



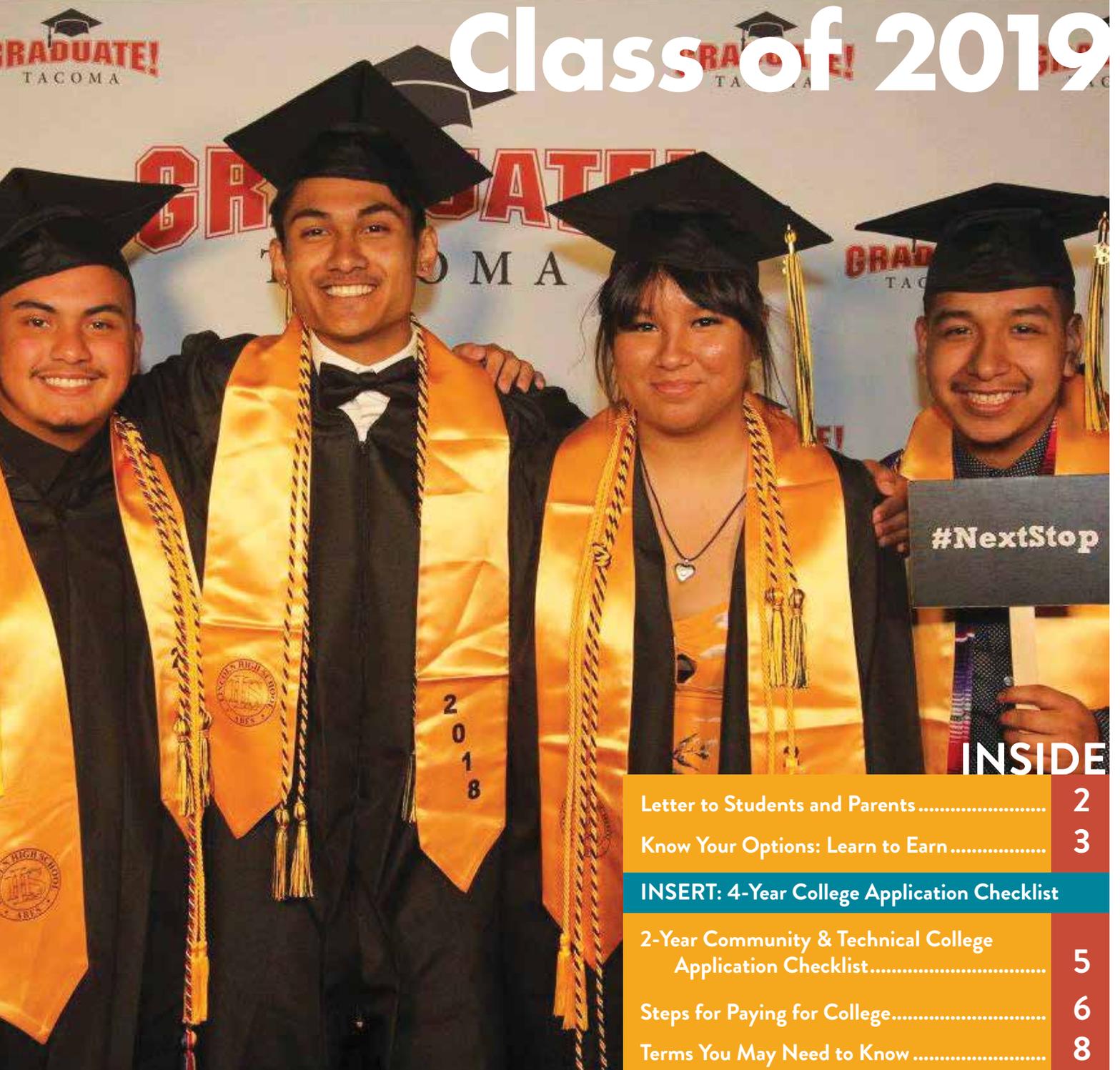
GRADUATE! TACOMA

Every Child. One Community. Cradle to Career.

COLLEGE AND CAREER SENIOR TOOLKIT

For Students and Parents

Class of 2019



INSIDE

Letter to Students and Parents	2
Know Your Options: Learn to Earn	3
INSERT: 4-Year College Application Checklist	
2-Year Community & Technical College Application Checklist.....	5
Steps for Paying for College.....	6
Terms You May Need to Know	8

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 in a notebook to refer to and ask when you need help.



COLLEGE AND CAREER SENIOR TOOLKIT

For Students and Parents

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

The Graduate Tacoma Community would like to welcome you to the start of your senior year! Graduating high school is such an important milestone and major step toward your future. It's going to be a busy year. Now is the time for students to finalize plans and meet deadlines for the transition to college, technical school, apprenticeship, military, or career. There are many paths to take on the way to earning the higher education degree or technical certification needed for the career field you choose. You are not alone and the Graduate Tacoma Community is here to help.

Use this toolkit to help you navigate through this important year. Enclosed you will find items to discuss together and checklists to help your student keep organized and meet important due dates over the next several months. Use the list of College and Career Counselors below for any support you may need.

Be sure to check out **Plan4College.ME**, for additional information.

College and Career Counselors

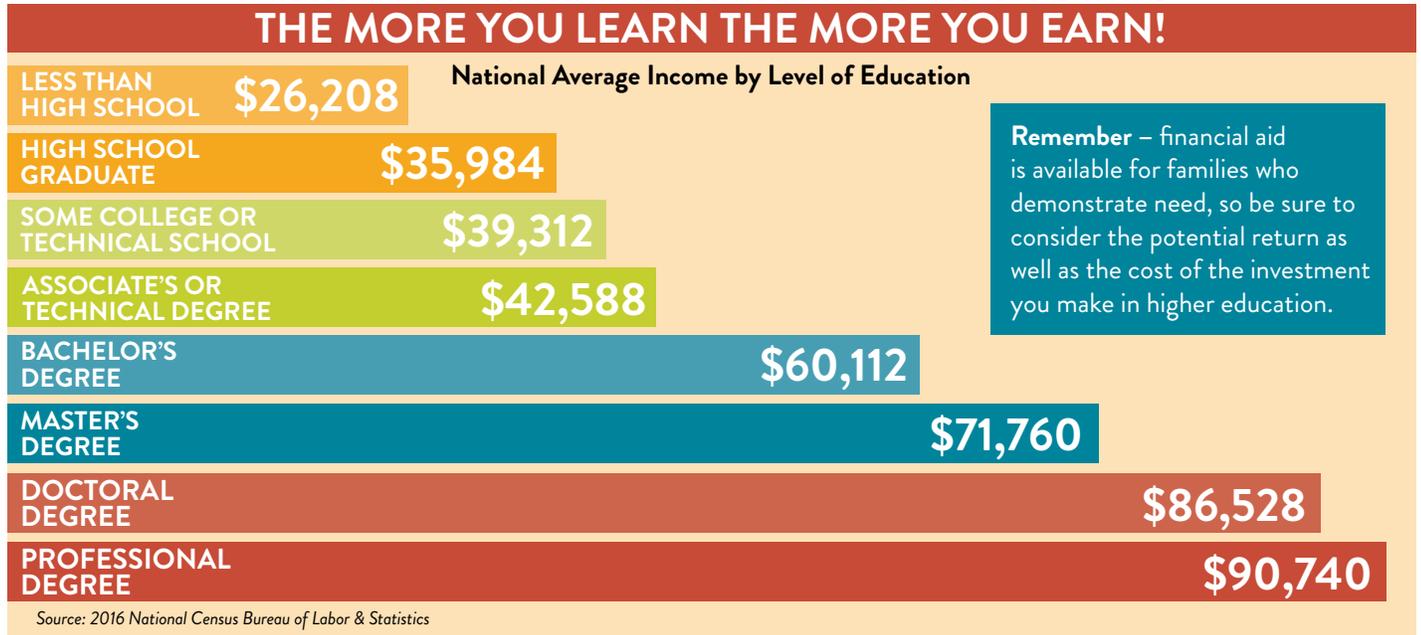
Your high school's College and Career Counselor can answer additional questions, and many schools also have very knowledgeable college support staff. Don't hesitate to seek help. Employers and colleges highly value "self-advocacy"- or your ability to speak up for yourself.

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]  Greg Eisnaugle, Principal 253.571.3271 geisnau@tacoma.k12.wa.us



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.



High school graduates have many options to earn the degree or certification needed to pursue their career interests: two-year or four-year colleges, technical schools, apprenticeships, and more! Below you will find helpful information to guide you in choosing your right fit pathway.

Four-Year College or University

- Use the **“Four-Year Application Checklist”** insert to help create a list of potential schools and the application deadlines for each.
- There is no one perfect college, so consider a range of schools that fit your needs.
- It's easy to research schools online. A great first start is CareerCruising.com, which all seniors must complete as part of their **High School and Beyond Plan**. Here are some additional websites to research your college options:
 - CollegeBoard.org
 - CollegeResults.org
 - CollegeScoreCard.ed.gov
 - IMfirst.org
- **College “Fit” Factors** to consider include majors and programs offered, size, distance from home, and how selective it is (Can I get in?).
- **Cost** is also an important factor, but don't let the published expenses scare you off until you explore financial aid options.



TIP: Many students are eligible for the **College Bound Scholarship**, which covers tuition for Washington colleges. See your counselor to find out if you are eligible and attend a financial aid information session at your school. **Be sure to file the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), or WASFA (for students who are not U.S. citizens) starting October 1.** The FAFSA or WASFA are required to receive financial aid, so file as early as possible. See page 6 and 7 for more information on steps for paying for college.

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

Community and Technical Colleges

(Two years or less)

- Use the “**Two-Year and Technical College Application Checklist**” on page 5 to help create a list of potential schools.
- Students obtain a two-year Associates Degree and/or one of hundreds of career certificates through programs as short as three months.
- Affordable and often near home, these colleges train students for careers in computer science, health, business, trades, and many other fields.
- Students who earn an Associates Degree can transfer to a four-year university as a junior and finish in two years: a great way to cut costs.
- Financial aid is available, including the College Bound Scholarship. **Be sure to file the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) in October.** Attend a financial aid information session at your high school for more information.
- 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 at: CheckOutACollege.com.

Vocational/Trade Schools

- These options provide education in a specific career, ranging from cosmetology or criminal justice to design or health fields.
- Many vocational schools are for-profit, so check the rate of graduates’ job placement. If you choose to pursue further education, check with other colleges to make sure your credits will transfer from the vocational/trade school.
- Vocational school database RWM.org lists schools that offer Associate’s Degree programs in Washington and nationwide.

Apprenticeships

- A mix of technical education and on-the-job training, apprenticeships in trades and technology allow students to earn while they learn through apprenticeships in trades and technology.
- Offered by employers (such as Boeing), by trade unions (such as electricians and roofers) and independent programs, these two- to four-year programs provide the pathway to well-paid jobs. Apprenticeship programs offer certifications, licenses, and/or college degrees.
- Apprenticeships are competitive and require solid math abilities.
- Learn more at LNI.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship.

Military

- Military experience teaches life skills and often provides technical education.
- Military service can also provide scholarships and help pay for future college education.
- Learn more at TodaysMilitary.com.

TIP: Students should build a college application list of about 5-7 schools, including three types of schools:

“REACH”

Someplace you would really like to go, but you think you may not get in

“SOLID”

A good match with grades and test scores that makes it likely for you to be accepted

“SAFETY”

You will definitely get accepted here; this back-up ensures a continuation of your education that still lets you achieve your goals



Process for Applying

Each college has slightly different application processes, so make sure to confirm the process and requirements for the colleges you are considering.

1. Explore Your Options Create a list of career opportunities you are interested in pursuing.

Careers of Interest

Certificates or Degrees

Community or Technical Colleges

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Research schools that provide the certification or degree you will need to get a job in the field that interests you – CheckOutACollege.com

2. Apply Online or In-Person

- Community and Technical Colleges have an open door policy, and generally accept applications year round.
- Most Washington community colleges use the same online application: Public.ctc.edu

3. Submit an Application for Financial Aid

- Submit your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or WASFA (Washington Application for State Financial Aid) to community colleges as soon after **October 1**, as possible. The earlier you submit, the better your chances of receiving financial aid. You will need to submit a new FAFSA or WASFA each year that you attend college.
- Many community colleges also have their own financial aid forms in addition to the FAFSA, so check with each school's Financial Aid Office. If you do not turn in these additional forms, you can miss out on scholarships, grants, or opportunities to earn additional income and employment experience through a Work Study job.

4. Take Your Placement Test

- Many colleges now accept alternate forms of placement including the **Smarter Balanced Assessment, High School Transcripts**, and **SAT and ACT test scores**. Check with the college to see which placement test is required.

The most common placement test is the **ACCUPLACER**.

- You may take ACCUPLACER for free at your high school. Check with your Career Counselor.
- This untimed placement test is taken on a computer. Take your time, since there is no time limit.
- This multiple-choice test includes math, writing and reading, as well as English as a Second Language (ESL), if applicable.
- While this is not a pass/fail test, it will determine which classes you are eligible to take, so it is important to do your best.
- You may take the test more than once and colleges will use the best score. This may allow you to place out of remedial classes and save money.

5. Schedule an Advising Appointment

- Focus your education on getting the degree or certification(s) you will need in order to pursue the career you want. If your goal is to transfer to a four-year school, plan ahead to ensure a smooth transition between your college experiences.
- Some schools require you to meet with an advisor before registering for classes each quarter, in order to ensure that you are on track.
- Attend an orientation, where you will learn how to access student services, make an academic plan, and register for classes.



STEPS FOR PAYING FOR COLLEGE:

Financial aid makes paying for college possible!

OCTOBER

1

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.

Submitting the FAFSA

1 Be prepared

- Attend a workshop at your high school to learn how to prepare for the process. Check [Plan4College.ME](#) for dates.
- Apply for a Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID) at [FSAid.ed.gov](#)
- A parent/guardian applies for a separate FSA ID, using a separate email, at [FSAid.ed.gov](#)
- Check priority filing dates for your colleges.

2 Gather your important documents

- Your Social Security number (or Alien Registration or Permanent Resident Card)
- Your Driver License number or state ID
- Your family's 2017 income tax returns
- Untaxed income records
- Current bank statements for you and your family
- Business and investment records for you and your family

3 Apply online

- Fill out the FAFSA online at [FAFSA.ed.gov](#) beginning October 1 of your Senior Year.
- For help, attend a FAFSA completion night at your high school. Check [Plan4College.ME](#) for dates.
- On the FAFSA, list all of the schools you plan to apply to.

Non-citizen? You can apply for the Washington State Need Grant!

Federal aid is not available to non-citizens, but you are eligible to apply for a Washington State Need Grant if you meet the program's income requirements and satisfy the residency criteria:

- Have graduated from a Washington high school or obtained a GED (or will do so before beginning college).
- Have lived in Washington for three years prior to, and continuously since, earning the high school diploma or equivalent.
- Sign an affidavit (written promise) to file an application to become a permanent resident of the United States when eligible to apply.

Complete the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) at [ReadySetGrad.org/WASFA](#), available beginning October 1.

There are different types of funding that can help you pay for school, including:

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.

ACTION STEP

6



Complete and submit your FAFSA/WASFA as early as possible starting October 1 to be eligible for financial aid and scholarships.

Financial Aid – Sample Breakdown of Costs 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. This table is an example comparing a full-time student at four-year state school to a two-year technical college.

SAMPLE	Estimated Cost of Attendance Each Year – Tuition, housing, books, food, etc.	4-year Public University Live on Campus \$23,295	2-year Community College Live at home \$11,337
	Expected Family Contribution (EFC) – How much the FAFSA shows your family could provide. This can range from zero to the full cost of attendance.	SAMPLE EFC \$3,261	SAMPLE EFC \$3,261
	Your “Financial Need” – How much the school might offer you in financial aid.	This is your Financial Need \$20,034	This is your Financial Need \$8,076

Use **FAFSA4caster** – [FAFSA.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm](https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm) to see what your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) might look like.

College Costs The cost of tuition varies a lot at private, in-state, and out-of-state colleges. At in-state schools, there is a different cost for Washington residents and out-of-state students while tuition at private colleges is usually the same regardless of residency. Most private schools require a second financial aid application called the **CSS profile** available at Student.Collegeboard.org/CCS-Financial-Aid-Profile. The cost of attendance at private colleges is much higher, but those institutions are often able to offer more financial aid, meaning the cost you actually pay may be less.

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.
- **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.
- **Washington Scholarships** – see theWashBoard.org and your school’s website for more scholarships.
- **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.

College Bound Scholarship Many families were eligible to sign up for the College Bound Scholarship (CBS) in seventh or eighth grade. Check with your counselor to see if you are a College Bound Scholar and how to maintain your eligibility. Students must complete applications to chosen schools, the FAFSA, or WASFA, and any additional financial aid forms for those colleges. CBS is combined with the Washington State Need Grant to cover tuition at public rates and a small book allowance. CBS will not be part of your financial aid award if all your need is met by other financial aid or if your family’s income has risen above eligibility standard. You can learn more about the College Bound Scholarship at ReadySetGrad.org/college/college-bound-scholarship-program

TERMS YOU MAY NEED 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 600 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 is an excellent site for practice tests and college search and planning process. **The SAT is offered free to all TPS students on October 10, 2018.**
- **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. All Federal Aid is need-based, so you must submit the FAFSA 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



Every Child. One Community. Cradle to Career.



Plan4College.ME GraduateTacoma.org