
PLANNING ON GOING TO COLLEGE? TIPS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS ON HOW TO GET THERE

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OUTLINE OF TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- My background
- True/False questions
- Tips for students and parents
 - Choose the right classes in middle school/high school
 - Begin thinking about your strengths and thinking about a career
- Finding money to pay for college

MY BACKGROUND

- First-Generation
- Low-income
- Product of my parents immigrating to the USA
- Product of the Dean's Future Scholars (DFS) Academic Outreach Program and WCSD
- Studied at UNR (BA – Criminal Justice, MA – Ed. Leadership, MA – School Counseling)
- Worked at Sparks MS for one year
- Starting my second year as a counselor at North Valleys High School

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

- When I say “college” I mean:
 - Public and private four-year colleges and universities;
 - Two-year community colleges or junior colleges; and career schools

TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

- Research suggests starting conversations about college as early as kindergarten.

ANSWER

- True!
- But don't worry it's not too late. Middle school is also a perfect time for families/students to take control of their college preparation.

T/F

- Only students with good grades go to college.

ANSWER

- False.
- Good grades and high test scores can definitely help when applying to college, but college admissions staff also take into account other things, such as your interests, hobbies, and school and community-based extracurricular activities.

T/F

- College will be the same as middle or high school.

ANSWER

- False.
- College is much different from middle or high school. Making new friends, choosing your own classes and program of study, and possibly living away from home are all a part of the college experience.

T/F

- I need to get a job as soon as I graduate from high school.

ANSWER

- True/False
- Sure, you can get a job with decent pay after your high school graduation, or you can invest in your education to have a great career with better pay later!
- How much more does a person with a college education earn over a lifetime compared to someone that did not continue their education?

T/R

- I can't go to college because I don't know what I want to do with my life.

ANSWER

- False.
- Most students decide what they want to do during or after college.

TIPS AS A STUDENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

- It is not too early to start thinking about college
 - Develop good study habits
 - *Read* to develop verbal, writing, and critical thinking skills
 - Study at the same time at the same place
 - Develop interest in extracurricular/community-based activities
 - Marching band, clubs, sports, outside organizations
 - As an 8th grader, consider taking advanced or honors courses (if available) and do well (honors English or Algebra)

TIPS AS A STUDENT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL CONTINUED

- Get to know your school counselor
- Talk to other adults in the building about your goals (deans, administrators, coaches, mentors)
- Talk to family members about plans for after middle school
- Do well on standardized tests
- This will help determine your college options later!

TRANSITIONING INTO HIGH SCHOOL (TIPS ON WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW)

- High school is the training ground for college and work
- Larger environment
- Credits matter
- Attendance can be a barrier to getting a diploma
- Consider taking Honors/Advanced Placement (AP) courses
 - AP courses require an exam in the spring (\$)
 - If passed, students have the opportunity to earn college credit
 - GPA boost
- American College Test (ACT)/SAT
 - College entrance exams
- Dual credit options
 - In our area: TMCC Jump Start Dual Credit
 - Other community colleges in our state

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACT/SAT

- Most colleges accept both
- It is recommended that you take practice tests for both

■ SAT

- Comprised of four parts: Reading, Writing and Language, Math, and the optional essay
- Length of the test is three hours and fifty minutes
- SAT no longer penalizes you for wrong answers

■ ACT

- Comprised of five parts: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and an optional essay
- Length of the test is about three hours and thirty minutes
- There is no penalty for wrong answers

- WCSD requires students to take the ACT (free) during junior year

TRANSITIONING INTO HIGH SCHOOL (TIPS ON WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW) CONTINUED

- TMCC HS
 - After graduation, students can earn an Associates degree at the same time as their high school diploma
 - They admit sophomores and above
- Apply to Upward Bound
 - They provide a mentor to meet with students throughout high school
 - Summer classes to get ahead
 - Connection to TMCC/UNR
 - Inside knowledge
 - Guidance
- Inquire about the DFS program
 - Waitlist
 - Counselor recommendation needed

CONTINUED

- Go to career information events or field trips.
 - Ask employers what kind of education they expect their employees to have
- Explore opportunities to volunteer in your school or community
- If you have older brothers or sisters getting ready to go to college fairs, financial aid nights, or other high school events, go with them so that you can become familiar with these events

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Save for your child's college education.
- Talk to your child about his or her interests and help match those interests with a college major and career.
- Help your child develop good study habits, such as finishing all work before going on social media or playing computer games.
- Stay in contact with your child's teachers and counselor so that they can let you know about any changes in your child's behavior or schoolwork.
 - Continue to stay involved when your child reaches high school
 - Let your child's counselor know they are college-bound
- Keep an eye on your child's grades, and help him or her find tutoring assistance, if necessary.

TIPS FOR PARENTS CONTINUED

- *Helping Your Child With Homework* offers suggestions on how to empower your child to successfully complete assignments.
- *Helping Your Child Through Early Adolescence* addresses issues that parents of 10 to 14-year-olds generally find most challenging.
- *Browse Parent Power* for ideas to help you support your child as he or she transitions into high school.

Source: <https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/checklists/middle-school>

KEEPING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE

- Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
 - Apply even if you believe your family may not qualify for need-based aid
 - You have to apply in order to know what you qualify for
- Different types of financial aid (“gift aid” and “self-help”)
 - Scholarships (free money! \$\$ best kind of financial aid)
 - Grants (free money! \$\$ best kind of financial aid)
 - Loans
 - Work-Study
- Students need a SSN to fill out the FAFSA. If they do not have one, there are other types of aid that different colleges/universities offer

KEEPING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE

- Savings Account!
 - Federal Student Aid (an office of the US Department of Education) recommends opening a savings account
- How do I find out about scholarship opportunities?
 - Stay vigilant for potential scams
 - [Federal Student Aid Webpage](#)
 - [Department of Labor's free scholarship search webpage](#)
 - Millennium Scholarship and TMCC Nevada Promise Scholarship
- Serving in the Military (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines)
 - GI Bill

RECAP

- What do colleges seek from high school applicants?
 1. High School Curriculum & Performance
 - High Grade Point Average (GPA)
 - Challenging college-prep courses (AP classes/Dual credit)
 2. Strong Scores on Standardized Tests
 - ACT/SAT
 3. College Application Essay
 4. Extracurricular Activities & Involvement
 - Leadership positions in a few organizations
 - Active involvement in community service
 5. Demonstrated Enthusiasm in Attending the University
 6. Letters of Recommendation

RECAP CONTINUED

- Think outside the box in terms of how you present yourself
- Grit, Tenacity, Perseverance
- Building blocks (habits and skills)

DISCUSSION

1. What scholarships are available in my state or school district?
2. How can my grades affect my financial aid opportunities?
3. Why should I fill out a FAFSA form when I'm a high school senior?
4. What else can I do to learn about financial aid opportunities?
5. How can I discuss paying for college with my family or college support team?

ANSWERS

1. Answers will vary depending on your state or school district.
2. Your grades are important particularly if you plan to receive scholarships. High school students who receive scholarships from the community or colleges generally have earned good grades. Scholarship providers feel more comfortable helping these students pay for college because they have demonstrated that they take school seriously.
3. You should fill out the FAFSA form during your senior year to find out whether you qualify to receive federal student aid. Also, colleges, states, and some scholarship providers use your Expected Family Contribution, or EFC (determined by your FAFSA information), to figure out how much financial help you need.
4. To learn more about financial aid opportunities, attend college fairs to speak with school representatives, visit your high school career center to find information on scholarships, and explore student-friendly websites that offer college and scholarship searches.
5. Begin your discussion with your parents or college support team by explaining your interest in college and your future career goals. Ask your parents or support team to help you develop ways to start saving for college (e.g., assisting you in finding a summer job and opening a savings account).

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME?

- Please ask me anything!



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

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