

Postsecondary Planning

After high school, what comes next?

Many homeschool families wonder how their children's future will unfold as their interests develop. These recurring thoughts and strengths may appear initially as curiosities in robotics, music, writing, or science, for example. There are other students that might gravitate toward skills cultivated by their family business or career concepts gained by special experiences. Still others are inspired and influenced by community individuals who have been part of a student's life and shown them other career possibilities.

Each family's choice could potentially move a childhood interest into a lifelong occupation. In response, Twindly Bridge Charter School has created some suggestions to guide families through postsecondary preparation time; eighth grade through twelfth grade. As teachers from MSBSD, we preface this list of resources as one way to address future planning and gain independent living skills, college entrance tips, trade school information, sport scholarship requirements and more. Of course, there are endless ways to achieve postsecondary goals. We

share information that Mat-Su School District guidance counselors have shared. We also include research and experience gained from other student's postsecondary choices. It is valuable information to support and help our families begin this diverse process.

After high school, the question of "What comes next?" can be overwhelming at first. The internet helps with the research and there is a lot of information available. One of the best ways to acquire current information is to research and network with other parents who are going through the same process. This can lessen research time and make the magnitude of information easier to move through. It can also assist by keeping a momentum going as students write entrance essays, collect recommendations, develop a portfolio of volunteer time, and organize pertinent scores that will be part of applications.

We chose to share these resources in the student's eighth grade year so that families can get a working sense of the educational, financial, and time sensitive demands this process takes. It is clearly not a simple or easy process. However, words cannot express the benefits of getting our youth off to a great start.

BEGIN IN EIGHTH GRADE

- Review the “Program of Studies” at the www.matsuk12.us website and review what credits are mandatory to graduate. Explore the variety of classes that are accepted for graduation.
- Adults, visit with your teen about positive options for their future! Brainstorm ideas!
- Investigate the internet resources for college bound, trade school, military, and work opportunities.
- Earn college credit while in high school by enrolling in Alaska Middle College School, doing AP/IB courses at Wasilla, Colony and Palmer HS, attending Mat Su College, attending APU Honors Program.
- <http://www.Commonapp.org> is an “investigative tool” to 488 colleges. Believe! Stay focused! Maintain strong grades through all four years of high school.
- Gain the “reality check” with <https://akcis.org/>
- Explore an SAT preparation website. <http://www.SATquestionoftheday.com>
- Athletes can sign up with <http://www.NCAA.org> This opportunity is active in the junior year after SAT’s are submitted.
- Discover <http://www.wiche.edu/wue> schools. Tuition reductions are available at colleges in the Lower 48.
- Are there TRADE schools in Alaska that I can attend? <http://avtec.labor.state.ak.us/>
- What do I need to do to improve my chances of gaining scholarships? How do colleges award their scholarships? Find out at www.collegeapp.org
- Learn which year the PSAT, SAT or ACT exams are taken. Why is it important to do well in the exams?
- Do you need help in any of your subjects? Would you consider hiring a tutor to help you catch up? If you are proficient in math, reading, and writing, you will perform much better in your high school classes.
- Service~ 120 hours for the portion “extracurricular activities and work experience” in www.commonapp.org Can I begin these hours in my eighth grade year?

- Start your Memory Book/Portfolio of accomplishments if you haven't already.

- FAFSA assists college bound students with scholarships, grants, and work study. Find out how it works at www.fafsa.ed.gov/

- Here is a site to help you find grants <http://forms.educationgrant.com/> and another for scholarships to Alaska colleges: <http://acpe.alaska.gov/>

NINTH GRADE

Become comfortable with "What's next?"

- Attention! High School graduation requirements are often different from college entrance requirements. Clarify these lists and plot your next four years of classes.

- Research! The ninth grade year is typically a continuance of the information that was introduced to you in the eighth grade. Get your volunteer hours completed for your www.Commonapp.org application because life is just getting busier the closer you are to graduation. If you are non-proficient in any of the subjects, this is the year to improve, get extra help from your teacher, and hire a tutor if you can. High School

qualifying exam is in tenth grade. You must be proficient in math, reading, and writing.

- Check in with the MSBSD "**Program of Studies**" to understand what it takes to graduate and what college credits are available in high school:

<http://www.matsuk12.us/page/827>

- Invite friends over for a "College Search" party. During your get together, network with friends about interesting colleges to attend, which ones have great scholarships opportunities, what specialties are in each college, and what you might be interested in studying.

- Attend college or postsecondary school information meetings.

- Strive for "A's" in high school. Consider taking AP/IB courses. Be involved with service organizations, sports, and academic clubs.

TENTH GRADE~ Get ready for the last three years of high school and beyond.

- This is the year that you take HSQGE exam. The Pre-SAT exam is available to take this year. Remember, the more you practice taking tests, the better you'll be when

the real time comes. Reading, writing, and math must be passed in order for you to graduate.

- On the www.commonapp.org website, research schools that align with your interests and educate yourself on the requirements for application. For example, some colleges might require four years of high school language while others require none. Peruse the www.commonapp.org student application essay choices and practice writing a 250-500 word essay. Locate an English teacher that could help you with your writing challenges. Writing on www.commonapp.org topics can help you define what you really need to say.
- If you are such a student, perhaps going to the Alaska Middle College School is right for you. It will award college credit while attending high school!
- Check out www.khanacademy.com for tutorials that accompany SAT study!

ELEVENTH AND TWELVETH GRADE

~ Get Ready, Get Set, GO!

- Besides finishing up your high school curriculum, you are now on

the fast track by getting ready for the postsecondary education that is right for you. Work Keys exam is in 11th grade and helps employers define your strengths in the workplace. College bound students will begin the process of preparing for and taking the SAT exam. This can continue through your 12th grade year but most college applications are submitted in the fall or late winter of the senior year.

- Begin drafting your applications to schools in the <http://www.wiche.edu/wue> <http://avtec.labor.state.ak.us/> www.commonapp.org
- Consider applying to schools that are not on the www.commonapp.org list. **Mark your calendar.** It might appear similar to the one below:

Spring semester before your Senior Year:

Sign up for the SAT/ACT, attend the exam. When you get the results, see if the scores make you eligible for the colleges that you are interested in.

Summer before senior year:

Work on a 250-500 word essay. Check in with a writing editor.

Assess your SAT/ACT scores with the colleges that you are interested in. Ask, "Do I need to take this exam

again?" Send only your top SAT scores to www.commonapp.org
There is no penalty for taking the SAT/ACT more than once.

October of the senior year:

Finish www.commonapp.org with information, volunteer/employment hours, high school grades, SAT/ACT scores, and essay.

November of the senior year:

Apply to all the colleges that have free applications.

January of the senior year:

Have parents/guardian fill out a FAFSA report at www.FAFSA.gov

I hope that this webpage has assisted you. You are welcome to call, e-mail or visit with me if you have any questions, concerns, or comments. I am more than willing to meet with you. My e-mail is Bettina.Mileur@matsuk12.us