Tours.com: www.campustours.com
A source for virtual college tours, with interactive maps, photos, tuition and admission information, and more.
- Center for Collegiate Information: www.collegiate.net
A guide to college information organized by subject, with links to college sites.
- College Basics: www.collegebasics.com
College information resource including articles about getting started on the college essay and how to interview. This site helps students with the entire college admissions process.
- College Board: www.collegeboard.com
This college search engine finds colleges and universities just right for you. Quickly perform a college search by major, location, type of college, financial aid and more. Get info on the PSAT, SAT and other tests.
- College & Career Choices: www.education-world.com/counseling/career/index.shtml
This site provides resources to help students make important decisions regarding their future.
- College.gov: www.college.gov
This is a new website being built by the U.S. Department of Education to help students reach their college dreams.
- College Net: www.collegenet.com/elect/app/app
A site for finding colleges, scholarships and financial aid, touring campuses virtually, and completing applications online.
- Common Application: www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/default.aspx
The Common Application is a not-for-profit organization that serves students and member institutions by providing an admission application – online and in print – that students may submit to any of 300 member schools.
- EdRef: www.edref.com
Free online college directory providing college search information about thousands of U.S. colleges.
- Education Search Online: www.education-online-search.com
A free online college portal which helps you learn about careers and the colleges offering education and degrees for the fields that interest you.
- FAFSA: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid: www.fafsa.ed.gov
This is the government website where you go to apply for federal and state financial aid.
NOTE: There is *no fee* to submit this application. There are many other websites that claim you may submit the FAFSA from them for a fee, but you should ONLY use the website provided above.
- FAFSA Forecaster: www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/
FAFSA4caster will help you get an early start on the financial aid process by providing you with an early estimate of your eligibility for federal student aid. In addition, FAFSA4caster will increase your knowledge of the financial aid process and provide information about other sources of aid.
- FastWeb: www.fastweb.com
Free Scholarship search, recommended by over 15,500 high schools and 3,500 colleges. FastWeb is the nation's largest, most accurate and most frequently updated online scholarship database.
- Future Scan: www.futurescan.com
Online search engine for jobs and careers.

- It's My Future: www.myfuture.com
Information on opportunities beyond high school. Tips for locating excellent internships, surviving job interviews and writing resumes.
- Junior Achievement Center: www.ja.org
The JA Student Center is an online tool geared to help students become workforce ready, from exploring career possibilities to choosing a college and obtaining financial aid. Free online career assessment available.
- Mapping Your Future: www.mappingyourfuture.org/
Information on exploring careers, preparing for college, selecting a school, applying for admission, paying for college, and how to manage your money (student loans and more).
- My Majors.com: www.mymajors.com
Looking to find a college major? MyMajors.com provides useful advice on finding a college major (or minor) that a high school student with your interests and achievements might enjoy and excel in.
- NCAA Clearinghouse: www.ncaa.org
All students who wish to participate in athletics at the college level must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. The NCAA recommends registering with the Clearinghouse *at the beginning of your junior year in high school*, and updating the information regularly. Registration requires an official transcript be sent to the Clearinghouse.
- Occupational Handbook: www.occupationalhandbook.com
Information on careers, jobs, and forecasted occupational outlook.
- Saving for College: www.savingforcollege.com
Discusses how to fund children's education and recent updates in law affecting college funding.
- SRN Express.com:
http://www.edvisors.com/Detailed/College_and_University/Financial_Aid/Scholarships/SRN_Express_75443.html

Information on colleges, online education, financial aid and scholarships.

- Unigo.com: www.unigo.com
Articles and videos filled with "insider information" from students themselves, from over 250 colleges and universities. Sorted by majors, extracurricular offerings, demographics, gender, ethnicity, political leanings, et cetera. Also ranks professors, campus safety, political activity, sports programs, Greek life (fraternities and sororities) and more.
- U.S. News and World Report: <http://www.usnews.com/features/education/best-colleges/student-center.html>
Online Student Center where you can search over 100,000 pages of college- related information.

Publications

Here is a brief list of books you might want to check out. See your school counselor and school and public librarians for more suggestions:

- [College Guide](#)
- [Financial Aid to Education](#)
- [Foundation Grants to Individuals](#)
- [High School Survival](#)

- [How to Pay for College: The Financial Aid Information Guide](#)
- [In-Depth Profiles of America Colleges](#)
- [Index of Majors](#)
- [Occupational Handbook](#)
- [The Student Guide](#)
- [Surviving High School: Making the Most of the High School Years](#)
- [The Ultimate High School Survival Guide](#)
- [Up Your Score](#)