

Getting Started



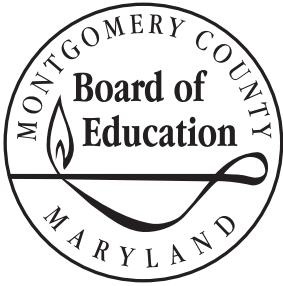
Career/College Planning Guide

for Ninth Grade Students



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Rockville, Maryland



VISION

A high-quality education is the fundamental right of every child. All children will receive the respect, encouragement, and opportunities they need to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a global society.

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Getting Started

Career/College Planning Guide for Ninth Grade Students

In high school, you will be involved in various academic, community, and social activities. Each of these activities will provide a wealth of experiences and help clarify your interests, goals, and plans for the future. Active involvement in high school is one key to a successful and rewarding high school experience. Get involved, take charge, and become the best student you can be. As you and your parents plan your program, your school counselor is available to help you every step of the way.

This handbook is designed to provide you with information about time management and study skills improvement, decision making, career information, college planning and college admission tests. Getting started with assignments or work can sometimes be a problem. However, if you put into practice ideas from this booklet, you may find that your high school years will be more rewarding. Please ask your school counselor for additional materials or clarification about information in this handbook.

Montgomery County Public Schools
Office of Special Education and Student Services
Department of Student Services
School Counseling Services Unit
Rockville, Maryland 20850
301-279-3584

This booklet belongs to



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Time Management

Plan your time

Success in school depends on how well you plan your time. Your time should be planned so that you can get your work done and still have time for yourself. Your schedule should be comfortable. Planning your time to fit your needs will help you to be successful.

How do you spend your time? Do you have time to do all the things you really want to do? Make photocopies of the time-planning chart below. Use it to keep a record of how you spend your time for one week. At the end of the week, look at the chart and ask yourself these questions:

- What are three main ways I spend my time?
- Do I like the way I am spending my time?
- What would I like to change?

Now use the weekly list of priorities chart to plan next week. Using the time-planning chart you copied, plan a schedule for all the things you must do and the things

you would like to do. Use the five steps in this booklet for planning your time and completing your schedule.

Some weeks are busier than others, with just too many tasks to do. Sometimes it is hard to decide which important activity to do first. Following a time-management plan should help you complete your major tasks.

Steps for planning your time

- Step 1.** List everything that you have to do for a whole week.
- Step 2.** Give every job or activity a time and place. Write this on a time chart.
- Step 3.** Make changes in your schedule (revise your schedule) as the week passes.
- Step 4.** Check off each item on the schedule after you have done it.
- Step 5.** Reward yourself when you finish a very hard task.

Time-planning chart

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6 a.m.							
7 a.m.							
8 a.m.							
9 a.m.							
10 a.m.							
11 a.m.							
12 noon							
1 p.m.							
2 p.m.							
3 p.m.							
4 p.m.							
5 p.m.							
6 p.m.							
7 p.m.							
8 p.m.							
9 p.m.							

Weekly list of priorities

Use this sheet to plan.

1. Make a list of things you always do each week.
2. Make a list of other things you must do this week.
3. Make a list of things you would like to do this week, if you have time.

Things I always do each week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Other things I must do this week

For school:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

For home:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Things I would like to do if I have time this week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now, review your lists. Use the weekly chart to plan another week. Do you see improvements? Sometimes everything won't fit into your schedule and some plans must be postponed. Choose the things that are most important to do first. This is called "setting priorities."

Review your choices and ask yourself if they are wise ones. You may wish to review your list and plans with your parents and teachers. With good planning, you will be ready when a big project must be done.

Decision Making

“The quality of the rest of your life can be enhanced or diminished by the seemingly unimportant decisions you make day by day.”

—Margaret C. Morrison

Each of us makes decisions every day. Often, we are not consciously aware that we have mentally thought through a situation, discarded ideas, and made note of advantages. In high school you will be expected to make many decisions, some of which will affect the rest of your high school years and beyond. Now is a good

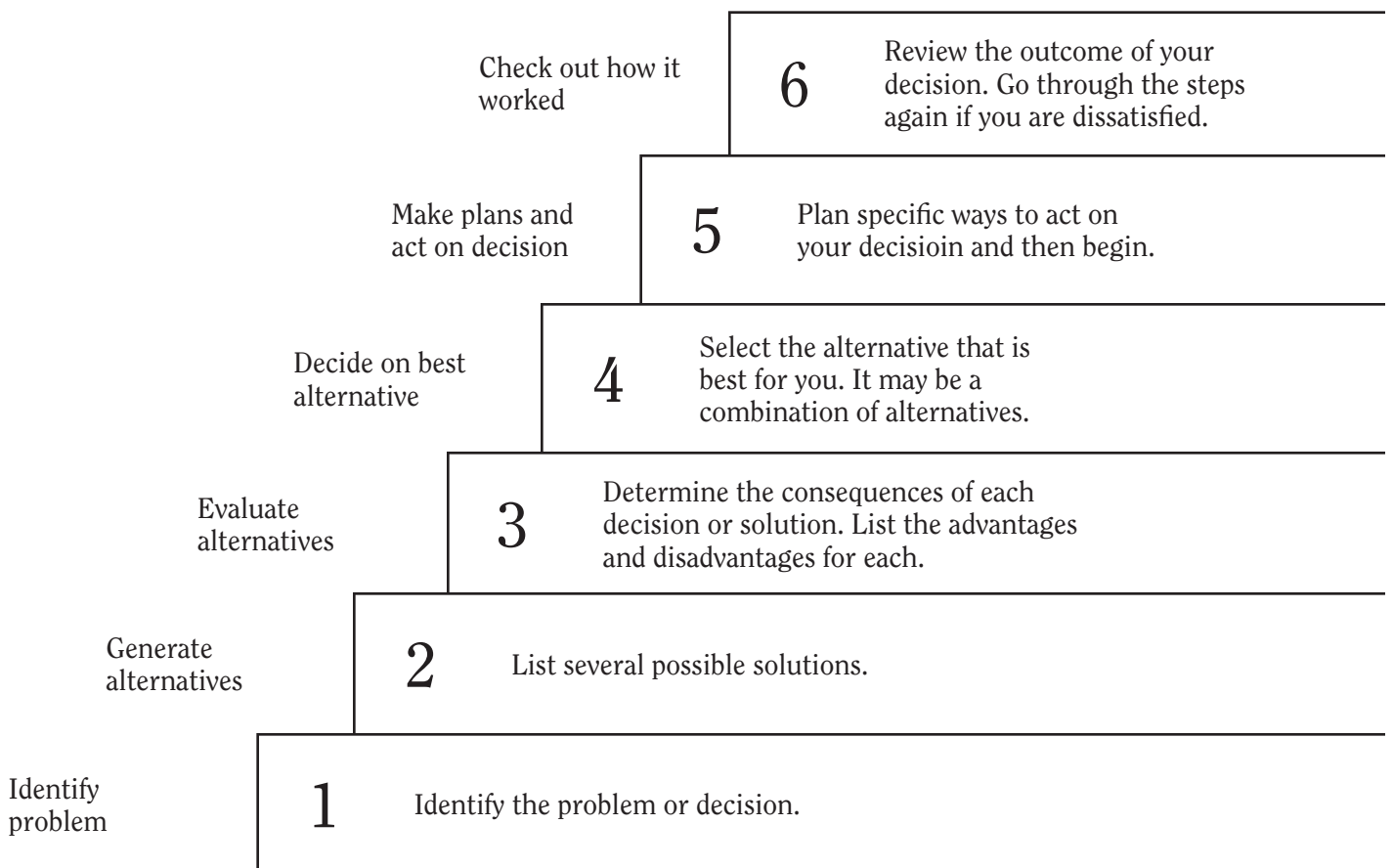
time to give thought to the many important decisions you will have to make in high school.

What decisions will you make about the following:

- *Should I go to college? Get a full-time job? Join the military? Attend a technical school?*
- *Should I take a college preparation curriculum?*
- *Should I take Honors and advanced courses?*

Good decisions require careful thought. Use the chart below to help organize your decision-making procedures. This process can help you to make decisions about careers, course selection, college choices, and postsecondary plans.

Steps in decision making



Personal Mission Statement

“It takes courage to grow up and turn out to be who you really are.”

—e.e. cummings

You can use your knowledge about yourself to help define your personal and career goals. The more you know about yourself, the more successful you will be in defining goals within the framework of your own values.

Take the time to complete the personal mission statement. Use the first worksheet as a prewriting tool to help you brainstorm your various ideas. Next, write your statements, expressing your ideas in sentence/paragraph form on the “My Personal Mission Statement Worksheet.”

You may not know “what you want to be,” but you should begin thinking about “the kind of person you want to be.” Revisit your personal mission comments from time to time, and update information as necessary.

Writing a personal mission statement

Prewriting, brainstorming: Asking yourself about you

Who I am

(Roles like student, daughter, brother; your personality—serious, social, giving, quiet, fair, helpful, open-minded, etc.)

My strengths and talents

(A leader, creative, intelligent, hard-working, artistic, athletic, peacemaker, good communicator, team player, enthusiastic, etc.)

My weaknesses

(Fearful/timid, a procrastinator, insecure, narrow-minded, disorganized, constantly late, lose temper easily, etc.)

My values

(Excellence, justice, service, ethical, religious, honesty, personal growth, etc.)

What I hope to become in life

(Career path, dependable, forgiving, loyal, dedicated to..., courageous, principle-centered, balanced, happy, monetarily successful, secure, healthy, etc.)

Specific goals

(Short term: academic commitment, accept responsibilities, read more, take an “outside school” class or instruction in your area of interest, community service, better diet, more sleep, more exercise, spend more time with family, etc. Long term: go to college or vocational school, pursue a specific career, improve “weaknesses,” develop talents, etc.)

Steps necessary to reach my goals

(Seek help in a specific subject; go to library once a week to check out a book of interest; study at least “x” number of hours a night regardless of homework; take an outside class on arts, sports, or computers, etc.)

My personal mission statement

Name I, _____,

Who I am

My strengths and talents

recognize my strengths and develop my talents as a person who is

My weaknesses

and acknowledge my weaknesses

My values

I hope to lead a life centered on the following beliefs (values):

**The kind of person
I hope to
become in life**

and envision myself becoming a person who is

Specific goals

I have set these goals in order to fulfill my hopes:

**Steps necessary to
reach my goals**

I will start on this journey by taking one or more steps this year. I plan to

Important Graduation Considerations

Which mathematics courses should I take?

Have I developed my skills to the point where I can take higher-level mathematics courses?

Which mathematic courses will provide the best preparation for careers that interest me?

The Pathways to Success in Mathematics chart, presents the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) mathematics sequence. The more advanced the math courses you take, the more college and career options are available to you.

One of the most important things that you will do in high school is to carefully select the courses that you will take each year. Every choice you make will open up new opportunities and possibly close down others. While all of your course selections are important, the choices that you make in mathematics courses can have a profound impact upon your options in other subjects and upon your college and career plans.

Student Service Learning (SSL)

Another important graduation requirement is Student Service Learning (SSL). Students graduating in 2011 or later will need to earn 75 SSL hours. Earning these hours not only enables you to meet a graduation requirement but also provides you with an opportunity to experience areas that you might want to consider when exploring possible careers. For further information on SSL go to www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/department/ssl/.

Promotion Requirements

For students in grades nine through twelve, the following should apply:

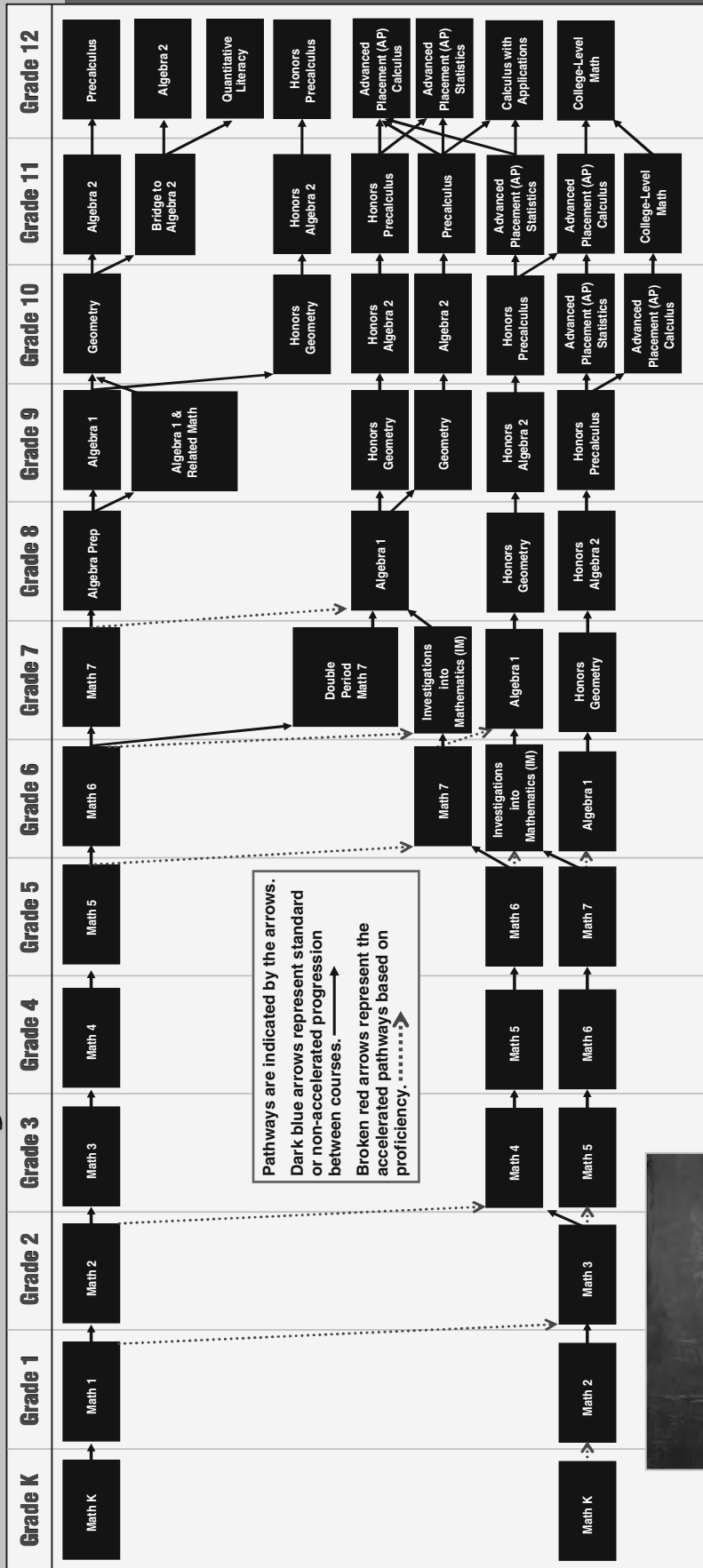
- To be promoted to the tenth grade, a student should have a minimum of five units of credit
- To be promoted to the eleventh grade, a student should have a minimum of ten units of credit
- To be promoted to the twelfth grade, a student should have a minimum of fifteen units of credit

Maryland Diploma Requirements

Graduating Classes of 2009 and Later	
Subject Area	Specific Credit Requirements
English	4 credits
Fine Arts	1 credit (Selected courses in art, dance, drama/theater, and music that satisfy the fine arts requirement are marked FA)
Health Education	0.5 credit
Mathematics	4 credits** (1 credit algebra, 1 credit geometry.) Students who successfully complete a calculus course may be exempted from this 4 credit requirements.
Physical Education	1 credit
Science	3 credits (1 biology credit and 1 physical science credit must be included)
Social Studies	3 credits (1 U.S. History credit; 1 World History credit; and 1 National, State, and Local Government credit)
Technology Education	1 credit (Courses in career and technology education that satisfy the technology education requirement are marked in the High School Course Bulletin.)
Other Courses	2 credits in a foreign language, <i>or</i> 2 credits in advanced technology education <i>and</i> 2.5 credits in electives <i>OR</i> 4 credits in a state-approved career and technology program <i>and</i> 0.5 credit in general electives
Assessments	
High School Assessments	Students must meet the Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) graduation requirement for English, algebra/data analysis, biology, and government by achieving one of the following: 1. Pass all four HSA tests. 2. Earn a combined score of 1602 or higher. 3. Complete required Bridge Plan project(s). The number of projects a student must complete is based on his or her highest HSA test score.

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/coursebulletin/diplomaRequirements.cfm

Pathways to Success in Mathematics



Pathways are indicated by the arrows.
 Dark blue arrows represent standard or non-accelerated progression between courses.
 Broken red arrows represent the accelerated pathways based on proficiency.



This chart shows some of the many options that students have in the progression of mathematics courses from Kindergarten through Grade 12. Courses are presented in columns by grade level, starting with Kindergarten on the far left side of the chart and moving to Grade 12 on the far right. Acceleration occurs in Kindergarten through Grade 8. Acceleration does not mean that the student "skips" a course. For example, when the broken red arrow shows a path that takes a student from Math 2 in Grade 2 to Math 4 in Grade 3, this means that the student has mastered the content of both Math 2 and Math 3 in Grade 2 before moving into Math 4 in the next grade. It is important for a student to demonstrate proficiency in the content of a course before he/she is moved to the next level. Students have the option to move from an on-level course to Honors or Advanced Placement courses at any time throughout high school.

Countdown to Graduation

Good decisions follow a timetable. When you complete each task, record the date.

Ninth grade

Fall

- _____ Make an appointment to meet with your counselor.
- _____ Discuss your academic/career plans and personal and academic strengths.
- _____ Visit your college/career center. Become familiar with the resources available there.
- _____ Participate in school extracurricular activities.
- _____ Take the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT)

Spring

- _____ Begin working with *Choices Explorer*.
- _____ Make an appointment with your counselor to review your academic progress and plan your program for next year. Talk about your grades. Remember the grades earned in the ninth grade are part of your official high school transcript.
- _____ Attend career information programs.
- _____ Work on earning your student service learning hours.

Tenth grade

Fall

- _____ Continue your participation in extracurricular activities.
- _____ Take the PSAT. Check with your counselor for more information.
- _____ Visit your college/career center.
- _____ Continue working with *Choices Explorer*.

Winter

- _____ Talk with your counselor about your grades.
- _____ Meet with your counselor to discuss results of the PSAT.
- _____ Find out what kinds of postsecondary schools offer the education you need to meet your career plans.

Spring

- _____ Plan next year's program to reflect your interests, school progress, and emerging career plans.
- _____ Continue working with *Choices Explorer*.
- _____ Consider career and technology course offerings at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology.

Summer

- _____ Continue earning student service learning hours, particularly through activities related to potential career plans.

Eleventh grade

Fall

- _____ Take the PSAT and the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQT).
- _____ Attend college programs sponsored by your counseling department.
- _____ Attend career presentations sponsored by your school, MCPS, and the business community.
- _____ Acquire volunteer or job experiences related to career plans.
- _____ Monitor your student service learning hours.

Fall/Winter

- _____ Meet with your counselor about your progress.
- _____ Meet with college admissions representatives who visit your school.
- _____ Get information on apprenticeship programs.
- _____ Get information on trade and technical schools.
- _____ Take career interest inventories.
- _____ Continue working with *Choices Explorer* or *Choices Planner*.
- _____ Begin working with *WorkSpaceK12* to identify colleges and universities to which you might apply.

Early Spring

- _____ Consider career goals as you select classes and revise your high school planning sheet.
- _____ Plan next year's program to enhance prospects for employment opportunities and college admissions.
- _____ Work with your counselor to determine if you are ready for American College Testing (ACT), Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT), ACCUPLACER or SAT Subject Tests.
- _____ Use the computer search programs to identify appropriate colleges and/or trade and technical schools.
- _____ Consider an internship for your senior year.

Spring

- _____ Attend college fairs and school-sponsored programs. Confer with your counselor about postsecondary plans.
- _____ Register for ACT, SAT, ACCUPLACER and/or SAT Subject Tests as appropriate.
- _____ Attend career information programs.
- _____ Spend time in the college/career center exploring materials. Find out about summer enrichment programs.
- _____ Begin visiting colleges and /or trade and technical schools.
- _____ Assemble a file of materials collected from colleges and/or trade and technical schools and those distributed by your counseling department.
- _____ Make interview appointments for the summer or early fall if appropriate. Practice interviewing skills.
- _____ Become familiar with college and job applications.
- _____ Develop your résumé/personal references.
- _____ Continue earning student service learning hours if needed.

Twelfth Grade

Summer/Fall

- _____ Make an appointment with your counselor for you and your parents to discuss postsecondary plans.
- _____ Request applications from colleges and/or trade and technical schools. Set up a file system.
- _____ Register for ACT, SAT, ACCUPLACER and/or Subject Tests as appropriate.
- _____ Stay abreast of all scholarship opportunities.
- _____ Review high school records, including graduation requirements.
- _____ Complete any remaining student service learning hours.
- _____ Visit college and/or trade and technical schools. Talk to admissions representatives who visit your school.
- _____ Seek out scholarship information and apply as appropriate.
- _____ Attend college and career programs sponsored by your counseling department.
- _____ Familiarize yourself with your school's transcript request procedure and follow it.
- _____ Talk with your counselor about your academic progress.

Fall/Winter

- _____ Fill out college admission applications by December 1 if possible. Abide by both school and college deadlines.
- _____ Seek letters of recommendation if needed. Give teachers and counselors sufficient notice.
- _____ Complete a résumé.
- _____ If appropriate, have your parents complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and other financial aid forms, if required by the college, and file after January 1.

Spring

- _____ Attend job fairs.
- _____ Contact Maryland Department of Economics and Employment Development for job openings.
- _____ Maintain good grades and good attendance.
- _____ Notify your counselor of your application status as you hear from the colleges.
- _____ Request a final transcript to be sent to the college you will attend in the fall.
- _____ Notify the colleges you are not planning to attend.
- _____ Perfect your job-interviewing skills.



Definitions

In high school, certain terms and their meanings might be confusing. The following listing will help you understand some of the high school jargon.

High school credits—All subjects in high school are taught by semester. The semester or final grade is a compilation of the quarterly grades and the final exam. A passing final grade in a semester course earns a 0.5 credit. A total of 22 credits in required and elective subjects is needed to earn a high school diploma. Other graduation requirements also apply.

Transcript—A transcript is a record of all courses taken in high school, the level of the courses, and the final grade earned in each course. Usually, colleges and employers want to review a student transcript before accepting a student in a college or a job.

Grade point average (GPA)—Each final grade earned signifies points. An “A” is 4 points, “B” is 3 points, “C” is 2 points, “D” is 1 point, and an “E” is 0 points. The sum of the final grade points divided by the number of courses determines the cumulative grade point average (GPA).

Weighted grade point average (WGPA)—An “A,” “B,” or “C” in an Honors or advanced class earns an additional point. These increased points result in a “weighted” grade. The sum of the final grade points, including those “weighted” for Honors and advanced classes divided by the number of courses, is a cumulative, weighted grade point average (WGPA). MCPS does not rank students. A profile of grades by class is provided to colleges.

Academic eligibility—Students must maintain a 2.0 marking period average with not more than one failing grade in the preceding marking period in order to participate in extracurricular activities. The marking period average is not the same as the GPA.

Student service learning (SSL)—SSL is an unpaid activity within the curriculum, school, or outside community that provides service to an individual or group to address a school or community need. Hours accumulated are counted toward the graduation requirement for student service.

National Honor Society (NHS)—This society comprises 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students who have demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in academics, character, leadership, and service. Not all schools have a chapter of NHS, and there are different eligibility requirements among the schools that do have chapters. Check with your counselor or NHS sponsor for more information.

High school diploma—A diploma is a degree issued to a student who has successfully met the subject, credit, and other requirements issued by the state and county boards of education, met the attendance requirements, and met the required High School Assessment graduation requirements.



Career Planning

What is career planning?

When you were very young, you were asked, “What are you going to be when you grow up?” You probably had several answers. Career planning begins very early in life and is the accumulation of the experiences (in school and out) that you have had.

The Seven Keys to College Readiness

The Seven Keys will open the door to college for students. The Seven Keys are a pathway identified by Montgomery County Public Schools that will increase the likelihood of students being ready for college and earning a degree. These Seven Keys are significantly more demanding than the state requirements of earning a high school diploma. This is intentional. Students who only meet state high school graduation requirements may not be prepared to take and do well in college-level classes. They may be required to take and pay for remedial courses at their college before starting college-level work. Students who attain the Seven Keys are less likely to need remedial classes and are more likely to be ready for college and the workplace, where competition for jobs is high.

There will be situations where a student may not attain one Key or several Keys for any number of reasons. Some students will attain the Keys with the special services and accommodations they receive through their educational plans. Our children are unique, and how quickly or how much they progress will vary. Attaining all Seven Keys does increase the likelihood of a student being ready for college, but missing a Key does not close the doors to college for any student. It is important to look at all of a student’s strengths, as well as the student’s motivation to succeed.

Your high school has a career center and a college/career information coordinator (CCIC). The center has materials to help you learn about your interests and possible occupations. It also contains up-to-date information for career planning. As you review and revise your high school planning sheet, speak with your counselor

about your career goals. Your student service learning activities also will help you find out about different careers.

Consider enrolling in a Division of Career and Technology or Foundation career pathway program while in high school. These programs give you the opportunity to earn FREE college tech prep credits at Montgomery College for courses taken in high school. For more information about these programs go to www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/CTE/toolkit/index.shtm.

What career assessments are available?

Students in all MCPS high schools have access to two powerful career planning Web-based applications: *Choices Explorer* and *WorkSpaceK12*.

Choices Explorer

Students find this site exciting and informative, with fun articles about careers, recreation, education, and skills. In *Zones*, hundreds of occupations are arranged by career cluster. *Career Finder* is a quick and easy self-assessment of interests and skills. Colorful graphics compare a student’s self-rating of skills and interests to suggested occupations. *Career Research Tool* guides

SEVEN KEYS TO COLLEGE READINESS

7: 1650 SAT, 24 ACT

6: 3 on AP exam, 4 on IB exam

5: Algebra 2 by Grade 11, “C” or higher

4: Algebra 1 by Grade 8, “C” or higher

3: Advanced math in Grade 5

2: Advanced reading MSA in Grades 3–8

1: Advanced reading in Grades K–2

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students through Skills, Values, Interests, and Personality inventories to generate career research leads. The site license for *Choices Explorer* allows for career exploration to be accessed on the Internet—both at school and at home. Each suggested career can be explored in detail, and there are Web links to professional associations, colleges that offer the required courses, and additional related articles.

WorkSpaceK12/Career Interest Profiler

While the *WorkSpaceK12* is primarily focused on college admissions and financial aid, it does contain a powerful *Career Interest Profiler*. This career interest inventory enables students to link career interests back to their college search.

Career interest and aptitude tests

In addition to the *Choices Explorer* and *WorkSpaceK12* online assessment/interest inventory, most career center self-administered instruments or other computer inventories may be done individually or may be used as part of class assignments. Also available is the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The ASVAB is administered free to students in Grades 10, 11, and 12. Check the college/career center for the testing date. Taking the ASVAB does not involve a commitment to the military.

MCPS Career Clusters

Existing Career Pathway Programs and Academies

<p>ARTS, HUMANITIES, MEDIA, AND COMMUNICATIONS CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcast Media • Printing, Graphics, and Electronic Media 	<p>BIOSCIENCES, HEALTH SCIENCE, AND MEDICINE CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biotechnology • Medical Careers 	<p>BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy of Finance, National • Accounting • Business Management • Marketing
<p>CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpentry • Construction Electricity • Heating and Air Conditioning • Masonry • Plumbing 	<p>EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND CHILD STUDIES CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Child Development • Teacher Academy of Maryland 	<p>ENVIRONMENTAL, AGRICULTURAL, AND NATURAL RESOURCES CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Horticulture • Green Industry Management • Landscape Design
<p>ENGINEERING, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, & MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGIES CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Engineering (Project Lead the Way) • Pre Engineering 	<p>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy of Information Technology National • Cisco Networking Academy • Network Operations • Oracle Academy 	<p>LAW, GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND ADMINISTRATION CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire and Rescue Services/ Emergency Medical Technician • Justice, Law, and Society
<p>HUMAN AND CONSUMER SERVICES, HOSPITALITY, AND TOURISM CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academy of Hospitality and Tourism, National • Cosmetology • Hospitality Management • Manicuring/ Nail Technology • Professional Restaurant Management 	<p>TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND LOGISTICS CLUSTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive Body Technology/ Dealership Training • Automotive Technology/ Dealership Training • Foundations of Automotive Technology 	

Detailed information, including required courses for program completion, course rigor, graduation requirement, and corresponding articulation agreements with Montgomery College can be found at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/cte.

Other Sources of Career Planning Information

There are many websites that are sources of valuable information about careers and career planning. Here are a few of them:

- MCPS college and career information website
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/careercenter/
- Choices Explorer and Choices Planner <https://access.bridges.com/auth/login.do?targetUri=%2Fportal%2FlandingPage.do>
- U.S. Department of Labor Career Voyages
www.careervoyages.gov/
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
www.bls.gov/oco/
- MCPS Career Pathway Programs Toolkit
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/cte/toolkit/
- MCPS/Montgomery College (MC) Career Pathway Programs Articulation Agreements Brochure
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/cte/toolkit/Articulationt.pdf



What To Do After High School

Apprenticeship programs

An apprentice is a person who is—

- At least 16 years old,
- Being trained in a particular trade by a skilled worker under a planned program on the job,
- Taking classroom instruction (through adult education, at a community college, or in regular school if in a part-time job), and
- In training anywhere from one to six years (depending upon the trade—averaging three to four years).

Some additional facts:

- Employment is based on supply and demand
- The person wanting an apprenticeship may apply to and have a contract with one of the following:
 - An employer in the trade
 - The association of employers
 - The joint apprenticeship committee
 - The organization of employees registered with the apprenticeship council

For further information about specific apprenticeship programs, check in the college/career center and/or meet with your counselor.

College/University

There are several types of colleges and universities. The college/career center at your school and your counselors have additional resources to help you choose the right school to pursue your career interests.

Military training

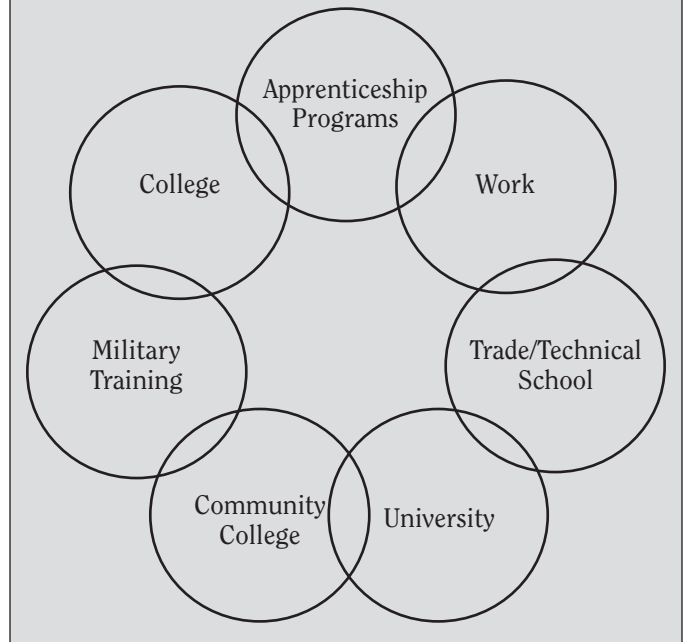
You can learn about your chances for success in the military by taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). This test is given at local high schools free of charge.

Men and women may enlist in all branches of the military. Enlistment procedures are similar, but the services differ in length of enlistment and opportunities for specific training. Active military enlistments are available in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

Trade and technical training

The Thomas Edison High School of Technology and many high schools offer a variety of programs in which students may obtain technical training during high school. Landscaping, biotechnology, and systems

Find your circles of interest and begin the research needed to reach your goals.



engineering technology are a few of the programs that begin in high school and continue at Montgomery College. For more information about specific career pathway programs, go to www.montgomeryschools.org/departments/cte/toolkit/index/shtm.

Community colleges, adult education, and private schools have trade and technical training programs for people who are no longer in high school.

Work/Postsecondary education

If you decide to get a job immediately after high school you should—

- Develop some job-finding and job-keeping skills,
- Talk to a counselor or a college/career information coordinator about job possibilities and/or visit the Maryland State Department of Employment and Training office,
- Visit with a career and college research and development teacher in your high school,
- Visit your career and media centers,
- Talk with employers about combining work and a part-time college program, and
- Investigate career education courses that match your interests.

College Planning

Going to college is one of many options available to you as you pursue your career plans. In either case, a certain amount of planning is required. The high school plan that you made with your parents and counselor should reflect courses that meet college entrance requirements. Course choice and the level should reflect your academic abilities, talents, and career interests. Certain courses act as gatekeepers for college entrance. Algebra and geometry are two such courses. Aspiring to go to college can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Education is important not only for its own sake, but people with more education have higher earnings within virtually all occupations.

No matter what your postsecondary (after-high-school) goals are, planning is important. Graduation requirements are complicated, and several options or programs are available to you as you move through high school. The Seven Keys may guide you as well.

You completed a high school plan in Grade 8 as you prepared to enter high school. Now that you are in high school it is important to reevaluate and revise your plan. You will need to do this yearly with your parents and counselor. Make sure that the choices you make this year will help you reach your career plans for after high school.

The Student Educational and Planning Worksheet (MCPS Form 560-45) can serve as a way to ensure that you meet all graduation requirements and prepare for your postsecondary goals (see page 19). Use it in conjunction with your *MCPS High School Course Bulletin* to create or update your own high school plan. Your high school counselor will assist you.

College admission requirements

Know the requirements for a high school diploma and the requirements of the colleges. All state universities in Maryland require successful completion of specific high school courses, 4 credits in English, a minimum of 3 credits in each of the disciplines of social studies and science, and a minimum of 2 credits in a foreign language. A minimum of 4 credits in mathematics also is required, which must include Algebra 1, geometry, and Algebra 2. The most competitive universities and colleges throughout the United States may require more credits in some of the courses listed. Your choice of college major also may determine whether

you should take more than the minimum number of credits.

To find out the admission requirements for particular colleges and universities, visit the college/career center and review college catalogues.

College Admissions and Placement Tests

Different tests are used for different purposes within the college admissions and placement processes. Some tests (the SAT, the ACT, and under certain circumstances the SAT Subject Tests) may be used by colleges and universities in making the admissions decision. When applying to college, it is very important that you determine which test or tests (if any) they require when applying for admission.

Some tests (the PSAT from the College Board and the PLAN and the EXPLORE from ACT) can be used to help you determine how prepared you are for SAT and ACT. The PSAT is also used as the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship competition when taken in the 11th grade. It is important that you work with your counselor and other staff members at your school to determine which tests are in your best interest. It is also important that you are adequately prepared for these tests.

Some tests (the College Board Subject Tests, the Advanced Placement Tests, the ACCUPLACER, and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) can be used to determine the levels of the courses that you will be able to take once admitted to a college or university. In some cases you can even earn college credit with sufficiently high scores on Advanced Placement Tests. Again, it is very important that you determine from the colleges or universities what their policies are with regard to these tests.

There are many websites that are sources of valuable information about college admissions and placement tests.

- PSAT (www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html)
- SAT (www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about.html)
- College Board Subject Tests (www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about/SATII.html)

- Advanced Placement Tests (www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html)
- ACT Test (www.act.org/aap/)
- PLAN—The ACT Test for 10th graders (www.act.org/plan/)
- EXPLORE—The ACT Test for eighth and ninth graders (www.act.org/explore/)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (www.ets.org/)
- Accuplacer (www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/accuplacer/)

Students with documented learning or other disabilities may be able to utilize testing accommodations for college admissions and placement tests. To do so, they need to apply directly to the testing company to be granted access to accommodations on those tests owned by the testing company. Information about these processes can be found at—

- Testing Accommodations on College Board Tests (www.collegeboard.com/ssd/student/index.html)
- Testing Accommodations on ACT Tests (www.act.org/aap/disab/index.html)

Early college-planning tips

Grade 9

- **Read**
- Make sure your courses reflect a college preparatory curriculum. The caliber of subjects you choose and the grades you earn become the most important record colleges use in making admissions decisions.
- Make an appointment with your counselor to discuss academic, career, and personal issues.
- Speak with your counselor about taking the PSAT or PLAN as a practice test. Remember, however, that only students who take the PSAT in the junior year of high school can qualify for National Merit scholarships. The test may be taken each year.
- Talk with your parents and teachers about your interests, aspirations, and goals.
- Visit the college/career center and get information about careers, colleges, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities.
- Visit college campuses as you vacation with your parents.
- Participate in extracurricular school/community activities.
- Complete class assignments and homework, and participate in class discussions and activities. Remember that the grades you earn in Grade 9 are a part of your official high school transcript.
- Maintain excellent attendance.

Grade 10

- **Read**
- Continue using all the tips offered for Grade 9.
- Speak with your counselor about meeting with college representatives who visit your school.
- Take the PSAT.
- Find out what kinds of postsecondary schools offer the education you need to meet your career plans.
- Plan next year's program to reflect your interests and abilities.
- Consult with your counselor and teachers about taking SAT Subject Tests in subjects you have completed.
- Consider career and technology course offerings at the Thomas Edison High School of Technology.
- Identify career interests, aptitudes, and abilities using an interest inventory available in your career center.
- Visit the college/career center and speak with the college/career information coordinator and your counselor about scholarship opportunities.
- Develop skills in interviewing and completing job/college applications.

Articulation Program at Montgomery College

MCPS students can receive up to 18 free college tech prep credits at MC for courses taken in an MCPS high school. The booklet, *Articulation Agreements Between Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery College*, details the Career and Technology Education (CTE) career pathway programs and courses for which articulation agreements exist. To learn more about the details of specific articulation, go to www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/cte/toolkit/index.shtm

A Quick College-Planning Guide for Students with Special Needs

There are many factors to consider when selecting a college. In addition to exploring programs, location, size, cost, housing, career, and social opportunities, you also want to search for schools that offer the services you need to succeed academically. This guide is designed to help you with that search. When comparing one college with another, try using the questions on page 18.

Develop self-awareness

- Become familiar with how you learn best.
- Understand your strengths as well as your special needs.
- Know which accommodations work best for you and apply them to your learning.
- Build strengths and areas of interest through extracurricular activities, service learning projects, internships, or work experiences.

Practice self-advocacy

- Prepare to assume responsibility for advocating for yourself in college by practicing while in high school.
- Attend your Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and be an active participant.
- Use logical, clear, and positive language to communicate your successes and concerns.
- Learn to be comfortable describing to others how you learn most effectively, your disability, and your academic needs.

Prepare yourself well

- Take the most challenging courses available to you and work hard in each of them.
- Talk with your counselor and teachers about the standardized tests you will need to take and plan a testing timeline.
- Consult with your counselor about whether or not you will qualify for accommodations on standardized tests, how and when to apply for those accommodations, and the testing plan that best meets your needs.

Explore options

- Talk with your counselor and visit the school's career center to identify a list of 6 to 10 schools that interest you, based on academic programs, admissions requirements, cost, financial aid opportunities, location, size, social activities, etc.
- Narrow the list by familiarizing yourself with the services each school can provide to special-needs students.
- Visit the school, if possible, to get an impression of campus life, classes, residential facilities, etc.
- Contact the Disability Support Services Office at the college to get your specific questions answered.

Complete the application process

- Understand admissions requirements for the schools you select and be sure you are able to provide everything that is requested. You are not required to disclose your disability. Discuss with your counselor and your family whether or not you will share that information. Colleges may not use the disability as a basis for denying admission. On the other hand, they are under no obligation to alter their admissions requirements or standards for students with disabilities. You must meet the admissions criteria established by the school.
- Follow your high school's application timeline to be sure all requirements are completed on time.
- Complete, then submit your application(s).
- Make the most of your senior year!

Did You Know?

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the "special education law," does not apply to higher education. Postsecondary institutions are not required to design special programs for students with disabilities, only to provide accommodations that allow for equal access to the regular program.

Students with a 504 plan (under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) may also work with their college to determine accommodations that allow for equal access to the regular program.

QUESTIONS	NAMES OF COLLEGES					NOTES
<p>Write the names of colleges that interest you at the top of the columns to the right. Then mark a Y (for yes) or an N (for no) in response to each question, based on what you learn at the MCPS College Fair through talking with an admissions representative, consulting with your counselor, or gathering information from your high school career center.</p>						
ADMISSIONS						
Are admission criteria for students with special needs the same as for other students?						
Are any special assessments required?						
Is diagnostic testing available?						
Is there a unique summer orientation for students with special needs?						
Is documentation required to demonstrate special needs?						
ACADEMIC SUPPORTS						
Is the process for accessing special needs clear and easy to follow?						
Is there a fee for supports?						
Is tutoring available?						
Is remediation in basic skills available?						
Are study skills courses available?						
AUXILIARY AIDS: Does the school provide the following?						
Calculators						
Laptop computer						
Personal desktop computer						
Scan-and-read programs						
Screen-enlarging programs						
Screen readers						
Speech-recognition programs						
Spelling/grammar assistants						
Other						
AUXILIARY SERVICES: Does the school provide the following?						
Advocates						
Alternative exam arrangements						
Duplicating at no cost or reduced cost						
Mentors						
Note takers						
Priority registration						
Readers						
Scribes						
Other						
STUDENT SUPPORTS: Does the school offer the following?						
Career counseling						
Career placement						
Internship programs						
Individual counseling						
Small-group counseling						
Student organizations for special needs students						
Derived from <i>Peterson's Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Disorders</i>						

Program Options	Credits Required	9th Grade Year _____	Credits Earned	10th Grade Year _____	Credits Earned	11th Grade Year _____	Credits Earned	12th Grade Year _____	Credits Earned	TOTAL CREDIT	
Students must complete at least one of the program options listed below to meet graduation requirements.											
OPTION 1: Foreign Language or OPTION 2: American Sign Language or OPTION 3: Advanced Technology Education	2 OR									0.0	
										0.0	
											0.0
											0.0
											0.0
or OPTION 4: Career and Technology Program	4									0.0	
										0.0	
and Additional Electives ²	2.5									0.0	
										0.0	
											0.0
											0.0
											0.0
Total Credits			0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0	0.0	

Student Service Learning³	75 hrs.									
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²List only classes in subject areas not mentioned above.

³Students graduating in 2008, 2009, or 2010, must earn 60 SSL hours. Students graduating in 2011 and after must earn 75 SSL hours.

HIGH SCHOOL ASSESSMENTS		
	SCORE	
Algebra and Data Analysis		
English		
Government		
Biology		
	Yes	No
REQUIREMENT MET		

APPROVALS

Signature, Student

Signature, Parent/Guardian

Signature, Counselor

____/____/____
Date

____/____/____
Date

____/____/____
Date



This document is available in an alternate format, upon request, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, by contacting the Public Information Office, at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 112, Rockville, MD 20850, or by phone at 301-279-3391 or via the Maryland Relay at 1-800-735-2258.

Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration in communicating with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) may contact Interpreting Services in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program at 301-517-5539.

MCPS prohibits illegal discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, socioeconomic status, age, disability, physical characteristics, or sexual orientation. Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination or Title IX issues such as gender equity and sexual harassment should be directed to the Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools at 301-279-3126, via the Maryland Relay at 1-800-735-2258, or addressed to that office at 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 129, Rockville, MD 20850.

