



9th grade is an important year for college prep. It is the first year that grades and co-curricular activities are considered by colleges/universities for admission and scholarships. Take preparation seriously during freshman year; you'll be setting yourself up for success later in high school!

For Students :

- Take challenging classes in core academic subjects. Most colleges require 4 years of English, at least 3 years of social studies (history, civics, geography, economics, etc.), 3 years of math, 3 years of science, and many require 2 years of a foreign language. Round out your course load with classes in computer science and the arts.
- Get involved in school or community-based activities that interest you or allow you to explore career interests. Consider working, volunteering, and/or participating in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, and camps with special focuses such as music, arts, or science. It's *quality* not *quantity* that counts.
- Ask your guidance counselor or teachers what **Advanced Placement or concurrent college courses** are available, whether you are eligible, and how to enroll in them.
- Use the U.S. Department of Labor's **career search** tool to research your career options: <https://www.mynextmove.org/>
- Start a **list of your awards, honors, paid and volunteer work, and co-curricular activities**. Update it throughout high school: [DreamCatcher Curriculum Extracurricular Archive](#)
- Check out *KnowHow2Go: The Four Steps to College*, which suggests **actions you can take** as you start thinking about education beyond high school: <http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/four-steps-to-college.html>
- Learn more about **managing your money**: <https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/money-management-checklist.pdf>
- Research the **benefits of going to college**: <https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college#why-go>. Don't be afraid to ask for help from your parents, school counselor, and upperclassmen as you prepare.
- Estimate your **potential financial aid** using the FAFSA4Caster: <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/estimate>

For Parents :

- Talk to your teen about **college plans**. Support their college aspirations and make plans to reach definitive goals. Visit college campuses together.
- Address your concerns about **whether your teen can or should go to college**. Use this website for a multitude of topics and resources: <https://studentaid.gov/resources/prepare-for-college/parents>
- Keep an eye on your **student's study habits and grades**. Provide an appropriate study space, free of distractions like cell phones and television. Place a higher priority on their studies rather than co-curricular activities. Stay involved with their academics and take advantage of opportunities to be involved with their school activities.
- Encourage your teen to take Advanced Placement (<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/>), honors, concurrent college courses, or other challenging high school classes. This will ensure that they are **academically prepared for college** (and might save you money on tuition later).
- Add to your student's **college savings account or 529 plan** regularly if you are able. Make sure you are fully aware of the requirements of the account.
- Read *Parent Power* to access **ideas for remaining involved** in your teen's progress: <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/parentpower/booklet.pdf>

Notes:
