

6th-9th Grade

Expose

It's never too early to start thinking about your future! Focus on building skills that will be useful no matter what path you take, and look for opportunities to expose yourself to post-high school options.

Develop good study skills and focus on getting good grades.

Notice which subjects you enjoy the most, and/or which you are the strongest in, and get extra help in subjects you struggle with.

Research options for high school, and consider magnet schools or career academies.



Participate in hobbies like sports, robotics, science fair, math league, debate, 4H, Model UN, music, theater, faith-based activities, and community service to explore your interests.

Research area colleges and universities that offer enrichment programs like TriO, GEARUP, or CROP.

Start learning about jobs and careers through family friends, books, and through free resources like MyCareerShines and Launch My Career. You can also look into opportunities to shadow a family member or friend at their job to learn more about it.

MyCareerShines
A service of FloridaShines

www.mycareershines.kuder.com



www.launchmycareerfl.org

Goal:

Identify 3 Career Clusters

Florida's state colleges divide classes according to "career clusters." By the end of 9th grade, identify at least 3 of these clusters you'd like to learn more about. (See the back of this brochure for more info.)

10th Grade

Explore

In 9th and 10th grade, start exploring different options for life after high school and thinking about which one might be right for you. This can help you plan what classes you want to take in high school or what activities you participate in.

Start taking advanced classes in subject areas that interest you. Consider options like AP, Honors, and dual enrollment.

Study for the PSAT, and take it in the fall.



www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf

Use online resources like Khan Academy to get help with school subjects, or to learn more about topics that interest you.



www.khanacademy.org



Research scholarship opportunities available nationally and in your local community. Will you need to complete community service hours, participate in extracurricular activities, or achieve a certain GPA to qualify?

Goal:

Identify 3 Careers

Start learning more about careers in the clusters that interest you. By the end of 10th grade, identify 3 you want to learn more about. Start researching the education requirements for these careers.

11th Grade

Experiment

You might find that you have many interests, and you don't know which you'd like to pursue. That's okay! Participate in activities and academic opportunities that allow you to experiment with different skills to learn more about who you are and what you're good at.

Focus on your grades! Since you will likely apply to colleges in the fall of your senior year, grades from your junior year will be the most recent ones they will see.



Research the admissions requirements for colleges that interest you, and make sure you are taking the classes you will need.

Take the SAT/ACT no later than the spring semester.

Start visiting colleges that interest you. Find out if your school or a community organization sponsors college visits.

Use online tools like the College Scorecard to research colleges and universities that interest you.



You can also look into camp opportunities to spend a week on a college campus over the summer. Many sports, arts, and science camps offer these programs.

Goal:

Identify 2-4 Pathways

In 11th grade, identify 2-4 pathways you can take after high school based on your career interests. Check out the back of this brochure to learn more about the available pathways.

12th Grade

Execute

- ❑ Finalize a list of 2-4 colleges you will apply to
- ❑ Ask teachers/supervisors/mentors for letters of recommendation starting in September
- ❑ Check with your guidance counselor to see if you qualify for application fee waivers
- ❑ Complete your college applications; keep in mind that, for some colleges, you may need to apply by **November 1** to qualify for scholarships and aid from that institution
- ❑ Find out if any of the schools you are applying to accept the Common Application
- ❑ Complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** as early as possible to qualify for free money for college
- ❑ Complete the Florida Financial Aid Application to apply for Bright Futures and other state aid
- ❑ Research and apply for local and national scholarships
- ❑ Compare financial aid packages from schools that accept you--talk to your guidance counselor for help
- ❑ Choose a college, complete enrollment paperwork, and submit your deposit
- ❑ Make plans to attend orientation and register for classes



www.commonapp.org



www.fafsa.ed.gov

The FAFSA opens on October 1. Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov to find out if you qualify for free money for college!

Goal:

Apply and Go!

It's time to put your plan into action!

Follow the steps above to apply to colleges and for financial aid. Soon you will be on your way to life after high school!