

Back to school: High School Edition



High school is an important time for students as they begin to prepare for career and college. Whether a student is exploring career fields or considering attending a two-year or four-year college or certificate program, it is never too early to start thinking about and planning for the future.

Here are some tips to help your child succeed in high school and be prepared for whatever comes next:

Get Connected

Being involved in high school athletics and student programs like theater, choir, band, or student council is not only fun, it gives students the opportunity to try something new, develop their talents and helps them stay engaged in school.

Advanced Courses and Study Tips

High school offers students the first real opportunity to choose the classes they take. Encourage your students to challenge themselves with advanced courses as well as classes that will help them gauge their interests for a future career path.



For example, in Minnesota, students are required to take up to Algebra 2 for math. While advanced courses like Calculus can seem daunting, they will look good to colleges and employers and may pique a student's interest in a wide number of careers from engineering to architecture to the medical profession.

In fact, some advanced courses in high school can lead to college credit.

No matter what classes your child is taking, it is important they develop good study habits that will benefit them throughout their life. Some study tips include:

- 1. Find a quiet space free from distractions** – Encourage your student to find a space away from anything that will distract him as he studies. This can be the library or a designated “phone and TV free zone” at home.
- 2. Time management** – Homework deadlines can sneak up on a student before they know it. Encourage your child to keep a planner with important dates. This will help her learn to plan ahead and set aside the appropriate time needed for each assignment.
- 3. Join a study group** – Getting together with other students for study time is a great way for high school students to support and learn from each other, while gaining skills in how to work in a group that will continue to be useful in college and throughout their career.
- 4. Don't be afraid to ask for help** – If your child is struggling with coursework, encourage him to find a tutor or schedule time to meet with the teacher for one-on-one instruction.

5. **Get a good night's sleep** – If your child has a big test or presentation the next day, being well rested is just as important as studying.
6. **Avoid stress** – Watch for signs that your child is feeling overwhelmed or stressed. Helping her learn to identify and manage stress will be a vital skill that will benefit her in career, college and throughout her life.

Postsecondary Opportunities

Many students are ready for career and college opportunities while still in high school. Minnesota offers numerous options:

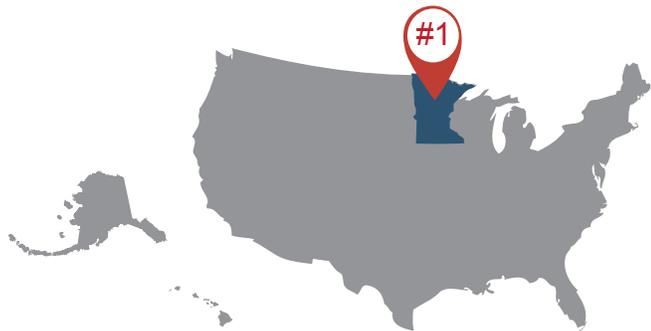


- **Advanced Placement (AP)** – A program of college-level courses offered at many high schools. Courses are available in many subject areas, including English, history, humanities, languages, math, psychology and science. Whether a student takes AP courses or not, they can take an AP exam if they have mastered a certain subject. Depending on a student's score, they may be eligible to receive advanced standing or college credit.
- **International Baccalaureate (IB)** – High school students in their junior and senior year can choose to enroll in individual IB courses or in the comprehensive a two-year diploma program. They are able to select classes at a standard and advanced level in their native language, as well as classes in a second language, humanities, science, mathematics and the arts. Classes are taught by high school teachers at their high school. At most schools, students may choose any number of IB courses, or they may complete the full IB Diploma (6 courses). Students may take IB exams to earn college credit if they enroll in a college that accepts their score.
- **Concurrent Enrollment** – Concurrent enrollment classes are college courses taught at a high school. High schools across the state partner with Minnesota colleges and universities to offer these courses, taught by trained high school teachers or college instructors. Sometimes these classes are called "College in the Schools." Students can earn both high school and college credit by successfully passing a concurrent enrollment course.
- **Career/Technical Education (CTE)** – CTE courses give students the chance to gain a deeper understanding of academic concepts while learning technical skills to prepare them for a specific career. Classes are offered in nearly every Minnesota high school. The programs are aligned with related programs at Minnesota's colleges. This allows a student to easily continue their studies in college to earn a degree, diploma, or certification. Courses are offered in a wide range of fields, from agriculture and art, to health and human services, to engineering and technology.
- **Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO)** – PSEO allows high school juniors, seniors and some sophomores to take college courses on a college campus. The courses are taught by a college instructor. Students can take a variety of courses, ranging from general education to technical courses. They can be taken face-to-face in a classroom, online, or a combination of the two. Students can earn both high school and college credit by successfully passing a PSEO course. The best part is that this program is free and many times there is even help to cover transportation costs.

Check with your child's high school to explore all available options and opportunities. Visit the Ready, Set, Go website to learn more at readyssetgo.state.mn.us.

Preparing for the ACT

Another important step in a student's high school journey is taking the ACT. This test gauges a student's college readiness and is often required for entrance into a postsecondary institution. Most students take the ACT during their junior year.



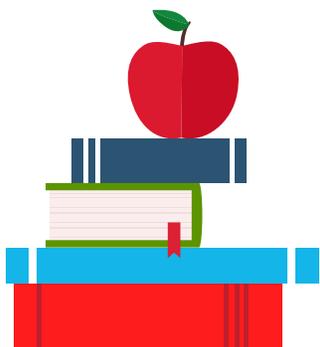
Fun Fact: Minnesota has been at the top of the nation for ACT scores for the last 10 years!

Some colleges may require students to take another college entrance exam, the SAT, rather than the ACT. Have your child meet with their high school guidance counselor to discuss possible postsecondary options and determine what test is right for them.

College Visits, Financial Aid and More!

Choosing a career path or a college can be a daunting process. Consider these suggestions to make the journey a little easier:

- **College visits** – There is only so much you can learn from a website. Have your child identify some colleges or postsecondary institutions that interest him and schedule a visit. This will allow him to meet with professors and current students as well as tour the campus and see which school feels like the best fit.
- **Scholarships and Financial Aid** – Encourage your child to look into available scholarships, either from the postsecondary institution or outside organizations. Also make sure she looks into deadlines for financial aid applications.
- **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** – WBL describes learning which occurs outside of the classroom at a location where goods or services are produced. It involves activities that include actual paid or unpaid work experience such as: worksite field trips, structured cooperative work experiences, internships, youth apprenticeship, and career mentoring. WBL students must be supervised by a licensed WBL teacher in a state-approved program.
- **Job Shadowing** – In job shadowing, students make brief worksite visits to spend time with individual workers to learn what knowledge, skills and education the job entails. The length of the job shadowing experience is based on individual career objectives and is designed and agreed to by the participating business or industry, student, teacher and parent.



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