

post High School Planning Guide



As you progress through high school, you are constantly making decisions that affect your future. Should I continue in math or science after I've met the graduation requirement? What will I do after I graduate? Should I continue my education? How do I know what I can do well? These are not easy decisions in our ever-changing, complex society. You are a unique, changing human being who is seeking to understand yourself, express yourself, examine your role in society and decide what lifestyle will allow you to be the person you want to be. Since work will be a major activity in your life, career-planning decisions you make are vitally important to your self-expression.

At this time, it is important to get as much information as you can about yourself and careers. Information about yourself is essential since it will tell you what your abilities are, what you enjoy doing and what best meets your needs. Your interests can be analyzed from self-reported activities and from results of interest inventories. If you've taken the ACT, the score sheet indicates possible career interests according to the questions you answered on the registration. These can be found in the counselor's office.

Like you, careers are continuously changing. Many of tomorrow's careers will grow out of today's problems, creating jobs that do not exist today. Changing careers will be a fact of life. Making a career choice for a lifetime is unlikely. Continuous career planning is almost a certainty. There is not just one job that fits you, but instead, many careers and jobs for which you may be equally suited.

Many of the job openings expected to become available in the next few years will require fewer than four years of academic college training. A four-year college education is not the sure ticket to a good job that it once was. However, most future jobs will require education or training after high school.

Making the decision to go to college "because it is the thing to do" is no more realistic than deciding not to go because "college graduates are having a hard time getting jobs." We do know it will be important for you to continue your education. This could be a four-year college, junior college, vocational/technical courses, or the military. Consider how the education you pursue will add to the quality of your life.

To best anticipate your role in the future:

- Watch trends. Examine alternatives. Be flexible.

- When possible, volunteer in your areas of interest.
- Talk with people about their jobs: what they like/dislike about their position, their training, their recommendations for you, how they see the future of their jobs.
- Look for part-time or summer employment in your areas of interest.
- Keep your school grades, attendance and selection of courses as strong as possible so you are in the best position to seize opportunities. By registering for the strongest possible courses in your areas of interest, and doing well in those courses, you may save yourself time and money in preparing for your career.

TENTATIVE POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS & FINANCIAL AID CALENDAR

(This is only a guide. Not all post-secondary institutions have the same deadlines.

Pay close attention to deadlines for the schools you select!)

August/September/October

- Request applications and information from schools.
- Visit schools and/or plan fall visits to help narrow your choices.
- Look into overnight and weekend visitation programs.
- Mark your calendar for the College Planning Conference in Newton or El Dorado and for representative visits.
- Register for ACT and/or SAT
- Consider early decision/early action programs.
- Create a schedule of admissions and financial aid deadlines.
- Begin applications and essays.
- Request transcripts.
- Request letters of recommendation.
- Explore school and scholarship information online.

November/December/January

- Follow up on your letters of recommendation, especially if being mailed directly by the author.
- Complete applications and essays.
- Submit applications for early decision/early action programs.
- Complete, photocopy, and submit your applications.
- Obtain a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) after January 1.
- Attend the Financial Aid Night at KCHS.
- Obtain any other financial aid forms that may be required by your target schools.
- Complete, photocopy, and submit the FAFSA.

February/March/April

- Be sure that you have submitted all required financial aid forms.
- If selected for verification, send copies of your income tax forms to financial aid offices.
- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR).
- Receive admissions notifications. Compare financial aid awards relative to cost of attendance.
- Make your final enrollment decision and submit the enrollment deposit, if requested.
- Notify the schools you will not be attending.
- Sign and return financial aid forms.

May/June/July

- Send final transcript to your chosen college.
- Contact your financial aid office to check your status.
- Complete any remaining financial aid forms.
- Plan for college orientation, transportation, and housing.
- Finalize college transportation and housing.
- Good luck in college!



HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING OFFICE RESOURCES

The counselor is here to help you with your plans for the future and to assist you with other concerns, as well as many pamphlets, books, and files of material that will be helpful in making decisions. You are urged to make extensive use of these career materials. The counseling office has on hand, and will help you secure, bulletins and catalogs for vocational-technical institutes and colleges. Information in the counseling office includes:

- Your ACT scores.
- Catalogs, directories, and applications for many schools.
- Armed forces educational information.
- Test information
- Information on passing college entrance tests.
- Financial aid and loan information.

- Job information.
- CD-ROMs and videos about colleges and careers



AFTER GRADUATION: WHAT ARE SOME OPTIONS?

Full-Time Employment: Some students seek full-time jobs immediately after graduation.

Apprenticeships: This is an option to consider, perhaps after some training.

Armed Services: You receive a regular salary and room and board while obtaining specialized training. Today a higher percentage of enlistees than ever before have high school diplomas.

Private Vocational and Technical Schools: These are privately owned, self-supporting schools offering specialized training in specific skill areas. They vary widely in quality. Carefully check catalogs for costs, admission procedures, and placement records.

Two-Year Community Colleges

Four-Year Universities

Out-of-State Colleges

Remember: An application to a post-secondary school is not a promise to attend. It is asking for acceptance, which usually costs you an application fee. It keeps your options open while you are deciding on your future direction.

THE ARMED SERVICES

This information may change.

Advanced Education

Cooperative education programs provide college or technical courses during off-duty hours. The military pays 75-100 percent of the cost while you are on military duty. The new GI Bill provides money for education after discharge for persons who serve on active duty.

Army

The only military branch to have a two-year commitment is the Army. Employment, training, and advancement in over 300 fields are available. Male or female applicants, qualifying after aptitude testing and physical examination, select school options, bonus-pay options, and job-location options from computer read-outs updated daily. Job-contract periods are from 24 months to six years, depending upon job selection by applicant, bonus conditions, or applicant's choice. Seventy-five to 100 percent tuition-assisted university programs at the bachelor's or master's degree level are available at most job locations.

Navy

Navy male/female enlistments are normally for three, four, five, or six years. Seventy-plus specific school guarantees are offered, including areas such as aviation specialties, propulsion systems, advanced electronics, and nuclear power. The new technically oriented and trained Navy, combined with the service education benefits, offers the high school graduate an opportunity to pursue educational goals while working full time in a technical job.

Air Force

Enlistment options of four or six years are offered. Qualified applicants, before enlistment, may select guaranteed job training and placement in one of 140 different Air Force specialties with possible choice of assignment worldwide upon completion of technical training.

Marine Corps

Enlistment terms are for four, five, or six years. Ground and aviation enlistment options and subprograms that guarantee assignment to certain occupational fields are available to qualified applicants. The Marine Corps Enlistment Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) allows enlisted personnel to attend college full-time while receiving full-duty pay. After receiving a degree, a person is commissioned as an officer.

Coast Guard

Under the U.S. Department of Transportation rather than the Department of Defense, the Coast Guard is responsible for saving lives and property on federally controlled waterways of the United States. This includes inland rivers, the Great Lakes, and the coastal waters. Enlistment terms are four years. E4s and above are automatically federal law enforcement officers (except for hospital corpsmen).

Other Options:

Service Academies

These schools provide free college education plus expenses for a five-year military obligation, except for Navy and Coast Guard aviation programs which have a six-year military obligation. To apply, you must request nominations from your U.S. senators and representatives. Take the ACT or SAT in the spring of your junior year, if possible. There are few ACT or SAT testing opportunities available in the fall in time to meet the early December deadline. See your counselor as soon as possible if this opportunity interests you. Addresses of the five service academies are:

- U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs CO 80840
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy, New London CT 06320
- U.S. Military Academy, West Point NY 10996
- U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis MD 21402
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point NY 11024

ROTC Programs

These programs consist of Army, Navy, and Air Force units at public and private colleges and universities throughout the country. Marine Corps ROTC is affiliated with the Navy ROTC program. ROTC training consists of two to five hours of military instruction per week and some summer training periods. ROTC graduates fulfill their military obligation by service on active duty as regular or reserve officers for stipulated periods of time and maintain such reserve association as may be required to complete all military obligations.

Reserve Components

These are composed of National Guard (Army and Air), Army Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve.

Young men and women without prior military service may enlist in a reserve program if they qualify. All reserve programs require enlistees to serve some time on active duty for training. Normally, most of the reservists' period of active duty for training is spent in basic training and basic technical schooling or on-the-job training in a military occupational specialty. Upon completion of active duty for training, reservists return to the local unit. Reservists sign up and receive pay for a term of between three and eight years.

TECHNICAL COLLEGES

What are the advantages of a public technical college?

Many students are discovering that preparation for a good career is as close as a local public technical college. Tuition costs are below that of private trade and technical schools. The overall placement record in training-related jobs is excellent.

Be aware that not all technical colleges offer the same programs.

WHAT ABOUT FINANCIAL AID?

Your high school counselor is a valuable source of information regarding the costs, financial aid programs, and application deadlines at all kinds of post-secondary institutions.

Is financial aid available only to those who plan to attend college?

No! Financial aid is available to anyone who seeks additional education in an approved institution after high school. This includes public and private professional and vocational-technical schools, community colleges, state universities, and private colleges.

What form of financial aid do schools award?

- Grants and scholarships; no repayment needed.
- Job/work-study guarantees; money comes for these programs from both federal and state governments.
- Loans; need to be repaid.

A school's financial aid package can be a combination of all three types of aid, depending on the demonstrated need of the student.

What is the most important step in applying for financial aid?

You should fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is an application for federal aid. Completing this form will yield a Student Aid Report (SAR) with Expected Family Contribution (EFC) which schools use in determining financial awards.

How soon do I need to complete the FAFSA?

You may submit the FAFSA after January 1. The FAFSA requires certain information from completed tax returns. March 1 is the priority deadline.

Where may I obtain a copy of the FAFSA?

Your school counseling office has forms. These are usually available towards the end of November.

Is it worth the time to fill out the forms for financial aid, especially since we doubt we will receive anything?

You will not receive financial aid unless you apply for it. The possible return for the time you take to complete applications can mean hundreds, even thousands of dollars to you. Even if grant money is not awarded, the FAFSA filing is necessary to qualify for federal or state work-study. In the work-study program a student is given a job, frequently on campus, at a set wage and a set number of hours per week in order to have a guaranteed income while attending school. At some schools it may be difficult to find a part-time job while attending classes unless a student is qualified for work study.

Even if I get financial aid, how can I ever afford the high tuition at a private college?

Financial need is defined as the difference between the cost of attending a specific institution and the student and family's ability to pay for those costs. If you are interested in attending a private institution with high tuition costs, your need will be greater than if you attend a community college or state university. If you qualify for financial aid, your financial award would be greater at the higher cost institution.

A few more notes:

Be sure to ask the schools to which you apply for their school scholarship information.

Federal grants are dependent on proof of draft registration for men.

Check with employers, unions, church-affiliated colleges, and fraternal organizations for scholarship opportunities.

Merit-based school scholarships: Certain schools offer financial aid for students in the top 5, 10, or 15 percent of their high school class. Please check the individual schools in which you are interested. Special talents may qualify a student for aid. Examples would be music, drama, and sports.

TESTING

PRELIMINARY/PRACTICE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

It is beneficial, but not required, that you gain practice in college entrance testing. Both testing services--ACT and SAT--offer such preliminary or practice testing.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS: ACT, SAT

Four-year colleges require an entrance exam. Most students need to take only one such test. Two tests--ACT and SAT--are used by colleges for admission. Consult the catalog of the college(s) to which you intend to apply to determine if they have a preference for college entrance exam. ACT is the test normally used in the Midwest.

ACT (American College Test)

The ACT is recommended for juniors during their junior year. If you miss the June testing or are interested in re-testing, you may register for the ACT early in your senior year. The ACT is the test requested by most colleges in the Midwest. It is also accepted by almost all colleges nationally.

Description: Three hours of testing in science reasoning, reading, math, and English. ACT is also offering an optional writing section. The ACT is given at various locations in the area. If your score is below that required for the college to which you intend to apply, you may retake the test.

Registration: Materials are available in your school's counseling office and include a sample test and Preparing for the ACT. Students should mail their registration to ACT. ACT is encouraging registration online at www.actstudent.org.

SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)

The SAT is recommended for juniors at the end of their junior year. It can also be taken in the senior year. Some highly selective colleges prefer their applicants provide SAT scores.

SAT I is a three-hour primarily multiple-choice test—verbal, math, & writing. If your score is below that required for the college to which you apply, you may retest.

Registration: Materials are available in your school's counseling office and include sample test items in a preparation booklet called Taking the SAT. Students should mail their registration to SAT.

SAT II The SAT II is often required for strongly academic students applying to highly competitive colleges.

Description: Tests are available in 20 areas. Each is a one-hour multiple-choice test.

Dates: See schedule for SAT. SAT II cannot be taken on the same date as the SAT.

Registration: Students use the same materials used to register for the SAT.

Registrations are mailed by the student to SAT.

COLLEGE CATALOG VOCABULARY

Accreditation -- approval given to an institution/program meeting minimum standards by its regional accrediting organization. It is vital in certain areas (e.g., nursing, law) that a student attend an accredited program since being able to take examinations for certification may have as a prerequisite graduation from an accredited school.

Baccalaureate degree -- an undergraduate degree, such as the Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS), which usually takes four years or more to complete.

Coeducational (Coed) -- refers to an institution offering education to students of both sexes, as opposed to colleges specifically all male or all female.

College -- a school for higher learning; usually an academic degree in one or two fields is earned at the end of a course of study.

Common or core curriculum -- a basic pattern of courses required of freshmen and sophomores regardless of the school from which they hope to graduate.

Community college -- also called junior college. These schools are operated by public funds to meet the needs of the community. They offer lower-division (freshman/sophomore) classes. They offer two programs. One group of students takes classes to fulfill the freshman-sophomore requirements at various four-year colleges, then transfers these credits and completes a four-year degree. Another group of students earns a two-year degree -- AA (Associated Arts) or AS (Associate Science) in a specific area. (See "joint admissions.")

Competitive admission -- a type of selective admission in which not all qualified applicants are admitted because of limitations on the number which can be accommodated.

Comprehensive -- 1) A fee that includes all charges for tuition, room, board and other annual fees. 2) Examination broadly covering college studies. Example: senior comprehensives in major field.

Conditional admission -- admission granted to students who do not fully meet all admission requirements. The deficiency may be related to the lack of specific courses in a student's background; level of previous scholastic achievement; or a required certificate, diploma, or degree. The student may be given regular status after a term or year of satisfactory performance or after the specific admission condition has been removed.

Credit hour -- the amount of credit given for a course meeting one hour a week for a semester or a quarter. A three-hour course would meet three times a week, for example.

Early admissions -- a procedure which enables a student to apply to one college early; if accepted by that school, the student is committed to attend. It is usually used with rolling admissions.

Early decision -- admission policy used by some highly selective schools which commits them and you to admission by an early date. Early decision application deadlines can be as early as November.

Endowment -- funds which a college has received as gifts, which are invested and from which income to run the college is obtained. Frequently scholarships are funded from endowed money.

Entrance unit -- refers to a high school course lasting one year. Example: English -- four units means English taken in high school for four years.

FAFSA -- Free Application for Federal Student Aid - the form used to analyze needs for financial assistance. It must be filled out by a student and/or parents. It is an application for federal aid. Colleges use the FAFSA results to help formulate their aid packets, including work-study guarantees for enrolled students.

Fees -- charged by schools for extras such as student newspaper, health service, student government and student recreation.

4-4-1 -- college year divided into two semesters with one-month session between. Four courses are carried each semester. One course is carried in the interim. Many schools provide work experiences, study abroad, and concentrated study in one area during this time. This is often a feature of private college programs.

Graduate school -- college study after earning a bachelor's degree. It can lead to a master's, specialist, or doctorate degree.

Grant -- financial award based on financial need but without the prestige of a scholarship.

Humanities -- study of literature, philosophy, and the arts.

Internship -- program offered by many colleges where students have actual work experience--paid or volunteer--in their area of study. This program has become increasingly vital to college students to give them hands-on experience in their career field and to make them more employable after graduation.

Liberal arts -- education for general living including sciences, social sciences, languages, philosophy, and literature. It is not technical or professional training in itself.

Major -- subject in which a student does most of his or her work the last two years of college.

Master's degree -- earned after a bachelor's degree; usually takes one to two more years to complete. Work is done in graduate school.

Rolling admission -- a procedure by which decisions are made and applicants notified as soon as their applications are ready for action. Under this procedure, admission decisions are made

continuously throughout the year.

ROTC -- stands for Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

Scholarship -- financial award given to students for academic or other talents. Scholarships may or may not require financial need.

Semester plan -- college year divided into two parts as is our high school year.

Special admissions -- admissions granted on an individual basis, on consideration of the candidate's age, personal recommendations, examination results, or other factors, to those who do not meet the general admission requirements.

3-2 plan -- type of plan where student works for three years at one college and two years at a second college. Example: three years at a liberal arts college and two years at an engineering college.

Transcript -- is a record of courses, grades, and credits received in high school which colleges will request with the application for admission.

Transfer -- refers to a student who comes to a college after previous study in another college. In general, grades lower than a C do not transfer.

Tuition -- the amount charged for instruction.

HOW DO I DECIDE WHICH SCHOOLS TO CONSIDER?

Research

If you have made the decision to go on for further education after high school graduation, your next step is to investigate schools to identify the one(s) which will best meet your needs. You can begin your search by using the internet or consulting any of a number of books and pamphlets in the counseling office. Mrs. Deterding will be happy to assist you. Establishing a list of criteria for judging schools is a personal matter and sources which attempt to rate them for you are often subjective. It is best to make a list of what you want in a school and check out each one against your list.

Prioritize

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I prefer a large or small school, public or private, in-state or out-of-state, urban or rural, two-year or four-year, co-ed or non-co-ed, selective admissions or open admissions?
- If there is a specific major that I want, is it offered at the school(s) I am considering?
- If I might transfer after a year or two, will the credits all transfer to other schools?
- Do the schools I am considering have the activities in which I plan to participate?

- Can I afford the school?
- Can I visualize myself in that campus atmosphere or if I commute, will it be realistic?

Visit

The best way to determine if you will belong at a school is to make a campus visit. All schools welcome visits by prospective students and many provide complimentary food and lodging for a weekend visit.

Investigate Financing

You and your parents must jointly decide if a school is affordable. Figuring this out is a continuing process. In most cases it is best to go ahead with applications to schools while continuing to figure financial possibilities.

- Start early in the fall to look at the constant influx of scholarships in the counseling office to see if any are appropriate for you.
- Check the Scholarship Notebook in Mrs. Deterding's office regularly.
- Consider a part-time job and save money.
- You and your parents fill out the appropriate financial aid form(s) as soon as possible after January 1.
- Ask the schools to which you are applying for financial aid information/applications.

Apply

REMEMBER, AN APPLICATION TO A SCHOOL IS NOT A PROMISE TO ATTEND. IT IS A REQUEST FOR ACCEPTANCE ONLY.

To make an official application for admission to most schools, your completed application form plus a check for the appropriate fee (if any), made out to the school to which you are applying, must be sent to the school to which you are applying. Many schools have online applications.

An official, sealed copy of your high school transcript will be sent after you complete a Transcript Request form, which can be obtained from Mrs. Deterding. If mid-year and final transcripts are required, inform the counselor.

- Some schools may request evaluations or recommendations to accompany your application. Counselors, teachers, employers, and members of the clergy are possible sources of recommendations. It is strongly recommended that you do not ask relatives for recommendations.
- You can help these people by providing a list of your activities and interests both in school and out (including employment details) and allowing them time to write a carefully worded recommendation.

- Make clear, in writing, the purpose, due date, and person or place to which the application should be directed. Provide envelopes which can be sealed if the recommendations are to be returned to you.
- If you are applying to a number of schools, you may request from the person writing the recommendation permission to have the letter copied.
- Anticipate deadlines.
- You should allow school counseling office personnel (counselor, secretaries) at least one week processing time for applications for admission and financial aid forms.

Decide

Your acceptances are in from schools. Financial aid packages have been put together. Scholarships have been awarded. You can now compare your final, out-of-pocket costs for each school.

To keep a place in a college class, you usually are required to make a payment; either a housing or a tuition deposit due to the college by a certain date. If you need more time to make a decision, communicate with the college. If you still have questions on financing, direct your request to the financial aid office at the school you are considering.

CHECKLIST FOR VISITING A SCHOOL

Once you have narrowed your school choices to those offering the program you want and which are within your budget, you should visit each one before making your final choice. Because of distance and expense, this is not always possible, but wherever and whenever it is possible, visitation is a must! The following suggestions may be helpful in planning visits to the various schools of your choice.

- Remember to relax and be yourself.
- It is always better to visit when school is in session.
- Every school campus has a unique personality. Try to discover it and determine whether or not you fit in.

When meeting with the admissions officers, here are a number of suggested questions that might be appropriate.

- What are the factors contributing to the total expense?
- How much and what type of financial aid is available and what are the criteria for eligibility?
- What type of housing is available and what are the regulations?
- What are the classrooms and teaching equipment like?
- How qualified is the library in terms of total volumes, number of periodicals, etc.?

- What school and intramural sports are offered, and what are the facilities?
- What facilities and personnel are available for guidance?
- What services are available for students of your religious faith?
- What is the nature of the student body in terms of male-female ratio, geographical origin of students, socio-economic level, and percent going on to graduate study?
- What are the extracurricular activities?
- How many full professors teach freshmen? What is the faculty-student ratio, and who is included in the faculty?
- Does the school offer vocational guidance and placement service?
- What special academic programs, if any, are available?
- What career fields do the graduates enter and what is the average percentage going into these fields?

Your interview with admissions officers is a two-sided affair and they may ask the following questions:

- What is your approximate grade-point average and rank in class?
- What are your easiest and most difficult subjects, and what are your grades in them?
- What are your extracurricular achievements and job experiences?
- How do you intend to finance your school experience?
- What are your reasons for wanting to attend this school?

This should be one of the most exciting times in your life, but it is bound to be one of the most stressful as well. Plan ahead. Schedule an appointment with me if you need help. Use the internet. . This is an excellent resource. If you plan to go to college, it's okay not to know exactly what to major in. The majority of college students change their major at least once. Have confidence in yourself! Set goals. Most importantly, have fun. You are about to begin an incredible journey.

Mrs. Deterding