**Prepare for YOUR Future**

**Ninth Grade**

**Fall**

**Explore college and career opportunities**

* Research opportunities that match your goals, interests, and skills. Think broadly.  There are many different career and educational options available.
* Participate in career related learning experiences explore different career areas.
* Attend college fairs and career fairs.
* Plan college visits on school breaks or during the summer.
* Contact trade and apprenticeship programs and ask about specific programs, pathways, and on-the-job training.

**Plan your courses.**

* Plan your coursework so it includes rigorous courses, including career electives and CTE courses.
  + These courses are offered in a variety of subjects and incorporate academic, creative, technical and soft skills that will help you choose a career while providing you with lifelong skills and training. Some trade and apprenticeship programs look for certain CTE and math courses.
* Keep up with your school work and maintain good grades.
* Many students need academic support to do well in rigorous courses. Speak with your teachers and counselor about support options available at your school.

**Plan and participate in career related learning experiences.**

* Look for events and activities may include informational interviews, job-shadows, internships, school speakers, and visits to local businesses and industry organizations.
* Log or journal any career related experiences, including volunteer activities
  + Include the name and date of the experience.
  + Write a few sentences about the experience.

**Get involved in extracurricular activities like sports, student government, music groups, and volunteerism.**

* Keep a record of these activities for your resume and college applications.
* Extracurricular activities can help you discover your interests, develop leadership skills, demonstrate time-management, and show a commitment that colleges and employers look for in an application.

**Winter**

Start thinking about which colleges and careers best match your goals, skills, and interests.

**Spring**

* Start thinking about which colleges and careers best match your goals, skills, and interests.
* Determine your Expected Family Contribution ([EFC](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/paying-your-share/expected-family-contribution-calculator)), actual cost of college and sources for financial aid.  [How to Pay page](https://fafsa.ed.gov/spa/fafsa4c/?locale=en_US#/landing)
* Make summer plans to work or participate in a variety of college and career related experiences, such as volunteerism, college visits, job-shadows, and internships. Take the time to speak with people in your daily life who are in careers that may be of interest to you. Don’t forget to add these experiences to your journal or log.