



# College and Career Junior Toolkit For Students and Parents

Dear Junior Students, Parents, and Guardians,

There are many paths that students can take to earn the higher education degree or technical certification needed for the career field he or she chooses. Whether you are considering a university, community, or technical college, now is the perfect time to begin the conversation about future goals, explore options, and plan next steps.

Use the **Top 10 Spring & Summer Action Steps** in this toolkit to stay on track to graduate and make a smooth transition to college. Don't wait until the last minute – use these resources to plan for your future now!

In this toolkit you'll find:

- Make Sure You Are On Track**
- Junior Checklist**
- Know Your Options**
- Paying for College**
- Top 10 Spring & Summer Action Steps**
- Maximize Your Summer**

Your high school's Career Counselor can answer additional questions, and many schools also have very knowledgeable college support staff. Don't hesitate to seek help. Speaking up for yourself, or "self-advocacy" is a skill that is highly valued by employers and colleges. Here is their contact information:



<b>FOSS</b> , Juanita Cantrell-Jefferys .....	571-7358	jjeffre@tacoma.k12.wa.us
<b>LINCOLN</b> , Jamila Jones .....	571-6659	jjones5@tacoma.k12.wa.us
<b>MOUNT TAHOMA</b> , Sativah Jones .....	571-3823	sjones@tacoma.k12.wa.us
<b>OAKLAND</b> , Glen Burden .....	571-5106	gburden@tacoma.k12.wa.us
<b>RE-ENGAGEMENT CENTER</b> .....	571-3270	
<b>SOTA</b> , Linda Dieckhoff .....	571-7900	ldieckh@tacoma.k12.wa.us
<b>SAMI</b> , Liz Minks .....	571-2300	lminks@tacoma.k12.wa.us
<b>STADIUM</b> , Natalie Hart .....	571-3153	nhart@tacoma.k12.wa.us
<b>WILSON</b> , Nancy Sprick.....	571-6021	nsprick@tacoma.k12.wa.us

Look for the **Senior Toolkit** coming in September with next steps for planning your future. You may also go to the [www.Plan4College.ME](http://www.Plan4College.ME) website for more events and resources for college and career support, or contact Wendy Holcomb, Plan4College Outreach Coordinator at (253) 272-1600 or wholcomb@graduatetacoma.org. Have fun and good luck!

# Make Sure You Are On Track

## Step 1: Check your high school transcripts.

Make sure you have the credits needed to graduate and the courses required for college admission.

**Make sure your transcript has these required courses, along with 6.5 electives, for a total of 23 credits as required for all 2017 TPS High School Graduates:**

English	4 credits
Fine Arts	1 credit (such as Choir, Band, Theater, Photo, or Drawing)
Foreign Language	2 credits* in same language; Not a TPS graduation requirement, but required for 4-yr colleges & universities
Social Sciences	3 credits
Math	3 credits* (including 1 Algebra and 1 Geometry); Many 4-yr colleges require 4 credits
Science	2 credits (including 1 lab science); Many 4-yr colleges require 3-4 credits
Health & PE	2 credits for TPS graduation (.5 Health + 1.5 PE)
Occupational Ed	1 credit for TPS graduation (.5 Digital Communications + .5 Career & Tech Ed)

*\*For more selective 4-year colleges, the requirements may be greater. These colleges want to see that you have challenged yourself with college preparatory classes. Make sure you check the admission requirements for schools you are considering and plan your summer and senior year accordingly.*

## Step 2: Get back on track, if you are missing anything.

It's not too late. Meet with your school counselor to make a plan to fill any gaps in your transcript this summer, including retrieving or adding credits, retaking classes, and improving your GPA (grade point average).

## Step 3: Pave your pathway to success.

Use the enclosed "Junior Checklist" to find right fit schools and prepare a competitive application package.

## Step 4: Maximize your summer!

Do something that makes you stand out from the crowd. See "Maximize Your Summer" page in this toolkit for more information.



# Junior Checklist for College Planning

Planning for college and career can be exciting and also stressful and overwhelming. Students are looking forward to their independence, but still need support and encouragement. Parents can help guide their students to stay focused, organized, and motivated. You are not alone as you navigate this process. Use this checklist, get connected to the community mentors and resources listed in this toolkit, and go to [Plan4College.ME](http://Plan4College.ME) for more help.

Explore     Plan     Promote Yourself     Visit

## EXPLORE

There is no one perfect college, so consider a range of schools that fit your student's needs. It's easy to research schools online. Some good websites to start learning about college options are:

- [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org)
- [www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com)
- [www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org)
- [www.imfirst.org](http://www.imfirst.org)

Your counseling office and public library will also have copies of resources such as the Fiske Guide to Colleges, Colleges that Change Lives, and others.

- Make a list of 5-7 programs or colleges** that meet your interests and career goals. Include "reach," "solid," and "safety" schools on your list.

**REACH** – *someplace you would like to go, but may not match the recommended grades and test scores.*

**SOLID** – *a good match with your grades and test scores.*

**SAFETY** – *you are most likely to be accepted based upon your grades and test scores.*

- Keep track of application deadlines**, requirements, tests, and procedures. Use a calendar, phone, or set up an account at a college search website such as [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) to track your progress.
- Look and sign up for summer opportunities**, including jobs, internships, and summer study programs on college campuses. See the "Maximize Your Summer" page.
- Investigate scholarship and financial aid options** for funding your college and career plans. Check out [www.thewashboard.org](http://www.thewashboard.org), [www.collegesuccessfoundation.org](http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org) and your high school scholarship websites. See the "Paying for College" page for ideas.

## PLAN

Use these planning steps this spring and summer to make sure that you are prepared for your senior year and have many options open to you.

- Meet with your counselor and review your plans** for after graduation, grades, transcript, PSAT scores (Pre-Scholastic Aptitude Test), and courses planned for senior year to make sure that you are on track for graduation and college applications.
- Include challenging classes in your senior schedule**—Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Tech Prep, "College in the Classroom", or Running Start classes.
- Finish the junior year strong** with good grades! Your junior grades are the first thing colleges look at and will contribute to your overall GPA and a competitive application package.
- Prepare for the SAT** (Scholastic Aptitude Test). All seniors will take the SAT during school in October. SAT prep materials, study tips, and practice tests can be found online at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org), [www.kahacademy.org](http://www.kahacademy.org), and at your library or career center.
- Consider taking the SAT more than once** to improve your scores, or taking the ACT (American College Test – some students do better on this test). Find out if your schools of interest require any SAT subject tests. Go to: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) and [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for test prep, registration, and deadlines. Fee waivers are available, check with your counselor.
- Talk to your parents, guardians, or mentors** about your future plans and financial options. Sharing this conversation with someone who can support you is an important step on your pathway to college and career.

## PROMOTE YOURSELF

Start developing a competitive application package that proves you are a strong candidate for admission or scholarships. Put your best foot forward with a well-written, clear, and complete application.

- Create a resume or “brag sheet,”** including awards, extracurricular activities, leadership, work, and volunteer experiences. See examples at [Plan4College.ME](http://Plan4College.ME)
- Draft a personal statement** for college and scholarship applications. Use this essay to show colleges who you are beyond grades and test scores. Highlight your unique talents, passions, and any obstacles you have overcome. This essay also demonstrates your best writing skills, so take time to draft and edit. See [Plan4College.ME](http://Plan4College.ME) for more help.
- Decide who you will ask to write a letter of recommendation for you.** Many schools require recommendations from 1-2 teacher(s) and some accept community references as well. Choose someone who knows you well as a student and provide them with a resume or “brag sheet.” Ask early, at least a month prior to deadlines, and be sure to thank them.
- Artists, develop a portfolio of your work,** highlighting your talents. Include items such as audition tapes, websites, writing samples, artwork, and awards.
- Athletes, complete the NCAA Clearinghouse registration form online by June 1,** ([www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)), if you are planning on participating in Division I or II athletics. This is required before any coaches can talk to you. If NAIA schools are on your list, register for initial eligibility at [www.PlayNAIA.org](http://www.PlayNAIA.org).

## Important Tip for Parents

*Tacoma Public Schools offers **free college tours for parents** this spring, March 29th-April 22nd, to local two and four-year colleges. Come join other parents and learn how to help your child meet their college and career goals. Free transportation is provided from the TPS Central Administration Building, 601 S. 8th St., Tacoma, 98401. Contact the TPS Community Partnership Office for more details about the schedule and registration, 253-571-7980, or [www.tacomaschools.org/collegetours](http://www.tacomaschools.org/collegetours).*

## VISIT

See what college life is really like! Visit! Go on a tour, attend a class, or stay overnight. There are many two-year, four-year, public and private options in Tacoma and along I-5. Many colleges offer open house events for parents and students.

- Sign up online for college visits this spring and summer break.** Go to the “admissions” link on the websites for the colleges on your list and register for a tour. Let them know you are coming so you can make the most of your time.
- Attend a college or career fair in the Puget Sound area,** including these two on **Saturday, April 23rd:**

- **College Bound Saturday, 8:30-12:30** at Mt. Tahoma HS, for all College Bound Scholars and their parents.
- **PNACAC Spring College Fair, 12:00-3:00** at Seattle University. ([www.pnacac.org/college-fairs](http://www.pnacac.org/college-fairs))

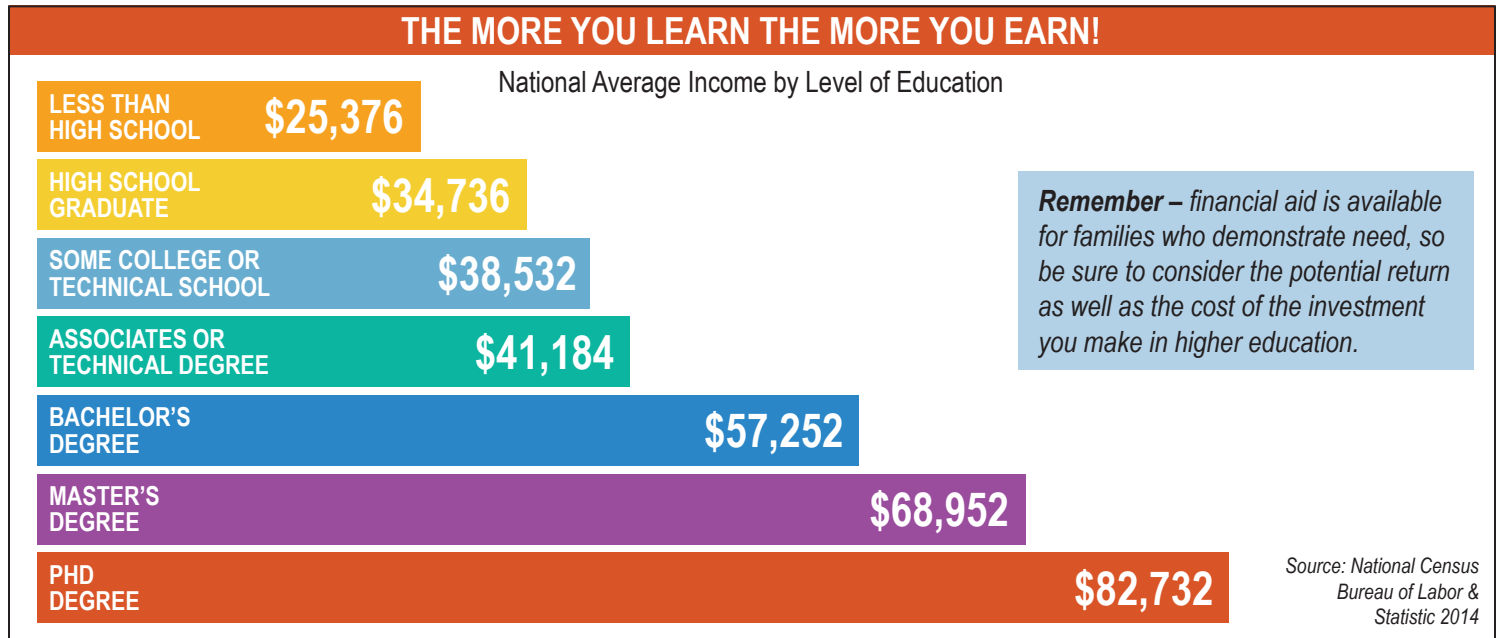
Find out more details about these free events and more opportunities at your career center or at [Plan4College.ME](http://Plan4College.ME).

- Check out virtual online tours for the schools on your list,** the next best way to visit if you cannot go yourself.
- Meet college admissions representatives whenever possible.** Better yet, set up an interview. This is the best way for them to get to know you and for you to ask questions. Making this connection can help them advocate for you and your application.



# Know Your Options

While future income is just one of the factors when choosing a career, it's important to be aware that more and more of the jobs that pay well across the nation require a college degree or a technical certificate.



There are many pathways towards a degree and a career, the key is to find programs that are a good **fit** with your interests, talents, finances, and goals. Here are the basics:

## Public, Private, and For-Profit Colleges

**Public colleges** are funded by local and state governments and usually offer lower tuition rates than private colleges, especially for students who are residents of the state where a college is located.

**Private colleges** rely mainly on tuition, fees and private sources of funding. Private donations can sometimes provide generous Financial Aid for students, so don't let the published expense scare you off until you explore options.

**For-Profit Colleges** are for-profit businesses that offer a variety of degree programs which typically prepare students for a specific career. They tend to have higher costs, which could mean graduating with more debt. Credits earned may not transfer to other colleges, so be sure to check with the admission office at each college.

## Four-Year Colleges

Four-year colleges offer four years of study that lead to a bachelor's degree. Students choose a major in a range of areas, such as art, business, psychology, or zoology.

### Universities

Universities often are larger and offer more majors and degree options—bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees—than colleges. Most universities contain several smaller colleges, such as colleges of liberal arts, engineering or health sciences. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

### Liberal Arts Colleges

These colleges offer a broad base of courses in the liberal arts, which include areas such as literature, history, languages, mathematics and life sciences. Most are private and offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study. Many private liberal arts colleges use one online **Common Application** ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)) for admission.

## Two-year Colleges

Two-year colleges offer programs that last from three months to two years that lead to a certificate or an associate degree. Students who earn an associate degree can transfer to a four-year university as junior and finish in two years, a great way to cut costs or improve grades, opening up more options. In fact, 40% of four-year graduates in Washington started at a community college.

### Community Colleges

Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees that prepare you to transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree. They also offer other associate degrees and certificates, through programs that focus on preparing you for a certain career. Community colleges are often an affordable option, close to home.

### Vocational-Technical Colleges

Vocational-technical and career colleges offer specialized training in a particular industry or career. Possible programs of study include the culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene and medical-records technology. These colleges usually offer certificates or associate degrees.

To learn more about the variety of programs offered at Tacoma Community College, Pierce College, Bates Technical College, Clover Park Technical College and Washington's other 30 community and technical colleges go to: [www.checkoutacollege.com](http://www.checkoutacollege.com)

## Other Important Post-High School Options to Explore

### Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships include a mix of technical education and on-the-job training. Students earn while they learn through apprenticeships in trades and technology. These two to four year programs, which are competitive and require solid math abilities, provide the pathway to well-paid jobs. Apprenticeship programs offer certifications, licenses and/or college degrees.

To learn more about these programs offered by employers (such as Boeing), by trade unions (such as electricians and roofers) and independent programs, go to [www.exploreapprenticeship.wa.gov](http://www.exploreapprenticeship.wa.gov)

### Military

Military experience teaches life skills and often provides technical education. Service can also provide scholarships and pay can help towards funding college education. To learn more about this option, go to [www.todaysmilitary.com](http://www.todaysmilitary.com)

## Important Tips for Parents

One of the most important things you can do is to help your teen stay organized in the application process. You can get help at your high school career center, information sessions, college fairs and application workshops, including the **Tacoma College Depot**, a series of six free summer workshops about the steps to take for the college search, application, scholarship, and Financial Aid process, at the Main Tacoma Public Library, 1102 Tacoma Ave. S, Tacoma, 98402. Go to [Plan4College.ME](http://Plan4College.ME) for more information.

Financial Aid is available, including the **College Bound Scholarship**. Be sure to file the **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) in October 2016**. Attend a Financial Aid information session at your high school or local community or technical college for more information. Application fee waivers are also available for the application process. See more in the "Paying for College" section in this toolkit.





# Paying for College

**Financial Aid makes paying for college possible!**

The cost of attending college is different for every school and every student. If you apply to several schools, you can compare the types of Financial Aid you are offered. To properly plan as a junior, it is important that you learn about the first steps and many different ways to pay for college listed below. Take note of important deadlines that will be coming up in your senior year.



## Deadlines

To be considered for the most financial aid possible, you have to submit the **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or **WASFA** (Washington Application For State Financial Aid) by the earliest priority date of the colleges to which you'll be applying to in your senior year— every college's priority date is different, so be sure to check each one. The FAFSA and WASFA now open **October 1** of every year and a new application must be submitted each year.

1

### Talk about paying for college

Take time as a family to discuss your education budget, funding resources and options so everyone is on the same page. Remember, Financial Aid is available for families who demonstrate need, so be sure to consider the potential return as well as the cost of the investment you make in higher education.

2

### Learn about Financial Aid at each of the schools on your list:

- Go to individual school websites and see estimated costs for tuition and housing. Many school websites have **Net Price Calculators** which will help provide an estimate of costs and eligibility for Financial Aid.
- Contact the Financial Aid or Admission Office at each school for help with at each school for help with applications and explanations of aid available.

3

### You will need to complete the FAFSA or WASFA beginning October 1, 2016:

- Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)
- The FAFSA will ask for information about your family's finances and then calculate how much you and your family are expected to pay for your college expenses. The FAFSA is required at most colleges in order to qualify for **GRANTS, LOANS, WORK STUDY** and most **SCHOLARSHIPS**. Make sure to attend a FAFSA Workshop so you know the required documents to gather in order to properly complete your FAFSA. You can check [Plan4College.ME](http://Plan4College.ME) for Financial Aid information sessions in Tacoma. Use FAFSA4caster – <https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm> to see what your Estimated Family Contribution might look like.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, use the Washington Application For State Financial Aid (WASFA), [www.readyssetgrad.org/wasfa](http://www.readyssetgrad.org/wasfa)
  - Some private, 4-year colleges may also require the **College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS)**, which includes a fee and more detailed information than the FAFSA. See individual school websites or <http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>

#### GRANTS

Money that you do not have to pay back, awarded based on family need.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS

Funds from colleges or other sources, often recognizing academics, sports, service, arts or other strengths. Money does not have to be repaid.

#### WORK STUDY

Special jobs where your wages can help pay for school and personal costs.

#### LOANS

Money you can borrow and repay over time, with interest added. Some loans have low interest, but families should think seriously about how they will repay before accepting a large loan.

## More Options to Help Pay for College

### College Bound Scholarship

If you signed up for the College Bound Scholarship in 7th or 8th grade you will still have to complete a FAFSA in your senior year, as well as additional Financial Aid forms at the college you choose. If you are unsure if you signed up for the College Bound Scholarship you can contact your counselor to learn more.

### Tacoma Scholarships

Tacoma has some excellent scholarships for TPS students. Be sure to investigate the following scholarships, making note of their application due dates that come up early in the fall of the senior year.

- **Act Six** – [www.ActSix.org](http://www.ActSix.org), due October 2016. A four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarship to five participating colleges.
- **College Success Foundation** – [www.collegesuccessfoundation.org](http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org). The CSF website has a number of scholarships specifically for WA state students, as well as helpful college resources for parents and students.
- **Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS)** – [www.waopportunitiescholarship.org](http://www.waopportunitiescholarship.org). A four-year, renewable scholarship for Washington seniors interested in pursuing a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) major at a WA state college or university.
- **Pacific Lutheran University, 253 PLU Bound Scholarship** – [www.plu.edu/253](http://www.plu.edu/253). A full-tuition scholarship to PLU for students who are College Bound Scholarship eligible, attend a high school in the 253 area code, and have a 3.7 or higher weighted GPA.
- **University of Puget Sound** – [www.pugetsound.edu](http://www.pugetsound.edu), due early November-January. Puget Sound has a commitment to meet the full financial need of any TPS student who gains admission.
- Also see [www.thewashboard.org](http://www.thewashboard.org) and your school's website for more scholarships for Washington state students.

### Earn College Credit While in High School

Many Tacoma High Schools now offer Accelerated Classes which allow for college credit to be earned while still in high school, including:

- Advanced Placement (AP)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)
- College in the High School
- Running Start at Community Colleges
- Career & Technical Education (CTE)
- Industry Recognized Certification (IRC)
- World Language Proficiency Test (Credit possible in 60 different languages)

Please see your school counselor for more information.

### Important Tips for Parents

**Parents and students, start researching and discussing your Financial Aid and scholarship options now. The more you plan ahead, the more funding options you will have to achieve your future college and career goals. You are not alone in this process. Visit your career center and [Plan4College.ME](http://Plan4College.ME) for more resources and support.**





# TOP 10 Spring & Summer Action Steps For College Planning

SPRING OF JUNIOR YEAR		DEADLINE
<b>1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Make sure you have all credits for graduation</b> Meet with your counselor if you need to make some up	<b>Now</b>
<b>2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Choose college-ready courses for next year</b> Schedule courses that meet college requirements	<b>Now</b>
<b>3</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Make a summer plan – work, study, volunteer</b> Build experience and help your application stand out	<b>All Spring</b>
<b>4</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Research and visit colleges</b> Big university, small college, trade tech, close to home, far away	<b>Spring &amp; Summer</b>
<b>5</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Plan ahead for paying for college</b> Talk with family and begin research into college costs	<b>All Spring</b>
SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR		DEADLINE
<b>6</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Attend the Tacoma College Depot</b> See <a href="http://Plan4College.ME">Plan4College.ME</a> for details about these free workshops	<b>During Summer</b>
<b>7</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Draft your personal statement</b> See your counselor for resources to get help on this	<b>By End of Summer</b>
<b>8</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Put together resume or “brag sheet”</b> List activities, athletics, arts, awards, jobs, etc.	<b>By End of Summer</b>
<b>9</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Practice testing for SAT or ACT</b> Scores improve when you study and practice	<b>During Summer</b>
<b>10</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Narrow your college list to 5-7 schools</b> Include a reach, solid, & safety school	<b>By End of Summer</b>

**Go to [Plan4College.ME](http://Plan4College.ME) for more information**

Continued >>



# Maximize Your Summer

Summer before your senior year is a prime time to enhance job, leadership, academic, and volunteer skills and experience, and to get on track before the busy fall of senior year.

## Do something!

Work, volunteer, intern, job shadow, attend a camp or summer academic program on a college campus. See the list below for ideas.

## Take hold of your future!

Get online and start researching schools and programs that fit your goals.

## Get in the driver's seat!

Sign up for mailing lists for each college of interest and review the materials when they arrive.

## Put yourself ahead of the pack!

Start online applications for the schools on your list. Many allow you to begin after August 1st, including the "Common App," [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org), which allows you to apply to over 450 private 4-year colleges with one standard application. **Application fee waivers are also available;** check with your school counselor for more information.

## Check out some great local resources for service, leadership, and learning:

<b>Pierce County Skills Center Summer School</b>	Build skills, take classes, and retrieve credits <a href="http://www.pcskillscenter.org/summer_school">www.pcskillscenter.org/summer_school</a>
<b>Summer Jobs 253</b>	Paid work experience & high school credit <a href="http://www.summerjobs253.com">www.summerjobs253.com</a>
<b>University of Washington Tacoma – Math Science Leadership Program</b>	3-week science, technology, engineering & math (STEM) career and leadership camp at UW Tacoma <u><i>Applications due March 14th for returning students and April 11th for new participants.</i></u> <a href="http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/msl">www.tacoma.uw.edu/msl</a> , 253-692-4421
<b>Pacific Lutheran University– MDC Summer Experience</b>	6-week college prep program at PLU <a href="http://www.mdc-hope.org/education">www.mdc-hope.org/education</a> , 253-536-6085
<b>University of Puget Sound – Summer Academic Challenge</b>	Tuition-free math & science enrichment at University of Puget Sound <a href="http://www.pugetsound.edu">www.pugetsound.edu</a> , 253-879-3927
<b>Boys and Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound</b>	Junior staff volunteer opportunities <a href="http://www.bgcsp.s.org/volunteer">www.bgcsp.s.org/volunteer</a> , 253-502-4600
<b>Metro Parks Tacoma Volunteer Program</b>	<a href="http://www.metroparkstacoma.org/volunteer">www.metroparkstacoma.org/volunteer</a> , 253-305-1000
<b>YMCA Teen Leadership Programs</b>	<a href="http://www.ymcapk.org">www.ymcapk.org</a> , 253-564-9622
<b>Peace Community Center – Summer Hilltop Scholars Program</b>	Tutoring, mentoring, academic and college coaching <a href="http://www.peacecommunitycenter.org">www.peacecommunitycenter.org</a> , 253-383-0702 ext. 108
<b>Washington Business Week Teen Summer Camps</b>	1-week camps exploring business careers at multiple Washington college campuses <a href="http://www.wbw.org">www.wbw.org</a> , 253-815-6900
<b>Multicare Nurse Camp</b>	1-week, free camp for students interested in exploring the nursing or allied health profession. <u><i>*Applications due March 4th.</i></u> <a href="http://www.multicare.org/nurse-camp">www.multicare.org/nurse-camp</a>
<b>University of Washington Nurse Camp</b>	1-week nurse camp at UW in Seattle <a href="http://www.nursing.uw.edu">www.nursing.uw.edu</a> , 206-543-8736
<b>More camps &amp; summer learning options</b>	Check after March 15th for updated 2016 summer opportunities <a href="http://www.summerlearningtacoma.org">www.summerlearningtacoma.org</a>