

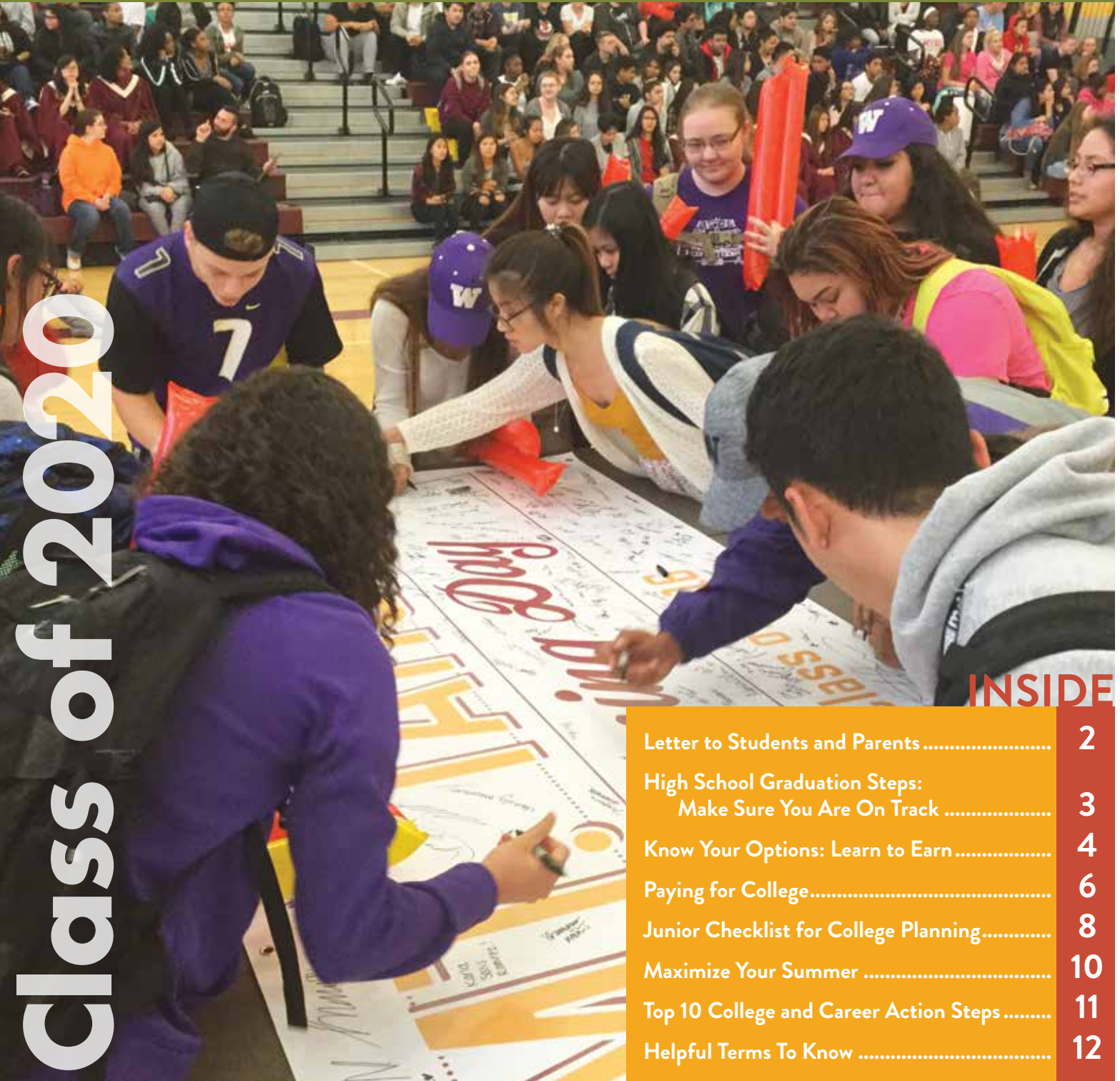


GRADUATE! TACOMA

Every Child. One Community. Cradle to Career.

COLLEGE AND CAREER JUNIOR TOOLKIT

For Students and Parents



class of 2020

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**ACTION
STEP**



Share this Toolkit and the steps in it with a supportive adult who can help you set goals and achieve your future. Save this Toolkit in a notebook to refer to and ask when you need help.

Dear Junior Students, Parents, and Guardians,









Students can take many paths to earning higher education degrees or technical certifications in the career fields they choose. Whether you are considering a university, community or technical college, apprenticeship, or the military, the junior year is the perfect time to begin the conversation about goals, explore options, and plan next steps.

Use the **Top 10 College and Career Action Steps** highlighted at the bottom of each page and summarized on page 11 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!

College and Career Counselors

Your high school's College and Career Counselor can answer additional questions, and many schools also have very knowledgeable college support staff. Don't hesitate to seek help. Employers and colleges highly value "self-advocacy"- or your ability to speak up for yourself.

Here is their contact information:

FOSS]		Juanita Cantrell-Jeffreys..... 253.571.7358 jjeffre@tacoma.k12.wa.us
LINCOLN]		Jamila Jones..... 253.571.6659 jjones5@tacoma.k12.wa.us
MOUNT TAHOMA]		Angela Phillips 253.571.3823 aPhill2@tacoma.k12.wa.us
OAKLAND]		Glen Burden 253.571.5106 gburden@tacoma.k12.wa.us
SOTA/SAMI]		Jennifer Boutell 253.571.1322 jboutel@tacoma.k12.wa.us
STADIUM]		Brandi Junderson 253.571.3153 bjunder@tacoma.k12.wa.us
WILSON]		Nancy Sprick 253.571.6148 nsprick@tacoma.k12.wa.us
WILLIE STEWART ACADEMY]		Janet Hopkins 253-571-3286 jhopki1@tacoma.k12.wa.us

Look for the **Senior Toolkit** coming in September with next steps for planning your future. You may also go to Plan4College.ME for more events and resources for college and career support, or contact Wendy Holcomb, Tacoma College Support Network Manager, at 253.272.1600 or wholcomb@graduatetacoma.org.

Plan for your future. The time is now!





HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION STEPS:

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 for a total of **24 credits** required for all 2020 TPS High School Graduates:

ENGLISH	4 credits
FINE ARTS	2 credits (such as Choir, Band, Theater, Photo, or Drawing)
WORLD LANGUAGE	2 credits* in same language; Credits may be in a Personalized Pathway Requirement (courses leading to a post-high school plan such as CTE)
SOCIAL SCIENCES	3 credits
MATH	3 credits* (including 2 Algebra and 1 Geometry); Many 4-year colleges require 4 credits
SCIENCE	3 credits (including 2 Lab Science); Many 4-year colleges require 3-4 credits
HEALTH & PE	2 credits for TPS graduation (.5 Health + 1.5 PE)
OCCUPATIONAL ED	1 credit for TPS graduation

**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," pages 8-9, to find right-fit schools and prepare a competitive application package. See Plan4College.ME for more details.

Step 4: Maximize your summer!

Do something that makes you stand out from the crowd: work, volunteer, intern, job shadow, attend a camp, or participate in a summer program. See "Maximize Your Summer," page 10, in this toolkit for more information.



Did You Know?

Completing Career Cruising is a required step of your High School and Beyond Plan for Graduation. Be sure to log into CareerCruising.com and see your counselor if you need any help.

ACTION STEP 3



Check your high school transcript to make sure you have all credits for graduation. Meet with your counselor if you need to make some up.



KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

While future income is just one of the factors to consider 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.

THE MORE YOU LEARN THE MORE YOU EARN!

National Average Income by Level of Education

LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL \$27,040

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE \$37,024

SOME COLLEGE OR TECHNICAL SCHOOL \$40,248

ASSOCIATE'S OR TECHNICAL DEGREE \$43,472

BACHELOR'S DEGREE \$60,996

MASTER'S DEGREE \$72,852

DOCTORAL DEGREE \$90,636

PROFESSIONAL DEGREE \$95,472

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.

Source: 2017 National Census Bureau of Labor & Statistics

There are many pathways toward 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 that typically prepare students for specific careers. 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 admissions 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 sciences.

- **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** 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** (CommonApp.org) for admission.

ACTION STEP 4



Visit a local two- or four-year college that fits your future career plans. Tacoma has many "Right Fit, Right Here" options to choose from.

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

Two-year Colleges

Two-year colleges, including **Community 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 a junior and often can finish in two years. This is a great way to cut costs or improve grades.

- **Some two-year colleges now offer four-year bachelor degrees in specific fields**, including Community Health and Health Information Management at Tacoma Community College, and Dental Hygiene and Homeland Security Emergency Management at Pierce College. Check with specific colleges to see what degree programs are offered.

- **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: SBCTC.edu



Did You Know?

As you near graduation, you will be required to submit a VANI. What is a VANI? It is your Verification of Acceptance to your Next Institution. Use this toolkit to start planning how you will complete your VANI.

Other Important Post-High School Options to Explore

- **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships offer paid, on-the-job learning. These programs are a great option for people who like to work with their hands and are ready to go to work in high-demand career fields like aerospace and construction. These two- to four-year programs, which are competitive and require solid math abilities, provide pathways 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), trade unions (such as electricians and roofers), and independent programs, go to

ExploreApprenticeship.wa.gov

- **Military**

Military experience teaches life skills and often provides technical education. Service can also provide scholarships and pay can help toward funding college education. To learn more about this option, go to TodaysMilitary.com



Did You Know?

Tacoma Public Schools has a Next Move Internship Program allowing students to explore a career, earn credit, build their resume, and acquire workplace skills. Visit your High School Career Center to meet your Next Move Coach and learn more. Go to NextMoveTacoma.org for more information.

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.
- Financial aid is available, including the College Bound Scholarship. Be sure to file the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or WASFA (Washington Application for State Financial Aid) in October 2019. Attend a financial aid information session at your high school or local community or technical college for more information. See more in the "Paying for College" section on page 6 in this toolkit.

**ACTION
STEP
5**



Explore career options and build your resume by signing up for an occupational education class offering industry-recognized certification (IRC) or an internship through TPS Next Move, NextMoveTacoma.org. See your counselor to get connected.

STEPS FOR 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. 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 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. Visit your Career Center for help completing Financial Aid forms.

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 applications and explanations of aid available.

3 You will need to complete the FAFSA or WASFA beginning October 1, 2019

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), FAFSA.ed.gov

The FAFSA form 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**.

- Use FAFSA4caster – <https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm> to see what your Estimated Family Contribution might look like.

- Before filing the FAFSA, each student and parent will each need to file separately for a FSA ID at fsaid.ed.gov
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, use the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA), ReadySetGrad.org/WASFA.
- A new FAFSA Mobile App is now available. Download for free at myStudentAid to be ready for the FAFSA opening on October 1. You will need your FSA ID to apply.



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

SCHOLARSHIPS: Funds from colleges or other sources, often recognizing academic merit, 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.



College Bound Scholarship

The College Bound Scholarship is a commitment of state financial aid to **eligible** students and is a four-year scholarship covering tuition (at comparable public college rates). If you signed up for the College Bound Scholarship in 7th or 8th grade, you will still have to complete FAFSA or WASEFA 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. Your high school may have its own scholarship page as well, so see your school website or career center for more information.

- **Act Six – ActSix.org.** A four-year, full-tuition leadership scholarship to four participating private colleges for seniors. Registration opens August prior to senior year and applications are due in November.
- **Elizabeth Wesley Youth Merit Award – eWesleyAward.org.** For African American students who have completed grades 10 or 11 and earned at least a 2.5 GPA. Applications due July 1.
- **College Success Foundation – CollegeSuccessFoundation.org.** The CSF website has a number of scholarships specifically for Washington state students, as well as helpful college resources for parents and students.
- **Washington State Opportunity Scholarship (WSOS) – WAOpportunityScholarship.org.** A four-year renewable scholarship for Washington seniors who pursue a STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) major at Washington two- and four-year colleges. Applications open January of senior year and close in February.
- Also see **theWashBoard.org** and your school's website for more scholarships for Washington state students.
- **Pacific Lutheran University, 253 PLU Bound Scholarship – 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, Tacoma Public School Commitment – PugetSound.edu.** University of Puget Sound has a commitment to meet the full financial need of TPS students who are admitted.
- **University of WA, Husky Promise – Washington.edu/HuskyPromise.** Guarantees full tuition and standard fees will be covered by grant or scholarship support for all eligible Washington state students at all UW campuses.
- **Washington State University, Cougar Commitment – WSU.edu.** A commitment that full tuition and standard fees will be covered by grant and scholarship support for all eligible Washington state students.
- Additional Washington state universities – including Western, Eastern, and Central – have their own scholarships, so go directly to their websites to learn more.

Earn College Credit while in High School

Please see your school counselor for more information.

Tacoma High Schools now opt students in to Accelerated Classes, which allows you to earn college credit while still in high school and save money. College Credit Classes include:

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

Important Tip for Parents and Students

Start researching and discussing your financial aid and scholarship options now. The more you plan ahead, the more funding options will be available to achieve your future college and career goals. You are not alone in this process. Visit your career center and **Plan4College.ME** for more resources and support.

ACTION STEP



Set up a scholarship search account at **theWashBoard.org** and apply for at least one scholarship.

JUNIOR CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGE PLANNING

Explore. Plan. Promote Yourself. Visit. Use this checklist, get connected to the community mentors and resources listed in this toolkit, and go to Plan4College.ME for more help.

Explore

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

- CareerCruising.com
- BigFuture.CollegeBoard.org
- CollegeResults.org
- 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.

1. **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 highly likely to be accepted based upon your grades and test scores*

2. **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 CollegeBoard.org to track your progress.

3. **Look and sign up for summer opportunities,** including jobs, internships, and summer study programs on college campuses. See “Maximize Your Summer” on page 10 for more options.

Plan

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

1. **Meet with your counselor and review your plans** for after graduation, grades, transcript, test scores, and courses planned for senior year including rigorous classes (AP, IB, Tech Prep, College in the High School, and Running Start), to make sure that you are on track for graduation and college applications. See the “High School Graduation Steps” on page 3 for details.

2. **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.

3. **Prepare for standardized college entry exams, SAT or ACT.**

- TPS will offer free SAT testing for all juniors during school on March 27 and for seniors in October. SAT prep materials, study tips, and practice tests can be found online at CollegeBoard.org, KahnAcademy.org, and at your library or career center. Find out if your schools of interest require any SAT subject tests as well.
- Do your best work as scores on these tests can be used by some colleges for placement, as well as to meet high school graduation requirements.
- Some students do better on the ACT. ActStudent.org features test prep, registration, and dates. Fee waivers are available; check with your counselor.



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.

1. Create a resume or “brag sheet,” including awards, extracurricular activities, leadership, work, and volunteer experiences. See your career center or Plan4College.ME for more help.

2. Draft a personal statement for college and scholarship applications. This essay shows colleges who you are beyond grades and test scores and highlights your unique talents, passions, and obstacles you have overcome. Demonstrate your best writing skills and take time to draft and edit. See your career center for more help.

3. Decide whom you will ask to write a letter of recommendation for you. Many four-year colleges require recommendations from 1-2 teacher(s) and some accept community references. Choose someone who knows you well and will write positively about you as a student. Provide them with a resume or “brag sheet” and ask early, at least a month prior to deadlines.

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 (NCAA.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 PlayNAIA.org.

Visit

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

1. 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. Check out virtual online tours for the schools on your list, the next best way to visit if you cannot go yourself.

2. Attend a college or career fair in the Puget Sound area, including:

- **PNACAC Spring College Fair, April 27** in Seattle, for all students and their parents (PNACAC.org/college-fairs).
- **TPS Fall College Fair, October 2019,** at University of Puget Sound.

Find more details about these free events and more opportunities at your career center or at Plan4College.ME.

3. Meet college admissions and outreach representatives. Many colleges make visits to each TPS high school. See your career center for a schedule. Better yet, set up an interview. This is the best way for colleges to get to know you and for you to ask questions. Making this connection can help your college representative advocate for you and your application.





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.

GET IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

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

TAKE HOLD OF YOUR FUTURE

Get online and start researching schools and programs that fit your goals. Start applying for scholarships as well.

PUT YOURSELF AHEAD OF THE PACK

Start online applications for the schools on your list. Many allow you to begin after August 1, including the "Common App," CommonApp.org, which allows you to apply to more than 800 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:

Boys and Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound	Junior staff volunteer opportunities: BGCSPS.org , 253-502-4600
Metro Parks Tacoma Volunteer Program	MetroParksTacoma.org/volunteer , 253-305-1000
Multicare Nurse Camp	1-week, free camp for students interested in exploring the nursing or allied health profession. *Applications due early March. Multicare.org/nurse-camp
Peace Community Center – Summer Hilltop Scholars Program	Tutoring, mentoring, academic and college coaching PeaceCommunityCenter.org , 253-383-0702 ext. 108
Pierce County Skills Center Summer School	Build skills, take classes, and retrieve credits: PCSkillsCenter.org/summer_school
Summer Jobs 253	Paid work experience and high school credit: SummerJobs253.com
Tacoma Public Schools Summer Bridge	Free, extended learning opportunity in June for TPS students enrolled in accelerated classes. TacomaSchools.org/summer-school , 253-571-1068
Tacoma Public Schools Summer Learning Programs	Offering credit retrieval and summer classes to TPS students TacomaSchools.org/summer-school
University of Puget Sound – Summer Academic Challenge	Tuition-free math and science enrichment at University of Puget Sound PugetSound.edu , 253-879-3927
University of Washington Nurse Camp	1-week nurse camp at UW in Seattle: Nursing.UW.edu , 206-543-8736
University of Washington Tacoma – Math Science Leadership Program	3-week science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) career and leadership camp at UW Tacoma. <u>Applications open February 1.</u> Tacoma.UW.edu/msl , 253-692-4421
Washington Business Week Teen Summer Camps	1-week camps exploring business careers at multiple Washington college campuses WBW.org , 253-815-6900
YMCA Teen Leadership Programs	YMCAPkc.org , 253-564-9622
More camps and summer learning options	Check in April for updated summer opportunities: SummerLearningTacoma.org



TOP 10 COLLEGE AND CAREER ACTION STEPS

1. Share this Toolkit and the steps in it with a supportive adult who can help you set goals and achieve success. Save this Toolkit in a notebook to refer to and ask when you need help.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

2. Introduce yourself to the College and Career Counselor at your school.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

3. Check your high school transcript to make sure you have all credits for graduation. Meet with your counselor if you need to make some up.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

4. Visit a local two- or four-year college that fits your future career plans. Tacoma has many “Right Fit, Right Here” options to choose from.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

5. Explore career options and build your resume by signing up for an occupational education class offering industry-recognized certification (IRC) or an internship through TPS Next Move, NextMoveTacoma.org. See your counselor to get connected.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

6. Talk about paying for college with a supportive adult or parent, including budget, funding resources, and options so everyone is on the same page.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

7. Set up a scholarship search account at theWashBoard.org and apply for at least one scholarship.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

8. Prepare for and take the free SAT test offered to all TPS Juniors on Wednesday, March 27.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

9. Attend a college support event to get help drafting your resume and personal statement. Visit your High School Career Center to get more information on upcoming college fairs and workshops.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

10. Make a summer plan – work, study, volunteer. Build experience and help your application stand out.

Who did I talk to? _____

What did I learn? _____

What is my next step? _____

👉 Important Tips for Parents

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. Visit your career center and Plan4College.ME for more resources and support.

HELPFUL TERMS TO KNOW

GENERAL

- **Grade Point Average (GPA)** – Average of all the grades a student receives in high school, ranked on a 4.0 scale, considered in college admission. A weighted scale awards higher scores for rigorous Honors and AP classes in which an “A” earns a 5.0, rather than 4.0 as in an average class. Unweighted means the school does not differentiate. Tacoma submits unweighted GPAs to colleges.
- **General Education Diploma (GED)** – A set of tests that certify the test taker has met high school academic skills; used as an alternative route to the traditional high school diploma.
- **Verification of Acceptance of Next Institution (VANI)** – All TPS seniors submit this form as a part of their High School and Beyond Plan to indicate their post-high school plans, including job, military, internship, or college.

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

- **Common Application (Common App)** – Over 800 colleges and universities, mostly private schools, use a standardized application that can be filled out by students online. Learn whether your colleges of choice recognize this app here: CommonApp.org.
- **Admission** – The process by which colleges and universities select and admit applicants.
- **Regular Admission** – Students apply by the final deadline. Most applicants will receive a reply in March about admission decisions.
- **Rolling Admission** – Admission decisions are processed year-round on a “rolling basis,” depending upon when the application is submitted. The earlier a student applies, the better.
- **Early Action** – Not a binding contract when applying to college, but guarantees that the applicant will hear back by a certain date. Early Action requires an earlier application due date; often in November. The advantage to early action is that the application may be considered with a smaller pool of applicants.
- **Early Decision** – Students sign a contract stating that if they are accepted by a college, they will attend that specific college. You can only apply to one college when using this option. However, you can apply to as many other colleges as you want for regular, rolling, or early action admission. Early decision is also an earlier deadline – usually by November – and applications may receive special consideration in a smaller pool of applicants.
- **Priority Date** – Not a deadline, but a suggested date for application to colleges and universities so that you will be considered for scholarships and other special programs.

TESTING

- **SAT** – One of the standardized tests required by most four-year colleges for admission., the SAT is taken during the junior or senior year. Measured on a 400-1600 scale, the test consists of 3 tests: reading, writing, and math, plus an optional essay. CollegeBoard.org and KahnAcademy.org are helpful test-prep sites. **The SAT is offered free to all TPS juniors on March 27 and seniors in October 2019.**
- **SAT Subject Test** – Offered in many areas of study including English, Math, Science, History, and Foreign Language, this test is less common. Some colleges require one or more of these tests for admission.
- **ACT** – Another test accepted by most colleges and universities for college admission, the ACT is scored on a 36-point scale, testing English, Reading, Math, and Science with an optional Writing section: ACTstudent.org.
- **ACCUPLACER** – A group of tests used by some colleges to determine placement for college-level courses, based on your knowledge in math, reading and writing. It is not pass/fail and not used for admission.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

- **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** – All students applying for any financial aid will complete this form yearly and send to the college the student is attending. The earlier students submit this form the more opportunities they have for receiving financial aid dollars from the college of their choice. **Can apply beginning October 1.** FAFSA.ed.gov
- **Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA)** – For non-citizens, you may be eligible to apply for a Washington State Need Grant. **Can apply beginning October 1.** See eligibility requirements at ReadySetGrad.org/wasfa
- **Merit-Based Scholarship or Aid** – Money awarded for college without regard for financial need. This type of financial aid (separate from your FAFSA) is usually awarded for academic achievement, such as High GPA and/or test scores, or talents and unique traits; such as artistic, musical, service, or athletic skills.
- **Need-Based Scholarship or Aid** – Money awarded based upon your family’s financial need. Federal and State Aid is need-based, so you must submit the FAFSA or WASFA to be eligible.
- **College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS Profile)** – A financial aid application required by some private colleges in addition to the FAFSA. It includes a fee and is more detailed. CSSprofile.CollegeBoard.org



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Some information adapted from CollegeBoard.org – Big Future, and University of Washington Dream Project