

Steps to College High School - 12th Grade

Parents, did you know that numerous studies identify you as the single most important factor in your child's decision to go on to college? Regardless of whether or not you attended college, your consistent and unwavering reinforcement of the importance of graduating from high school and earning a high quality degree (i.e. license, certificate, associate's or bachelor's) is the greatest factor in a child's decision-making process. You can help with college access and success in the following ways:

Parent To-Do List

To Do:

-  Maintain high expectations and standards, academically and personally.
-  Visits the post-secondary institutions on your child's narrowed-down list.
-  Remain open minded and supportive of your child's post-secondary choices.
-  Stay positive. The search for the right college can be daunting, but it's worth it. You want it to be the RIGHT fit, not just a fit.
-  Remind your child that if he or she is unhappy with his or her score on the ACT, then he or she may retake it.
-  Know the different types of admissions and which ones each school prefers.
-  Know and meet deadlines of merit-based scholarships and need-based financial assistance.
-  Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for free by **March 1** to know how much federal aid your child is eligible to receive. You will need your tax information from the previous year.

With Your Child Know:

-  **July/August** - Use the summer break to explore the colleges on his or her interest list.
-  **August** - Take the ACT or SAT if your child has not already done so or to improve his or her previous score.
-  **Late summer/Early Fall** - Begin to write college or scholarship essays.
-  **Fall** - Request letters of recommendation from adults who know your child as a student or through extracurricular and volunteer activities.
-  **Fall** - Apply to colleges. Michigan College Application Week is an annual event held in the Fall to encourage ALL seniors to submit college applications. Contact your counselor or principal to see if your student's high school is participating in College Application Week.
-  **Winter** - Have your child's first-semester transcripts sent to the colleges to which your child has applied.
-  **Winter** - Attend College Goal Sunday to complete your FAFSA with a financial aid officer. This event is typically held in the month of February.
-  **Spring** - Continue to look for scholarship money. Notify your child's college of choice of any money received.
-  **Spring** - Make sure your child's final transcript has been sent to the college(s) of their choice.
-  **Spring** - Decide which college your child will attend and notify it and the others to which your child applied of your decision. **May 1** is the Michigan recognized "Decision Day" for all seniors graduating high school.
-  **Spring** - Make a list of things to take to college.

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Explore Together:

- Financial aid and scholarship options at www.FastWeb.com or www.cffmc.org
- The “College Match Maker” process at www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search.
- A campus tour. Schedule a visit to a college or university that is nearby or that your child wishes to attend and use a campus visit checklist to help guide the visit.
- A virtual campus tour at www.campustours.com.

Student To-Do List

To Do:

- Continue to make school a priority.
- Get good grades and practice good study habits.
- Use fall, winter and spring breaks to explore college campuses. Request to sit in on a class or two to get a feel for college lecture and lab classes.
- Talk to your parents about your future goals.
- Take the ACT test again only if you would like to improve your previous score. Take AP exams, if applicable.
- Know the college application process and required documents for each of the schools you to which you plan to apply, such as essays, résumés, transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc.
- Believe in yourself. Success begins with the belief that you have the ability to achieve your goals.

To Explore:

- “College is Possible” at www.collegepossible.org.
- The “College Match Maker” process at www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search.
- A virtual campus tour at www.campustours.com.
- ACT preparation at www.ACTstudent.org.
- SAT preparation at www.sat.collegeboard.org/home
- Financial aid and scholarship options at www.FastWeb.com or www.cffmc.org.