**College Planning Resources**

**Money for College:**

[www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/guide](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/guide)

 Provides details about the federal student aid programs (Grants, Scholarships, Work-study, and Loans), including maximum annual amounts and loan interest rates.

[www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov)

 FAFSA4caster is a federal aid estimator that you can use before officially applying for aid using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). After using FAFSA4caster, you should continue to research additional options for financial aid. FAFSA4caster provides you with other sources to check out.

The U. S. Department of Education is the main source of financial aid for college, but it is not the only source…

* [www.students.gov](http://www.students.gov)
	+ Funding available from other federal agencies
* [www.ed.gov/Programs/bastmp/SHEA.htm](http://www.ed.gov/Programs/bastmp/SHEA.htm)
	+ Money available from state governments
* Visit a college’s Web site or ask its financial aid office about money the school offers its students.
* Search for scholarships online through a search engine. Do not pay money for scholarship applications—it is probably a scam!

Free sources of information on finding scholarships:

* [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/scholarship)
	+ The U.S. Department of Education’s free online scholarship search
* Mr. Spencer is our MCHS guidance counselor who is our expert on college planning and scholarships; Check our guidance office bulletin board or stop by to check on local scholarships.
* Foundations, religious or community organizations, local businesses, or civic groups
* Organizations (including professional associations) related to your field of interest
* Ethnicity-based organizations
* Your employer or your parents’ employers
* Your library’s reference section

**Students - Every Year in High School:**

To Do:

* Update your Individual Learning Plan at [www.careercruising.com/ILP](http://www.careercruising.com/ILP).
	+ Your Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is an online education planning tool to help you plan your coursework and activities as you prepare for post-secondary education and develop your career. Some of the tasks your ILP allows you to do are below.
		- Take a career assessment (Career Matchmaker) and save the results
		- Develop an education plan based on your career interests
		- Record your career and life goals
		- Research careers and post-secondary schools
		- Create a personalized, professional-looking resume
* Work with your parents to update your information in *FAFSA4caster* at [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov), and continue to save for college.
* Take challenging classes in core academic subjects.
* Build your resume! … Stay involved in school- or community-based activities that interest you or let you explore career interests. Consider working or volunteering. Remember—its quality (not quantity) that counts. Take an active role and show commitment.
* Clean up your social networking sites such as Facebook. Colleges, scholarship sponsors, and prospective employers are checking!

To Explore:

* Check out *KnowHow2Go: The Four Steps to College*, which suggests some actions you can take as you start thinking about education beyond high school. The online version of the brochure is at [www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org).
* Get answers to common questions about college: Read the “college q&a question of the week” at [www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov).
* Visit [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for ACT registration, ACT Test Prep, College Planning, Financial Aid, and Career Planning, etc.
* Learn about managing your money in the “Financial Literacy” section of [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/preparing](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/preparing).

**Parents - Every Year in High School:**

To Do:

* Continue to talk to your child about college plans as if he or she will definitely go to college.
* Keep an eye on your child’s study habits and grades—stay involved.
* Encourage your child to take Advanced Placement or other challenging classes. Stay tuned to from the MCHS guidance office as to when the AP Forum nights take place.
* Watch videos for parents on the “News Parents Can Use” page at [www.ed.gov/parents](http://www.ed.gov/parents).
* Add to your child’s college savings account regularly.

To Explore:

* Address your concerns about whether your child can or should go to college in the “parents/family” section of [www.college.gov](http://www.college.gov).
* Check out [www.act.org/path/parent](http://www.act.org/path/parent) for ACT FAQ’s, College Planning, and other Career and College Readiness resources.
* Explore [www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/parent](http://www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov/parent) for information on academic preparation, homeschooling, financial literacy, saving, and borrowing for college.
* Learn from *Help Your Child in Test-Taking* at [www.ed.gov/parents](http://www.ed.gov/parents) (click on “Helping Your Child” and then “Archived publications”).

**Source:**

United States of America Department of Education. *College Preparation Checklist*. Printed: November 2009.