

COLLEGE & CAREER GUIDE

Start planning your future today!

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LETTER FROM THE NETWORK ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR HIGH SCHOOLS



Dear Boston Public School Students and Parents:

We are excited to introduce you to the 2013–14 edition of the Boston Public Schools' **College and Career Guide**. The guide was created specifically to support your journey through high school and help you on the path toward a great college education and career.

To be ready for college, you will need academic skills and the right resources to help you navigate the college experience. The new Massachusetts College and Career Readiness definition calls for all students to have the academic knowledge, experiences, and intellectual and personal qualities needed to enter into a college program or economically viable career pathway. There are many people, programs, organizations, and institutions that are ready to help you find the best information to make the right choices for college and career.

We encourage all students and parents to read this guide and take the time to check out the many resources and websites that are listed inside. Lots of the advice here comes directly from BPS graduates who have taken these steps themselves and wish to share their best advice.

In college, as in life, success is up to you. It is up to you to be diligent and work with the key people who are here to help, such as guidance counselors, college advisors, teachers, community-based program staff, friends, fellow students, and family members. Together we will help you find the higher education opportunity and the career that best suits you and your dreams.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Elizabeth Skipper". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mary E. Skipper
BPS Assistant Superintendent, High School Network

RESOURCES



This guide is available online, with additional information, at www.bostonpublicschools.org.

WHY A COLLEGE EDUCATION?

How important is freedom to you? How important is it to be happy? How important is it to be independent? How important are your hopes for the future? In the four years you are in high school, you'll have the opportunity to answer all those questions for yourself. By showing you how attending college can add enjoyment to your life, this guide will help you answer some of those important questions.

Almost nothing in life is guaranteed. However the effort we put into something is the only assurance that we can increase our opportunity for success. The more we invest time, money, and resources into attaining an education, the greater the likelihood of achieving the life we desire. Here are some of the outcomes that are sure to change for you when you pursue higher education.

More Money, More Jobs, More Choice

- College grads are more likely to be employed than non college grads.
- The employment rate among persons with a college degree is consistently higher than the employment rate for either high school graduates or high school dropouts.
- **For young adults in particular**, the unemployment rate for high school graduates is almost three times as high as that for college grads of the same age.
- The median earning for adult women with a bachelor degree is 79% higher than for women with a high school diploma. For college educated men, it is 74% higher.

Better Health

- College educated adults are more likely than others to receive health insurance and pension benefits from their employers.
- College educated adults are less likely than others to be obese.
- Adults with a bachelor's degree stop smoking at higher rates than those without a degree.
- College education leads to healthier life styles, reducing health care costs.

A Better Life

- College educated adults are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than individuals with just a high school diploma.
- Education enables people to better adapt to change. It also makes them more likely to take responsibility for their lifestyle.
- College educated parents tend to engage in more educational activities with their children, making them better prepared for school than other children.

It's Up to You: So if a better life, a happier life, a longer life, and a wealthier life sound like your goals, well then you need to add college to your top-ten list of things to do. It's really that simple.

Now college may mean a certificate program, two years, four years, six years, or eight or more years depending on your dreams for the future. It can also mean specialized technical training and apprenticeship in a trade. That's all up to you.

Graduating high school is the first big step. This guide will provide the information you need to help get ready to progress through high school successfully. The guide is also designed to help you get ready for college, apply to college, and be accepted by a college that fits you best.



Congratulations! Reading this introduction is now complete. You can check off that step! Now read on, ask questions, and explore.



COLLEGE OPTIONS

There are many college choices. Choosing the right college for you is based on your interests and goals as well as your level of preparedness. These are the different types of colleges and degrees:

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION	Community Colleges Community colleges offer two-year, one-year, and certificate programs in a variety of academic majors. A two-year graduate is awarded an associate degree. Community college credits for academic classes may be transferrable to four-year colleges or technical/career training and continuing education programs. Community colleges have an “open admissions” policy, which means they will accept everyone who applies who has earned a high school diploma or G.E.D. Some programs have more specific admissions requirements (e.g., nursing, criminal justice). Community colleges do not offer housing. There are 15 Massachusetts Community Colleges. Visit www.massccc.org for more information.	Public Four-Year Colleges The state of Massachusetts has a list of all its four-year colleges and universities at its website, www.mass.edu . There are 14 four-year public universities. A four-year graduate is awarded a bachelor’s degree. Public institutions for higher education can offer more affordable tuition to in-state residents because they are funded largely by state taxes. Admission to state four-year institutions is based on a student’s high school or community college grade point average (GPA), performance on standardized assessments such as the SAT and ACT, and a personal interview or written essay. Individual college admission criteria can be found on the college’s website or at www.collegeboard.org .
	Technical Colleges Technical colleges offer specific trade, technical, and career training. Course credits vary and may or may not be transferable to two-year or four-year colleges. Technical colleges usually have fairly open admissions, but they may have stricter requirements for more technical or scientific subjects. Some offer only a certificate. Some offer an associate degree.	Private Four-Year Colleges & Universities The main difference between private and public four-year institutions is the tuition cost. Private colleges operate with private funds. Additionally, many of the private four-year schools often have more requirements for acceptance, and they generally accept a lower percentage of their applicants. For a comprehensive list of four-year colleges and universities in Massachusetts, check out the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) at http://cihe.neasc.org . <i>*Students and their families should be wary and very careful when considering a private technical, two-year, or four-year school. Without adequate financial aid the costs can quickly become overwhelming. Please be sure to speak with a guidance counselor or advisor before making a commitment.</i>
PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION	Junior Colleges Junior colleges are two-year colleges and offer academic credits that may or may not be transferred to four-year colleges and technical/career training. Admission requirements vary.	

Associate degree is an academic degree earned after completing a two-year course of study. Community colleges, technical colleges, and junior colleges offer associate degrees.

Certificate is earned upon completion of a 6–12 month program. Certificates can be obtained at community colleges, private training centers and colleges, and Massachusetts workforce development training centers.

Bachelor’s degree is an academic degree awarded for an undergraduate course of study, which generally takes four years to complete but can take more or less time. Students may earn a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science (B.S.). The B.S. usually requires more math or science coursework.

Advanced degrees require more years of study, allowing you to focus your attention in a particular field. Speak to your guidance counselor or college counselor for more information about advanced degrees.

Check out *Peterson’s Complete Guide to Colleges* for a comprehensive list of colleges and universities that offer all types of academic degrees. You can view the list at www.petersons.com; www.bpl.org; www.amazon.com; or your local library.

CAREER OPTIONS

What is the difference between a career and a job?

Career: A career is a series of related jobs that provide advancement in a meaningful area of work chosen by an individual.

Job: A job is work performed within a career. It is a paid position providing work that is expected to continue.

In many instances, a job is selected to earn an income to survive. A career is more deliberate. A career is a choice. A career is made up of a series of related jobs that are chosen purposely because the work matches an individual's values and goals. All work requires some level of education and training. The more formal education and training you complete, the better your chances for good salary, promotion, and job satisfaction.

While you might not be ready to make a very specific career choice before choosing a college, you can identify what types of work and careers interest you. Is it health, computer technology, culinary arts, counseling, business, creative arts? Once you identify your interests and passions it becomes a little easier to set high goals for yourself. Your motivation to succeed will increase when you have a goal that is close to your heart. In fact, you might have several goals. Don't worry! Identify the general career areas (we call them career clusters) and start with your first goal. The rest will fall into place.

Below are **16 career clusters** that include a majority of careers. Visit www.careertech.org for more information about careers within each cluster.

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, Audio-Visual Technology & Communication
- Business Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Finance
- Government & Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Who can help???

Almost every person you know can offer useful information to help you find direction. Start by speaking with your parents, guidance counselor, teachers, career advisors, librarian, brothers and sisters, and friends. The web is always out there and has the world of information to explore, but it helps to have a general career focus to start. Complete a career interest inventory at your school or on the web. You may be surprised to find occupations that you didn't know existed. Once you have identified your career(s) of interest, you can start researching colleges that offer that type of career training. See, that wasn't as tough as you thought it would be!

For more information on occupations and careers requiring training beyond high school please visit these web sites:

Preparing Your Child for College:
www.ed.gov/pubs/Prepare

Occupational Outlook Handbook: www.bls.gov/oco

My Road: www.myroad.collegeboard.com/myroad/navigator.jsp

Massachusetts Career Information System:
www.masscis.intocareers.org
(use your city and zip code to sign in)

Detailed career cluster and occupational information: www.Onetonline.org

Information on technical careers:
www.Careertech.org

Career information for middle schools:
www.Citizenschools.org

Massachusetts apprenticeship information:
www.massresources.org

You can find additional information at your local library or online at www.bpl.org.

For a list of community-based programs/activities, see the resources section at the end of this guide.

RESOURCES

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION OPTION

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs provide hands-on applied learning experiences that build academic knowledge, problem solving skills, general employment skills, and specific career skills that lead to applicable industry credentialing. You may enroll in CTE pathway programs while in high school and gain the technical skills needed to jumpstart a career. A CTE pathway program will offer assistance with career planning and tools needed to successfully transition to college or the job market. With a career in technical education you can enter employment, apprenticeship programs, and two- or four-year colleges after you graduate from high school.

What are the benefits of CTE?

- You can explore a variety of career choices
- You can partner with employers to participate in work-based learning activities, such as career fairs, job shadows, internships, and mock interview
- You can earn tuition-free college credits while still in high school
- You can open the door to an exciting and rewarding career
- You can attain high-quality skills while still in high school
- You can graduate from high school with industry-recognized credentials
- You can participate in college placement test preparation to increase your readiness for college

Work-Based Learning Activities: If you are serious about a CTE pathway and decide to pursue your education through one of the programs offered by BPS, you can attain lucrative certifications that complement your academic courses. As a CTE student, you can participate in work-based activities through internships and apprenticeships in a wide variety of organizations, such as:

- Longterm care facilities
- Acute care facilities
- Health clinics and medical offices
- Law firms
- Insurance organizations
- Construction/contractors
- Food service industry
- High-end restaurants
- Cable stations — TV production
- Marketing and advertising

* CTE pathway programs are similar to choosing a major in college.

HINT: CTE programs are offered in a number of BPS high schools. If you would like to explore the option of a CTE pathway, talk with your guidance counselor to learn more about the CTE program or go to www.bostonpublicschools.org/cte.

Did you know? Students who take CTE classes, as well as academic classes in high school, are better prepared for the working world, to meet performance requirements of more employers, and to earn higher salaries.

NEED TO KNOW

High school is one giant step into your future. It's the time when you will decide how you want to live your adult years. Of course you can change course, but the trick is to be on a course at any given time. High school is the time to ask: "What careers would be a good fit for me?"; "What education will provide the best options for my future?"; "What can I do after school and in the summer to learn more about careers and college?"

CONQUERING HIGH SCHOOL

Before you set out on a career, you need to successfully cross the finish line of high school. The first step to doing that is to have a clear image of you crossing that finish line. Picture yourself diploma in hand. With that clear image in mind, you can begin a journey into high school that will almost guarantee your success.

One sure way to a great finish is a great start. Begin high school with a **plan**. Make sure you have some understanding of the resources that are available to you. With that information under your belt, here are some tips to help you stay ahead of the race.

STUDENT TIPS:

- Be on time.
- Be prepared. Get a locker and get into the habit of going to class with notebooks, pens, homework, etc.
- Establish a relationship with your guidance counselor and go to him/her with questions.
- Get involved with sports or other afterschool activities.
- Make it a habit to read and do homework every night.
- Get extra help if you need it. Tutoring is available at your school, the local library, and many community programs.
- Start your day with a healthy breakfast. School starts early — make it a point to eat right. You will think and feel better.
- Surround yourself with people who want you to succeed. This includes your friends. Find an adult mentor for support.
- Use out-of-school time wisely. Afterschool and summer activities can help with career decisions and in the college admissions process.

PARENT TIPS:

- Attend the freshman orientation or schedule a visit to see your teen's school and meet the principal and guidance counselor.
- Attend the Parent Open House.
- Attend School Parent Council (SPC) meetings to stay updated. Contact the Office of Family and Student Engagement, 617-635-9661, if your school does not have an SPC.
- Make sure your child is equipped with a book bag, notebooks, pens, and other necessary school supplies.
- Help your son/daughter find a good match with afterschool activities and summer programs.

ON MENTORS: A mentor is a trusted counselor or guide. Find a person, or more than one, who matches that description. It can be a parent, teacher, member of the clergy, neighbor, older friend, guidance counselor, employer, supervisor, coach, community agency worker ... whoever ... but find at least one person you can respect, trust, and share your feelings with.

Find a mentor who cares about your success and will help bring out the best in you!

"My coach was the first person who made me see that I could do more with my life. He pushed me to work harder not only in volleyball, but in my classwork. As I worked harder I started getting better grades and helped the team more. When I started feeling better about myself I also started making more friends."

— Midalia, BPS graduate



DO YOUR BEST

HINT: All of your grades from freshman to senior year will appear on your high school transcript. When applying to college, you will need to submit a copy of your transcript, which is your record of achievement in high school. Doing well will not only help you get into college; it will also give you a sense of pride and accomplishment.

HINT: Honors and AP courses not only prepare you for the rigors of college; they also demonstrate your willingness to work hard and achieve. Research shows that students who take these courses in high school are more successful in college. And Dual Enrollment classes allow you to take and earn college credits while still in high school.

STUDENT TIPS:

- Get the best grades you can.
- Know your grade point average (GPA). Understand how your GPA matches the requirements of the college or career program you hope to attend.
- Take Precalculus or Calculus in high school.
- Challenge yourself. Take the most demanding courses your school offers. Find out what Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and Dual Enrollment classes are available in your school. Selective colleges require a rigorous course of study to be considered for admission and all colleges look favorably on students who have challenged themselves.

PARENT TIPS:

- Find out what classes your teen is taking. Do these classes put your son/daughter on the right track to his/her desired career/college?
- Check homework periodically and read teacher comments on papers and tests. Follow up with the school if you have concerns.
- Encourage your child to take Honors, AP, and Dual Enrollment courses or the most demanding courses offered.
- Be aware of high school graduation requirements for your child.
- Set high standards and make sure your child knows that you believe in his or her abilities.

RESOURCES

American Student Assistance's (ASA) **Get Ready for College** booklet has steps to prepare for college, starting in grade 9. It is free to download at www.asa.org/plan. More information for the ASA College Planning Center is located in the resources section of this guide.

Another guide, **Teen Life Guide to College Admissions**, can be downloaded for free at www.teenlife-digital.com/tlpublications/collegeadmissions2013tl.

Upward Bound programs provide enrichment and college-preparatory courses in the summer and throughout the school year for high school students. The contact information for these programs is site specific. For additional programs offering enrichment courses, see the resources section of this guide.

AVID programs are offered in selected BPS high schools. If you need that extra boost and support to become a stronger student, then talk to your guidance counselor about the AVID program and learn more about them at www.avid.org.

NOW THAT YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY

KNOW THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

Getting ready for college and a career is a journey that began the first day you entered school. As you move through high school, you will find that the journey gets more and more interesting. It is crucial that you know the support systems and resources that are available to you. They were created specifically to help **you** succeed. Seek out and get to know those school personnel who will be influential in helping you on this journey, such as your teachers, guidance counselors, and/or college advisors.

College Tests and Test Preparation

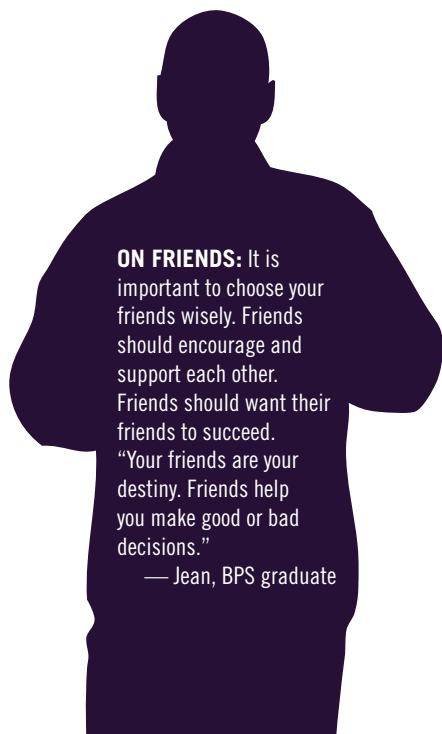
There are many tests in high school — assessment tests, exams for academic subjects, MCAS, etc. — and at times it can seem overwhelming. The best strategy for handling tests is preparation! Understand what each exam is testing and the length and format of the exam. Always, always read instructions. See your guidance counselor, advisor, or teacher for a copy of the current BPS testing calendar. Tell your family about key tests and get their support to keep you on track.

Applications for college and some jobs require additional, different tests. Know the tests that are required, their dates, and registration deadlines, and you will be one step ahead of the game. Many colleges request that you take an exam that tests English, math, and writing that is scored on a national scale. Most students in the Northeast take the SAT exam administered by the College Board. The ACT is an alternative exam also accepted by many schools. If you feel that your SAT or ACT test does

not reflect your abilities, you can consider a school that is test-optional (for a list visit the website for www.fairtest.org). In this case, colleges will rely more heavily on your high school academic record.

Review the College Entrance Exam section of the guide. At the beginning of the school year check with your guidance counselor for the most updated schedule for college entrance tests. Note that some schools require SAT subject tests. You may want to take these in junior or even sophomore year. Discuss this with your guidance counselor in sophomore year to make sure that you are on track.

Many afterschool and summer programs offer test preparation and there are also free online sources of help. Check out www.collegeboard.com for test dates and test-taking strategies, and check the resources at the back of this guide for programs providing support.



ON FRIENDS: It is important to choose your friends wisely. Friends should encourage and support each other. Friends should want their friends to succeed. "Your friends are your destiny. Friends help you make good or bad decisions."

— Jean, BPS graduate

REALITY CHECK

Have you ever considered the value of one course; pass it and you're one step closer to graduation and pursuing your dreams; fail it and you could be thrown off track for college, delay your graduation, and interrupt your plans for achieving your dreams.

Financial Aid

There are more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the U.S. **You can find a college that will provide you with an excellent academic education that meets your budget.** First, you need to understand the costs of college and what your family can afford. There are ways to predict the costs of college. The required form when applying for financial aid, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), has a tool you can use in advance of filing to estimate government aid you may qualify for. This tool is called the FAFSA4caster and can be found through the www.studentaid.ed.gov website or at the www.fafsa.ed.gov website.

Colleges are now required to provide an online tool that estimates the cost of an education specifically for you based on your family's financial situation. This tool can be found by searching for NET PRICE CALCULATOR at each college's website.

For more information on financial aid see the Make College Happen section of this booklet.

College Fairs

The Internet is a great way to gather information, but college fairs can be a great way to check this information out by meeting with college representatives. Be sure to attend each fair with a **list** for the colleges you want to learn more about. Attend with friends or as part of a school trip, but remember that your interests may not be the same as your classmates; seek out the information you want. Make a point to introduce yourself to college representatives, ask questions, collect materials, and ask more questions. The more you know, the better decisions you'll be able to make when choosing the right college for you.

DO YOUR THING

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO? Play a sport, sing or dance, write or paint? Would you like to learn more about the business world or health care? Do you want to help others? **Then do it!** Colleges want to see applicants who have demonstrated a continued interest in a few areas, not a shopping cart full of odds and ends.

Colleges understand that some students need to work to help with family expenses, which may limit extracurricular activities. Be sure to explain this in your college application. Perform well on your job and ask your employer to write you a recommendation. This can help you on your college and future job applications.

STUDENT TIPS:

- Participate in activities in school.
- Participate in activities in your community.
- Participate in college-preparatory programs.
- Participate in volunteer/community service activities.
- Remember schoolwork should come first. Keep up your grades!

PARENT TIPS:

- Encourage your child to get involved with activities.
- Help your child find programs/activities that match his/her interests.
- Be aware of the activities your child is involved in.
- Help your child keep everything in balance.



To find **employment and volunteer opportunities**, as well as other afterschool programs, go to www.cityofboston.gov/youthzone.

STRESSED OUT? There are times when life can seem to be more than you can handle. Being a teen today can be difficult. Your body, friends, interests may be changing. You can feel pulled in a million different directions. You're told you're just a kid, but you're expected to act like an adult. It's normal to feel unsettled at this age.

When situations in your life create additional stress, you can experience emotional overload. This does not mean that there is anything wrong with you. It means that you should talk to someone about how you are feeling. When you speak to a counselor or advisor, what you share is confidential, except in cases of concern about your safety or the safety of others. Trust someone — it can help.

For a listing of confidential hotlines go to: www.findcounseling.com/help/hotlines/massachusetts.html.

TAKING MASSCORE

What is MassCore? MassCore is a program of study that aligns your high school coursework with college and workforce expectations to give you the best chances of succeeding beyond high school. MassCore recommends taking 22 courses during high school — a combination of “core” courses like English and math and additional learning opportunities such as health, technology, or business education.

So what does that mean for your course planning?

The graphic below outlines the MassCore recommended program of study. In addition to the “core” courses, it is important to think about other learning experiences that can help you reach your goal. AP classes, online courses, and service-learning opportunities can count toward your MassCore completion.

How many “Core” classes?

4 English

4 Math

3 Lab-based Science

3 History/Social Science

2 The same foreign language

1 The Arts

5 Additional business education, career and technical education, health, and/or technology

GO FOR IT!

Taking 4 years of Math

Beginning in 2016, all four-year public colleges and the University of Massachusetts will require a fourth year of math.

This means that you must have taken and passed four years of math courses in order to apply and gain entry into these colleges.

So what classes should you take? Colleges are looking to ensure that you’ve completed:

- Algebra I
- Geometry OR Trigonometry
- Algebra II
- Senior Year Math course

Speak with your guidance counselor and make sure you are on track for success!

DID YOU KNOW?

High school graduates earn an average of \$456,000 more over a lifetime than high school dropouts, but **graduates of a four-year college** program earn an average of **\$1.4 MILLION more!**



MassCore meets or exceeds college admissions requirements for Massachusetts’s four-year public colleges. You’ve already completed one important step of the application process!



STEP 1

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

A good way to learn about college and careers is to talk to people who hold jobs you might like to have someday. This will also help you learn how your talents and interests might lead to a variety of experiences, including different careers.

STUDENT TIPS:

- Talk to teachers, counselors, mentors, coaches, employers, and friends.
- Talk to people who have been to college or, better yet, are in college now!
- Get real-life experience by volunteering or interning at a local hospital, business, museum, etc.
- Talk to your guidance counselor to learn more about different types of jobs and careers.
- Be open to possibilities.

PARENT TIPS:

- Introduce your child to friends/co-workers who have been to college.
- Talk with your child about college.
- Visit libraries for college and career books. *The Index of Majors* and the *College Handbook* (published by the College Board) are good books to start with.

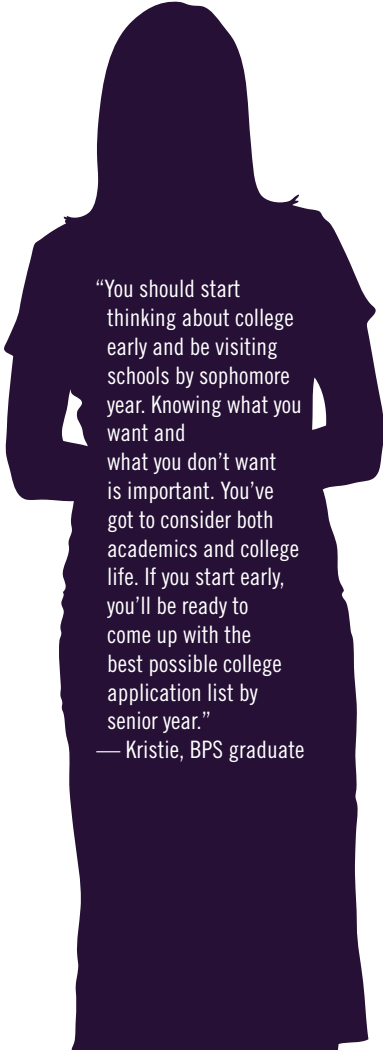
LEARN FROM THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU

Questions to ask:

- Did you go to college? Why or why not?
- How did you get your job?
- What is the best part of your job?
- What do you not like about your job?
- Is there anything you would do differently?

If the person went to college:

- Why did you decide to go to college?
- How did you choose the college you went to?
- What did you study?
- Where did you go to college?
- What did you like about college?
- What jobs did you have before your current job?
- How did college help you get where you are today?
- Is there anything that you would do differently?



"You should start thinking about college early and be visiting schools by sophomore year. Knowing what you want and what you don't want is important. You've got to consider both academics and college life. If you start early, you'll be ready to come up with the best possible college application list by senior year."

— Kristie, BPS graduate

STEP 2

VISIT COLLEGES

It is never too early to begin visiting colleges. Just being on a campus will help you get a better idea of what you do and don't like in a college. You are very fortunate to live in a city that has many colleges. Spend a few weekends walking around different campuses. If you think you'd like to go away, take a walk around a college when you are away on vacation or visiting family out of town. If you're interested in a college that is too far away to visit, ask your guidance counselor to suggest a similar local college to tour.

To schedule a college visit:

- Check college websites for phone numbers and email addresses to schedule your visit.
- Call or email the undergraduate admissions office to schedule a tour.

STUDENT TIPS:

- A good way to learn about colleges is to see them for yourself. You can do this by visiting a college campus; eating in the cafeteria; viewing the gym; or attending a sporting event, play, or concert.
- "Like" a college's Facebook page or follow them on Twitter. Read college newspapers to learn about events happening on campus, most of which are open to the public.
- You can also call the admissions office to schedule campus tours, which are usually led by college students. A tour guide shows you around the campus, allowing you to see the facilities, learn about programs, and ask questions.

HINT: While tours are usually led by college students, keep in mind that they work for the admissions office and are coached on what to say and how to answer questions. While you can use this opportunity to ask questions and get a college student's perspective, **be sure to ask questions of other students around campus to get an unscripted and unbiased point of view.**

PARENT TIPS:

- If possible, visit colleges with your child.
- Encourage your child to participate in academic programs available at colleges.
- Attend college fairs with your child.

HINT: Visit college fairs for one-stop shopping. College fairs are good opportunities for getting a quick overview of a large number of colleges at one time. Colleges send admissions representatives to meet with college fair attendees, answer questions, and give out information. Bring a large bag to collect materials from different colleges. There are many college fairs throughout the year. The National College Fair, which is the largest, is held in the spring. To find out the date for this year's fair, go to www.test.nacacnet.org. Check the newspaper for listings of other fairs.

Visit www.campustours.com to view colleges online. This will provide you with a glimpse of colleges you are not able to visit.

Summer programs (e.g., Health Careers Opportunities Program) are offered at various universities. These programs are a great opportunity to experience college life.

For a list of these and other summer programs, go to www.boston.k12.ma.us/summer.asp.

RESOURCES



STEP 3

MAKE A PLAN FOR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT TIPS:

- Meet your guidance counselor.
- Take a career interest inventory.
- Participate in college-preparatory programs located on college campuses.
- Think about your goals for the future regarding where you would like to work and what you would like to do.

HINT: MassCIS (Massachusetts Career Information System) is a free self-assessment tool available on the internet to all Massachusetts residents. It can provide a realistic view of the best educational and career path to ensure your future success. Go to <https://masscis.intocareers.org> to begin your assessment.

* Many students are unsure about what they want to do. This is OK! Students frequently change their mind before settling on a college major or career choice. **The important thing to remember is that doing well in high school will give you more options in college and life.**

THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE BY ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS:

In my spare time I like to _____

I am good at _____

When I graduate from high school, I want to _____

When I grow up, I want to be a _____

Ten years from now I would like to _____

What I value most is _____

The person I most admire is _____

“Set high standards for yourself. Don't just apply anywhere. Do research on colleges that you are interested in and seek out your guidance counselor and other helpful adults that are knowledgeable about the college process. Also, get to know your guidance counselor and teachers well so that when it is time to ask for recommendations it is easier for everyone.”
— O'Neil, BPS graduate



PREPARE A LIST OF COLLEGES

What do you want to get out of your college experience? What are you looking for in terms of size and location? What types of students, programs, and activities do you hope to engage with? How important is financial aid? You might not find a college that meets all your criteria, but the closer you get, the happier you'll be attending that college.

Your list should include:

- **"ACADEMIC LIKELY" Schools:** Colleges you are most likely to be admitted to based on your high school grades and test scores.
- **"ACADEMIC TARGET" Schools:** Colleges with acceptance requirements that are similar to your grades and SAT/ACT scores and where you have a good chance of admittance.
- **"ACADEMIC REACH" Schools:** Colleges that are very selective and usually admit fewer than 25% of their applicants. Their acceptance requirements may be higher than your grades and SAT/ACT scores.

Admissions and Affordability

You must consider affordability in your college selection process. State schools are not always the cheapest option. Some students get much better financial aid packages from private schools.

- **"FINANCIAL LIKELY" Schools:** Colleges you are most likely to get a large merit-based scholarship based on your high school grades and test scores. At these schools, your grades and test scores are much higher than the majority of applicants. You will receive enough money to attend this college without having to pay much out-of-pocket or borrow outside of Stafford Student Loans.
- **"FINANCIAL TARGET" Schools:** Colleges you are most likely to get some merit-based scholarships based on your grades and SAT/ACT scores. At these schools, your grades and test scores are similar to other applicants. You might need to pay out-of-pocket or borrow outside of Stafford Student Loans.
- **"FINANCIAL REACH" Schools:** Colleges that do not offer you any merit-based scholarships. Their acceptance requirements are much higher than your grades and SAT/ACT scores. You will most likely need to pay a significant amount out-of-pocket or borrow a significant amount of money outside of Stafford Student Loans.

Financial Back Up Plans

Just because you do not get enough financial aid to attend a school does not mean that you can never attend that school. Consider spending two years at a community college and improving your GPA. You might be able to get a merit-based scholarship as a transfer student. Plus, you will have spent much less on your first two years of college.

HINT: Check out college summer "bridge" programs. Many colleges, including Salem State, University of Massachusetts at Boston, and Boston College, have summer bridge programs that give students a head start on college during the summer. Bridge programs help orient students and prepare them for the rigors of college life. When applying to schools, ask your guidance counselor about colleges with bridge or summer programs.

STUDENT TIPS:

- Visit colleges.
- Request catalogs from all colleges that interest you.
- Look at college websites.
- Do college searches online.
- Consider college "bridge" programs designed to prepare and orient students prior to freshman year.



FILL OUT COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

IMPORTANT STEPS IN COMPLETING APPLICATIONS:

1. Meet with your guidance counselor at school to review your list of colleges.
2. Determine whether your college uses the Common Application or its own application.
3. Compile a list of your athletic, extracurricular, volunteer, and work experience.
4. Ask your guidance counselor and two teachers who are very familiar with your work to write your recommendations. Be sure to give them plenty of lead time as other students will be asking for recommendations as well.
5. Write a college essay (get feedback from your guidance counselor and English teacher).
6. Have someone look over your application.
7. Ask your guidance counselor to send out transcripts.
8. Request fee waivers if you are eligible. You can get fee waivers from your guidance counselor or at the ASA College Planning Center.

HINT: On marketing ... yourself. Your application and essay represent your chance to present yourself as a special person who has had significant achievements and the potential to grow and contribute to college life and society. Emphasize your strengths.

It is important to tell a story. Admissions counselors read hundreds or thousands of application essays. A good story will not only catch the admissions counselor's eye, but you will likely be remembered. Also, keep in mind that a good story will describe your challenges and your successes. Don't be afraid to discuss a situation in which you failed, as long as you detail how you overcame it.

STUDENT TIPS:

- Most colleges allow you to apply online. Many prefer this method.
- When filling out a paper application use a black or blue pen and write very neatly.
- Make a copy of the application, fill out a rough draft, have someone review it, and then recopy the information onto the original application.
- Begin your college essay early, and have it read and reviewed by several people.
- Write several drafts of your essay before submitting the final copy. It is a good idea to put your draft aside for a few days so that you can reread it with a fresh set of eyes. Keep a copy of your final draft.
- If needed, request your letters of recommendation early (at least two months). Follow up with each person two weeks before your deadline.
- Give recommenders your resume and a written note, indicating when you need to mail your application.
- Be aware of deadlines and send your applications beforehand.

*** "The Common Application"** allows you to apply to more than 390 colleges with the same application form. Download the application or apply online at www.commonapp.org.

RESOURCES

In addition to your guidance counselor or student development counselor, there are many programs available to assist students with the application process. Write Boston is a program that can help with writing and editing your college application essays. For more information, call 617 541-2604 or visit its website at www.writeboston.org.

For a complete list of college planning resources, see page 28.

WHAT DO COLLEGES LOOK FOR?

Each college decides which criteria it will use to evaluate applications. In varying order of priority, most colleges look at the following:

- Quality of courses (college preparatory, honors, and AP classes)
- GPA (grade point average)
- Standardized test scores (SAT and/or SAT Subject Tests, ACT, TOEFL)
- Recommendations
- Essay
- Interviews
- Extracurricular activities

HINT: A special note to student athletes. Division I and Division II schools mandate that students complete the NCAA Clearinghouse Eligibility Form and meet specific eligibility requirements. Talk to your guidance counselor to find out more or visit www.ncaaclearinghouse.net and read the *Guide for the College Bound Athlete*.
You may be a fantastic athlete, but if you don't have the grades or SAT scores, you may not be eligible to play. Check out NCAA eligibility guidelines.

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

Some colleges require or recommend you have an interview as part of the application process. If it's required at the colleges you're applying to, contact the admissions office to make an appointment. This is a great opportunity for the college to get to know you as a person rather than just as data on the application form. If you have an interview, you should:

- Learn about the college in advance.
- Prepare questions in advance (it is OK to write them on a piece of paper and refer to them during your interview).
- Dress as you would for a job interview or other important event. Dress neatly and conservatively.
- Arrive early.
- Make eye contact and greet the interviewer with a smile and a handshake.
- Try to answer questions in full sentences with details rather than with one-word responses.
- Thank the interviewer before you leave and follow-up with a thank-you note expressing why you would like to attend that college.



TAKE STANDARDIZED TESTS

HINT: Studying for a test is only one part of getting good results. If you don't know how to take a test, it doesn't matter how hard you have studied. Make sure you enter the test room equipped with a handful of test-taking strategies. Check out www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/boost-your-skills for a list of exam-day survival tips.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

PSAT: Students should register with their guidance counselor to take the PSAT (Practice SAT exam) as 10th and/or 11th graders. The test is usually scheduled during October. (BPS pays for every 10th and 11th grader to take the PSAT at no charge.)

**While the PSAT scores are not seen by admissions counselors in their review process, the scores are used for certain scholarships, namely the National Merit Scholarship. It is therefore important that you take this exam seriously and do your best!*

SAT: Test that is required for most college applications. It includes a verbal, math, and writing section. Students should register for the SAT online at www.collegeboard.com or by mail. Registration must be submitted prior to the deadline. Fee waivers are available for eligible students. Students should generally take the SAT in the spring of 11th grade and in the fall of 12th grade.

ACT: This test includes sections on English, mathematics, reading, science, and an optional writing test. Fee waivers are available for eligible students. It can be used in place of the SAT for most schools.

SAT Subject Tests: These tests for specific subject areas (e.g., math, Spanish, chemistry, physics, etc.) are required by some colleges. Fee waivers are available for eligible students.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language): Test for students who have been in this country for less than four years. See your guidance counselor for a partial fee waiver if eligible.

COLLEGE PLACEMENT TEST: ACCUPLACER is the college placement test (CPT) used by all the Massachusetts state, two- and four-year colleges to determine if you are ready for college-level work. The Accuplacer is not a college admissions test. The test is given after the college has already accepted you. The result is used to assign you to classes that match your current abilities in English and mathematics. Colleges generally schedule their college placement test to be taken during the summer before you start college or in the fall immediately after you begin college.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU?

The Accuplacer is an important test because it will determine if you must take **developmental (remedial)** courses in English or math before being allowed to take college-level courses in the subjects you want to study. Accuplacer is also a required assessment for high school students taking dual-enrollment courses.

Developmental courses provide support by allowing time for students to review and improve skills to succeed in college. A student taking developmental courses must pay tuition for those courses equal to the tuition of other college courses. However, no college credit is given for developmental coursework. You may need to take one or several developmental courses depending on the results of the test. That's why becoming familiar with the test and getting the help you need in high school will save you time and money in college. Fortunately, BPS high school students can take the Accuplacer while in high school. See your guidance counselor or advisor for details.

STUDENT TIPS:

- Be sure to register for and take the PSAT. Use your PSAT scores to study for the SAT.
- Know which tests colleges require.
- Plan out your testing schedule.
- Don't miss registration deadlines.
- If you're registering online, you must remember your screen name and password. Write them down and keep them someplace safe.
- Complete the SAT practice guide.
- Take an SAT preparation class.
- Read, read, read!
- On the day of your test be well rested, eat a good breakfast, and be on time.
- Remember your calculator, pencils, admissions ticket, and picture I.D.
- Bring something to eat and drink for during test breaks.

Check out **test preparation guides and programs**. Students can improve their test scores by becoming more skilled and familiar with the tests!

The **LEAP Program at Lena Park** offers free SAT preparation courses. Also check out **Let's Get Ready**, www.letsgetready.org/Programs/BostonMA, another excellent resource for SAT preparation.

For a list of test preparation resources, see the table on page 28.

RESOURCES

FIND WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

Grants: Free money based on financial need (e.g., Pell Grant, MassGrant, and campus-based grants) that does not have to be paid back.

Scholarships: Free funds to pay education costs based on academic achievement, financial need, athletics, special characteristics, or talents.

Work Study: Money earned by the student.

Student Loans: Money to be paid back.

Applying for and Receiving Financial Aid

Everyone must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). You can complete the application online at www.fafsa.ed.gov or download a paper copy from the site. Some colleges may also require the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile and/or college-specific financial aid forms. Check out the College Board website at www.collegeboard.com for more information.

When a student is accepted to a college, he/she will receive a financial aid award letter that outlines the amount of money he/she is eligible to receive in grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. The student and parent are usually expected to pay a portion of the total cost. This amount is called the Estimated/Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The financial aid award must be understood and evaluated carefully. Compare the financial aid award packages offered by different colleges. Your guidance counselor can help.

If you accept student loans as part of your financial aid package, you need to complete Entrance Counseling, which details your loan and your responsibilities as a borrower, and sign a Master Promissory Note (MPN), which authorizes the school to administer federal loans to you. You only have to do this once, provided you stay at the same school while earning your degree.

HINT: Free money is available for college, but you'd be surprised to know that many students miss the opportunity because they aren't willing to put in the time and effort into researching and applying for it. Block out time on your calendar for scholarship. Check out the list of websites with scholarship information on page 30 of this guide.

Immigration Questions

Your immigration status affects your college options. In the 9th grade or as early as possible, find out what your immigration status is and whether or not you need to change your status. There ARE ways to pay for college even if your immigration status prevents you from receiving financial aid.

Call the **Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA)** Coalition at 617-350-5480 ext. 205 to speak to an immigration counselor, or go to www.miracoalition.org.

Scholarships

Scholarships are based on academic achievement; need, skill, and talents; interest in specific college majors or careers; and membership in an ethnic, religious, or civic group. Ask your parents/guardian to find out if their employer offers scholarships to children of employees.

WARNING: Beware of **scholarship scams** that guarantee money, cost money, or ask for credit card information. Free help is available. Organizations such as uAspire provide advisors, and your college financial office provides financial aid counselors to assist new students. Always ask for available scholarships.

The city of Boston has a listing of scholarships specifically for Boston residents and BPS students.

See what you qualify for at www.bostonscholarshipguide.com.

For a list of resources for financial aid application assistance, see the resources section on page 28.



RESOURCES

FIND WAYS TO PAY FOR COLLEGE

STUDENT TIPS:

- Money is available for eligible students who apply.
- Every graduating senior should complete the FAFSA.
- You can complete your FAFSA anytime after January 1. Make sure you are aware of the financial aid deadlines of the colleges you're applying to and ALWAYS aim for the earliest deadline. The earlier the better!
- To be eligible for state financial aid, such as the MASSGrant, you must apply for financial aid before May 1.
- Students should receive their Student Aid Report (SAR) from FAFSA three weeks after submitting the form. Contact them if you don't.
- Several private colleges require an additional financial aid application called the CSS Profile. Check the College Board website (www.collegeboard.com) for more information.

- Some colleges require their own financial aid application. Make sure to check with each college's financial aid office or website.
- Check for private scholarships online and in your school's guidance office or career center.

PARENT TIPS:

- Save your pay stub from your last check(s) in December and your previous year's tax return. With this information you can help your teen file his/her FAFSA promptly. Beware of websites that offer FAFSA assistance for a fee. Free assistance is readily available.
- Every high school, many community programs, and College Goal Sunday (www.collegegoalsundayusa.org) provide help filling out financial aid forms. Speak with your child's guidance counselor for more information, or call or visit the ASA College Planning Center to get free professional help with the FAFSA (www.asa.org/plan/centers).

RESOURCES

uAspire helps students in all BPS high schools understand and navigate the entire financial aid process. Any student and/or family member is also welcome to visit the Center for College Affordability located in downtown Boston. For more information call 617-778-7195 or visit its website at www.uaspire.org.

MAKE DECISIONS

Once you've received your college acceptances and financial aid award notifications, you'll need to decide which school you want to attend.

You need to think about:

- Which college is most affordable? Compare financial aid awards to determine where you will spend the least amount of money.
- Which college has the most opportunities to offer, in terms of both academics and student involvement?
- Which college do you have the strongest connection to?

Once you decide which college to attend, you'll need to:

- Send in your deposit to the school of your choice.
- Check the deadline for the deposit (if you need more time, request an extension).
- Make sure to complete all paperwork the college sends you on time.
- Write the other colleges saying that you are declining their offer of admission (this can open up a spot for another student).
- Ask your high school to send a final transcript to the college you choose to attend.
- Colleges expect you to maintain your grades. If your grades decline, they reserve the right to place you on academic probation or withdraw your acceptance offer.

THE MOVE FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

The transition from high school to college is exciting, but it may also be stressful and scary.

The following steps will help make the transition smoother:

- Make sure that financial aid and verification is complete.
- Pay your deposit (or ask to have it waived) and attend the earliest orientation possible.
- If you are eligible for work-study, go to the student employment office in the summer to look for on-campus opportunities. Since many work-study and student jobs get taken quickly, you want to make sure you visit this office again **ON THE FIRST DAY YOU ARRIVE TO SCHOOL**.
- College is supposed to be fun! Get a list of student clubs and organizations. Getting involved early is a great way to meet others and feel connected, especially if you're commuting.
- College academics can be more challenging than high school courses. Remember tutoring and other sources of support are available, but it's up to you to sign up. Be sure to visit your school's Tutoring and Academic Support centers the **first two weeks of each semester** to make sure you are on track in each class and then for help if you are struggling in class, need to brush up on a particular subject, or need help writing a paper. It's better to get help early than wait until you're feeling overwhelmed. Talk to your professors if you have any concerns about your progress.
- You must manage your time carefully. Studies show that full-time students who work fewer than 20 hours per week are more successful in college. If you need help with time management skills, ask your advisor or someone in career services. There are frequently on-campus workshops to help you.
- Find people who encourage and inspire you to keep moving toward graduation (mentoring programs, professors, advisors, older students).
- Take care of yourself. The health and counseling services at your campus are there to support your health needs, be they physical or emotional. Be sure to make use of the services if you are feeling sick, stressed, or have questions regarding any health related issues.
- Keep in mind that you don't have to do this alone. There are **MANY** support programs available to you. In addition to all the supports offered on college campuses, you might be eligible to become part of a unique mentoring program called "SuccessBoston." Through SuccessBoston, you can connect with supports and resources on and off campus; get assistance with the financial aid process; learn time management to help balance school, work, and life; and explore majors and careers. See your guidance counselor, or go to www.successboston.org for more information.

***** It is extremely important that you determine whether or not you can afford your first choice college for four or five years. If you and your family know that paying a certain school's tuition bill is going to be a major struggle for the first year, it will most likely be a struggle every year. You have many opportunities for college and do not have to end up in massive amounts of debt. Talk to your guidance counselor, uAspire counselor, or the advisors at the ASA College Planning Center for help.



A TIMELINE FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Now that you have a wealth of information and resources at your fingertips, you need a system to help you put this information to good use. It is imperative that you get organized. To help you achieve this, here is a more detailed summary of what you should be doing each season of high school. This schedule was created as a guide. You are encouraged to use it or modify it to best suite your needs.

IN THE 9TH GRADE

The race called high school begins. It's a marathon, not a sprint.

To be college and career ready, there are only a few things you really need to focus on at the beginning of this high school race. They can all be summed up in one concept — **a winning attitude**. Adopt the **“If it's to be, it's up to me”** attitude. Proactively get involved in your own success by taking these three simple actions throughout your freshman year in high school.

- Find out what courses you will need to take and pass to stay on track and graduate ready for college and/or a career.

1. Know the course.

What are the Massachusetts Core Curriculum Standards to graduate from your high school?

2. Be prepared and ready to study and to learn.

- Determine each day to get a good night's sleep, eat a healthy breakfast, and have your books and school supplies ready for school.

3. Attend all your classes every day and show up on time.

- Aim for a perfect attendance in the 9th grade. Maintaining good attendance after that gets easier.

ESSENTIAL KEY TO SUCCEEDING
IN THE 9TH GRADE

ATTENDANCE!
Show up every day,
on time and ready to learn.

IN THE 10TH GRADE

By now you have warmed up to high school and you are ready to take off. In the 10th grade you are about to pick up some speed and bring out the best in you.

- Know your high school's requirement for graduation. Are you on track to graduate based on the Massachusetts Core Curriculum Standards (MassCore)?
- Study and take the PSAT.
- Find a friend or two and together attend and/or participate in a College Month activity, e.g., college fair, local college tour, etc.

FALL (September to November)

- Participate in extracurricular activities that you enjoy and/or a community service project that will make a difference for someone else.
- Get ready for the MCAS exams by reviewing content and understanding strategies for taking the test. You must pass MCAS exams for ELA, math, and at least one science subject to graduate.
- Find out your PSAT scores and how the results will help you take more rigorous courses in high school, e.g., Honors, Advance Placement, and/or Dual Enrollment.

WINTER (December to February)

- Step it up a notch if you can: Focus on getting good grades and maintaining outstanding attendance.
- Take and pass the MCAS exams.
- Create a resume. If you already have one, update it and look for summer opportunities that will be a fun learning experience.

SPRING (March to May)

- Participate in a summer employment or internship opportunity, hopefully one that will bring you closer to your chosen career path.
- Seek out and participate in a volunteer opportunity with one of your local community service organizations.
- Decide how you will add rigor to your classes in the fall of your junior year. What Honors, Advanced Placement, or Dual Enrollment courses will you take?

SUMMER (June to August)

“Nothing — absolutely nothing — is beyond your reach. So long as you’re willing to dream big. So long as you’re willing to work hard, so long as you are willing to stay focused on your education. There’s not a single thing that any of you cannot accomplish — not a single thing.”

— PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

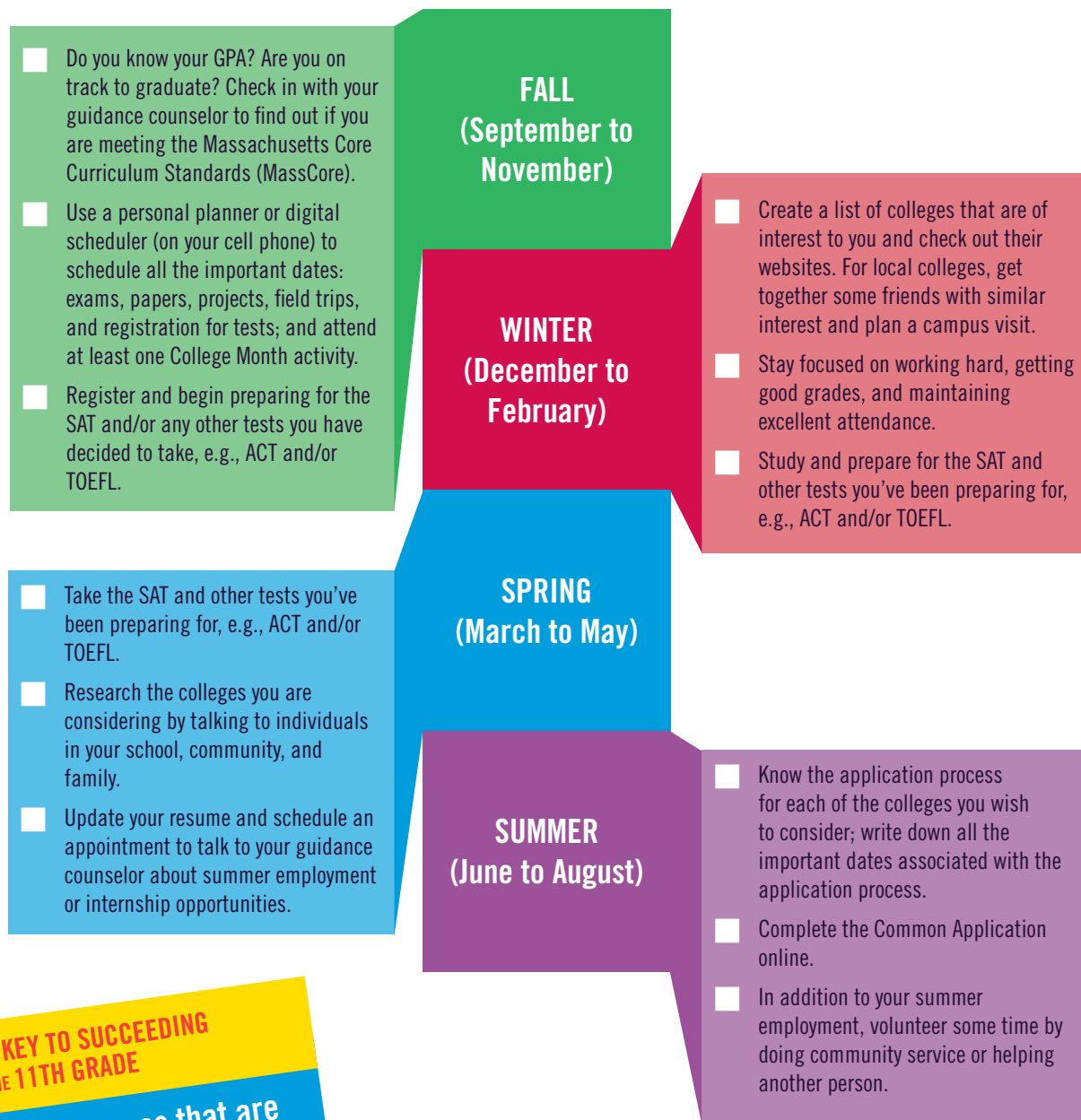
**ESSENTIAL KEY TO SUCCEEDING
IN THE 10TH GRADE**

**Learn how to use a
planner to help you
manage your time.**

A TIMELINE FOR HIGH SCHOOL

IN THE 11TH GRADE

You are half way to the end of your high school experience. If you have followed the checklist from the previous two years, you are in good shape to finish strong, ready for a college education or a career path.



ESSENTIAL KEY TO SUCCEEDING IN THE 11TH GRADE

Know all the resources that are around you — through your family, school, and community. Be bold and seek them out for advice and help as you need it.

IN THE 12TH GRADE

Now you can see the finish line, and although you might be tempted to, resist the urge to slow down. This is a critical phase in the pathway of being ready for college and a career.

- ❑ Schedule an appointment with your guidance counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and/or to start applying to colleges. Are you meeting the Massachusetts Core Curriculum Standards (MassCore)?
- ❑ Update your resume and write your college essay. Find those key people and solicit their help in writing your essay and updating your resume.
- ❑ Talk to a financial aid advisor about paying for a college education and/or setting a budget.

FALL (September to November)

WINTER (December to February)

- ❑ Complete and submit your college applications. Check to make sure that your transcripts and recommendations have been sent out.
- ❑ Complete and submit your FAFSA, (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
- ❑ Apply for scholarships.

- ❑ Participate in your senior class activities as much as you are able to.
- ❑ Decide which college you will attend and send in your deposit.
- ❑ Take any college placement tests that your college may offer. (This will let you know early if you'll be placed in any remedial courses.)

SPRING (March to May)

SUMMER (June to August)

- ❑ Make a special effort to thank the people who have helped you through high school: family members, teachers, school staff, friends, neighbors, and community members.
- ❑ Prepare for your transition to college by staying informed of everything you need to know to begin your freshman year in college. Read all the materials that your new school sends you and stay in constant communication with them.
- ❑ Make an extra effort to enjoy your summer vacation with friends and family.

ESSENTIAL KEY TO SUCCEEDING IN THE 12TH GRADE

Be informed and know exactly where you are and where you are going; then follow-through on all your due dates and deadlines to get you where you want to be.

ARE YOU ON TRACK TO GRADUATE?

You earn one credit by passing a year-long course or its equivalent. The easy-to-use checklist below was created for you by the Office of Enrollment. Use it frequently and you will stay informed about how you are doing with regards to meeting ALL your graduation requirements. Check with your guidance counselor and/or college advisor for the information you need to update this checklist.

What credits do I need to complete to graduate?

Talk to your guidance counselor or college advisor to make sure you are taking the right classes to earn the credits you need. For the mathematics requirement, you must earn 3 math credits and you also must take math in the 12th grade.

Core Subjects Needed to Graduate	Credits Required	Credits Completed	Credits Still Needed
English			
Math			
Science			
History			
World Language			
Health			
Physical Education (PE)			
Technology			

Have I fulfilled the MCAS requirements to graduate?

You must pass MCAS exams in ELA, math, and at least one science subject to graduate.

Subject	Test Taken (yes/no)	Test Passed (yes/no)	Met Requirement (yes/no)
English			
Math			
Science			

How is my attendance influencing my academic performance and my progress toward graduation?

Students who attend school less than 92% of the time have more difficulty staying on track. Did you know that having three or more unexcused absences per term or 12 or more per year can put you in danger of failing your courses and not graduating? *Did you know that you will be more successful during and after high school if you maintain at least a B average in all your classes?*

School Year/Grade	% Present	Grade Point Average (GPA)

REALITY CHECK

Not every class you take in high school is a core requirement for graduation. First, check to make sure you are making progress on required courses. Then, consider additional courses that may interest or challenge you.

List your colleges at the top of each empty column, and then record what tasks you need to complete for each. Check them off when you're done. Make a copy of this blank checklist if you are applying to more than five colleges.

COLLEGE APPLICATION ORGANIZER

TASKS					
APPLICATION					
Request info/application					
Set up online application					
Complete Common Application online					
Can I apply online?					
Regular application deadline					
Early application deadline					
Likely? Target? Reach?					
GRADES					
Request high school transcript — date sent					
Request mid-year grade reports — date sent					
TEST SCORES					
SAT required					
SAT Subject Tests required ____#					
ACT required					
TOEFL required					
Send SAT scores					
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATIONS					
Request recommendations ____#					
Date recommendations sent					
ESSAYS					
Write first draft of essay(s)					
Get feedback on essay(s)					
Produce final essay					
Show final essay to guidance counselor/advisor					
INTERVIEWS					
Interview at college					
Interview with college alum					
SEND AND TRACK MY APPLICATION					
Make copies of all application materials					
Include application fee or fee waiver					
Sign application					
Date application sent/filled online					
Confirm receipt of application materials					
FINANCIAL AID FORMS					
FAFSA deadline (date sent/filed online)					
Mail PROFILE, if needed (date sent/filed online)					
Mail school aid form, if needed (date sent/filed online)					
AFTER I HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED					
Send deposit					
Send AP Scores					
Send letter declining admission					
College placement test available					
College placement test taken					

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

The Internet has a lot of information to help you with the college process. Be aware that many of these sites ask you to “sign-in” with your name and email address. They do this to show advertisers that people are using the service. It is like commercial television. You watch “free” shows with advertising.

- Watch for check-off boxes that ask if you would like to receive information from their advertisers. If you don’t want to get on their mailing lists, leave the box blank.
- If a site asks you for your Social Security number or credit card number, just exit the site.

There’s so much free information available that there’s very little reason to use services that charge. We have tried to provide only sites that are reputable and free to BPS families.

Below are some websites you may find helpful. We are not recommending any one site; they are not ranked and sites can change. Look for the information you need, and if you can’t find it on one site, go to another.

College and Career Information

Career and education (use location and zip to access)	www.masscis.intocareers.org
College information	www.collegeboard.org
Common Application	www.commonapp.org
Historically black colleges	www.ed.gov/edblogs/whhbcu
Massachusetts public colleges and universities	www.massresources.org/public-colleges.html
College info — BPS related	www.bostonpublicschools.org/college
College rankings	www.usnews.com/rankings
Nursing schools	www.nursingschool.org/us/massachusetts-nursing-schools

SAT and Academic PREP

SAT — access is free	www.collegeboard.org/quickstart
SAT — free	www.number2.com
SAT and academics — free	http://ineedapencil.ck12.org
Academics and SAT Math — free	www.khanacademy.org
Academics and SAT — free/may be school based	www.myskillstutor.com

Financial Aid

CSS Profile online	http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile
Government student aid, including estimating aid (FAFSA4caster)	www.studentaid.ed.gov
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)	www.fafsa.ed.gov
Budgeting/planning and financial aid info	www.saltmoney.org
Financial aid/loan info	www.finaid.org
Annual event, Sunday, January/February	www.fafsaday.org
Support for making college affordable	www.mefa.org
Massachusetts scholarships and financial aid	www.osfa.mass.edu

Scholarship Search

Local scholarships	www.bostonscholarshipguide.com
Scholarship search	www.collegeboard.com , www.fastweb.com , www.thesalliemafund.org
Hispanic scholarship fund	www.hsf.net
Asian American & Pacific Islander scholarship fund	www.apiasf.org
UNCF — African American	www.uncf.org

Even if you don’t have a computer at home, there are many places to access computers and the Internet, e.g., the Timothy Smith Technology Centers (timothysmithnetwork.org), every Boston Public Library, ASA College Planning Centers, and career centers located in many high schools.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advanced Placement (AP) Program A program of the College Board offering college-level curriculum and exams to high school students. Colleges often grant college course credit to students who achieve high scores on the exams.

Apprenticeship A combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction under the supervision of a professional in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation.

Class rank The position (academic standing) of a student in his or her graduating class, as determined by the high school.

Cost of attendance All the expenses of college, which include tuition and fees, books and supplies, and a student's living and travel expenses while attending school. The cost of attendance, which is estimated by the school, is compared with the student's expected family contribution to determine the student's need for financial aid.

Credentialing A process used to evaluate the qualifications and practice background of an individual to determine if they have efficient skills necessary to fulfill the defined industry requirement.

CSS/Financial Aid Profile A web-based financial aid application of the College Board used by some colleges, universities, and private scholarship programs to award their private financial aid funds.

Deferred admission Permission offered by some colleges to students to postpone enrollment, usually for one year, after acceptance to college.

Dependent student For financial aid purposes, the term is used to define eligibility for types of aid, regardless of whether or not the student lives with a parent, receives financial support from a parent, or is claimed on a parent's tax return.

Early Action (EA) An admissions offer that the student receives earlier than the standard response date but that does not require acceptance until the regular decision date.

Early Decision (ED) Students with a strong interest in one college apply early (usually by November or December) with the agreement that if accepted they commit to attending that college.

Education tax credits/deductions Offered by the federal government to offset the costs of education. The American Opportunity (Hope Credit extended) and the Lifetime Learning Credit are current education credits. Credits can be as much as \$1,500 per dependent student annually. Check www.irs.gov for up-to-date information.

Fees and fee waivers Colleges and testing agencies charge application fees. Students who meet certain income guidelines may receive fee waivers (meaning fee does not have to be paid to take the exam). Check with guidance counselors or educational organizations for more information.

Financial need The difference between the cost of attendance and the family's expected contribution.

Financial literacy The ability to understand how to manage money to make better informed judgments and effective decisions about its use.

Grade point average (GPA) A system schools use for evaluating the overall scholastic performance of students. The most common system of numerical values for grades is A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and E or F=0. Higher points are usually awarded for Honors and Advanced Placement courses.

International Baccalaureate (IB) is a two-year educational program for high school students that provides an internationally accepted qualification for entry into higher education and is recognized by universities worldwide.

MASSGrant A Massachusetts government program that provides grants, based on need, to undergraduate students.

Net Price Calculator An online calculator, required by the government, found on each college's website to provide families with an early estimate of financial aid for which a student might qualify. It provides estimates only. Search NET PRICE CALCULATOR on each school's specific site.

Pell Grant A federal government program that provides grants, based on need, to undergraduate students.

Rolling admissions An admission process where colleges begin reviewing and making acceptance decisions as applications are received. These colleges generally have a later application deadline or no deadline at all. It is still important to apply early to receive the maximum financial aid.

STEM An acronym for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. There are some scholarships specifically for students studying STEM majors.

Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) Program A federal program, administered by colleges, that provides grants for undergraduate students on the basis of exceptional financial need.

Student Aid Report (SAR) A report sent to students in response to filing the FAFSA. The SAR contains information the student provided on the FAFSA as well as the federally calculated result; the financial aid office uses this information to determine the student's eligibility for the federal Pell Grant and other federal student aid programs.

Unmet need The difference between a student's total available resources and the total cost of the student's attendance at an academic institution.

Verification A procedure colleges use to check the information reported on the FAFSA, usually by requesting a copy of the tax returns filed by the student and, if applicable, the student's parent(s) and spouse.

Wait list A list of students who meet the admissions requirements of a college but will be offered a place in the class only if space becomes available.



RESOURCES – PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

The programs and agencies listed below are only a partial list of college resources that are available to BPS students. These programs and agencies work with students throughout the year, focusing on college planning. This list changes yearly. To learn about updates and to see additional programs, visit the BPS website: www.bostonpublicschools.org/college.

		Structured Academic Enrichment	College Awareness	Tutoring	Test Preparation	Career Exploration	College Application Assistance	Financial Aid Assistance	Summer Program	Transition/Alumni Support	Offers College Scholarship
Admissions Guaranteed Program (AGP)	(617) 287-5868 www.agp.umb.edu		×	×		×	×	×		×	
Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID)	(617) 635-9202 www.avid.org	×	×	×		×	×	×			×
American Student Assistance (ASA) College Planning	(617) 536-0200 www.asa.org/plan		×			×	×	×		×	
American Student Assistance (ASA) Gear UP/Talent Search	(617) 635-6858 www.asa.org/plan		×	×	×	×	×	×		×	×
Architecture, Construction, Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program — Suffolk Construction	(617) 755-2830 www.acementor.org	×	×	×		×		×		×	×
Benjamin Franklin Early Access to College Dual Enrollment Program	(617) 588-1299 www.bfit.edu/Academics/Early-Access-to-College--EAC-/Early-Access-to-College	×	×			×					
Boston Area Health Education Center (BAHEC) Youth to Health Careers (Y2HC) Programs	(617) 534-5258 www.facebook.com/bahec	×	×	×		×	×	×	×	×	
Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC)	(617) 442-5608 www.bostonherc.org		×	×	×	×	×	×			
Boston Scholar Athletes	(617) 517-4477 www.bostonscholarathletes.org	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Boston University Summer of Opportunity	(617) 353-7261 www.bu.edu/cgs/2010/01/29/summer-of-opportunity		×						×		
Bottom Line	(617) 524-8833 www.bottomline.org		×			×	×	×	×	×	×
Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston	(617) 994-4700 www.bgcb.org	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Breakthrough Greater Boston	(617) 635-1615 ext. 31138 www.breakthroughgreaterboston.org	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	
Citizen Schools	(617) 695-2300 www.citizenschools.org	×	×	×	×	×	×		×		
College Bound Boston College	(617) 552-0695 www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cbound	×	×			×	×	×			
College Bound Dorchester	(617) 506-5973 www.collegebounddorchester.org	×	×			×	×	×	×	×	×

Program participation requirements vary by grade, school, and/or neighborhood. Check directly with each program.

Checkout the BPS Publication
“Summer Stuff” for a list of
summer programs.

		Structured Academic Enrichment	College Awareness	Tutoring	Test Preparation	Career Exploration	College Application Assistance	Financial Aid Assistance	Summer Program	Transition/Alumni Support	Offers College Scholarship
Crimson Summer Academy Harvard University	(617) 496-0652 www.crimsonsummer.harvard.edu	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Freedom House	(617) 445-3700 www.freedomhouse.com	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Health Career Opportunity Program (HCOP) UMass Boston	(617) 287 5843 www.umb.edu/ academics/vpass/support_programs/ health_careers_opportunity_program	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Hyde Square Task Force	(617) 524-8303 ext. 313 www.hydesquare.org	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Let's Get Ready	(617) 345-0082 www.letsgetready.org	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Posse Foundation	(617) 523-4478 www.possefoundation.org	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Private Industry Council (PIC)	(617) 423-3755 www.bostonpic.org	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗
Project REACH Talent Search	(617) 287-7390 www.projectreach.umb.edu		✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Sociedad Latina	(617) 442-4299 www.sociedadlatina.org		✗	✗		✗					
Squashbusters	(617) 373-7782 squashbusters.org	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Steppingstone Foundation	(617) 423-6300 www.tsf.org	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	
Summer Search	(617) 524-9911 www.summersearch.org	✗	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗		
TechBoston (Adobe Voices, BATEC)	(617) 635-6495 www.techboston.org	✗	✗			✗			✗		
Tenacity	(617) 562-0900 ext. 41 www.tenacity.org	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
uAspire	(617) 778-7195 www.uaspire.org		✗					✗	✗	✗	✗
Urban Scholars	(617) 287-5830 www.urbanscholars.umb.edu	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Upward Bound — Boston University	(617) 353-3551 www.bu.edu/ub	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Upward Bound — Simmons College	(617) 521-2620 www.simmons.edu/academics/ undergraduate/upward_bound	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Upward Bound — Suffolk University	(617) 994-6862 www.suffolk.edu/offices/35002.html	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Upward Bound — UMass Boston	(617) 287-5845; (781) 320-7246 www.upwardbound.umb.edu	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Upward Bound — Wheelock College	(617) 879-2352 www.teacherbound.org	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
YMCA Achievers	(617) 522-4798 www.ymcaboston.org/achievers	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

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OFFICE OF HIGH SCHOOL SUPPORT

OFFICE OF FAMILY AND
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Boston Public Schools
26 Court Street
Boston, MA 02108

www.bostonpublicschools.org



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