



## **College Readiness Timeline: Tips for Making College and a Career Reality**

This resource provides tips and information about college & career readiness. Encourage your child to get started now; it's never too early to start thinking about their pathways!

*\* Indicates tips to follow for all four years of high school*

### **Tips for becoming college & career ready now**

- Develop & strengthen the Essential Skills.
- Acquire and practice good study habits to earn high grades.
- Set academic (and personal) goals by evaluating your personal strengths, interests, and skills.
- Engage in service projects, leadership opportunities, clubs, sports, and other extracurricular activities.
- Find a mentor – someone you look up to who is a positive role model.
- Research colleges using the Internet, books, CFES resources, and people who have attended college.
- Learn about standardized tests that are required for college entrance - like the SAT and ACT.
- Talk with your friends and family about college and careers
- Start saving money now to help pay for college.
- Take the right courses in high school that will place you on the college track.

### **Tips for Elementary School Aged Children**

- Teach your child organization and management skills – completing assignments on time, being proactive, volunteering, and participating in class.
- Introduce and talk to your child about jobs and careers. Have them shadow you and/or a family member at work for a few hours.
- Show your child the value of money and let them explore the basics of financial literacy.

### **Tips for grades 5 through 8**

- Develop good study habits – complete assignments on time, be proactive and participate in class.
- Ask your family members, school counselor, and family members lots of questions about colleges and careers.
- Shadow a family member or friend at work for a day.
- Explore possible career interests with the Brilliant Career Lab.
- Begin volunteering at your school, with your church or in the community to acquire experience and strengthen your Essential Skills.

### **Tips for grade 9**



- Focus on earning good grades. Grades now matter and are included in your high school GPA. Higher grades equate to more scholarship money.
- Meet with your school counselor to begin talking about and exploring colleges and careers.
- Tell your teachers you plan to go to college and talk to your family about planning for college.
- Make sure you have a Social Security number (and memorize it).
- Get involved in extracurricular activities, both school- and non-school-sponsored\*.
- Attend college fairs, visit college campuses, and take virtual (web-based) college tours\*.
- Research opportunities to job-shadow or volunteer in a career field of interest.

#### **Tips for grade 10**

- Ask your school counselor about postsecondary enrollment options and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- Take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) for practice. When you fill out your test sheet, check the box that releases your name to colleges so you can start receiving information from them.
- Discuss your PSAT score with your school counselor. What will you need to focus on? Which aspects of the test come naturally for you?
- Become familiar with college admissions requirements (SAT/ACT scores, GPA, etc.).
- Consider taking SAT II Subject Tests in the courses you took while the material is fresh in your mind.

#### **Tips for grade 11**

- Meet with your school counselor to review your transcript and talk about college options.
- If you didn't do so in tenth grade, sign up for and take the PSAT in the fall.
- Make a list of colleges that meet your most important criteria (size, location, areas of study, living options, and tuition cost).
- Request information and applications from colleges of interest by mail or the Internet.
- Visit college campuses to learn about what they offer and try to picture yourself going to school there.
- Prepare for the SAT or ACT.
- Have a discussion with your parents about the careers and colleges in which you are interested.
- Stay involved in extracurricular activities and try some new ones.
- Consider whom you will ask to write your recommendations.
- Apply for on-campus summer college programs for high school students.
- Practice completing college applications.



- Compose a rough draft of your college essay, and ask teachers and other trusted sources to review it.
- Learn about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Develop a financial aid application plan, including a list of the sources of aid, requirements for each application, and a timetable for meeting the filing deadlines.
- Select courses that will position you in the best light possible as you are applying to colleges in the fall of senior year. Consider Advanced Placement and dual enrollment classes.

### **Tips for grade 12**

- Enroll in AP/ advanced level courses and dual enrollment classes to earn college credit..
- Re-take the SAT/ACT if you believe you will do better.
- Continue to maximize new opportunities.
- Finalize your college list.
- Visit college campuses you are interested in applying to..
- Complete college applications (pay attention to deadlines!).
- Request your letters of recommendation, if required.
- Write your college entrance essay(s).
- Apply for scholarships.
- Meet with your school counselor to review the application checklist.
- File your FAFSA and other necessary financial aid documents.
- Weigh your college options once financial aid awards and college acceptance letters are received.
- Accept the college offer!