



Plan for Success: Tips & Tricks

Before Entering High School

1. Do your best in school - get help when you need it. We don't have to earn A's, but we should be able to honestly tell ourselves we did our best.
2. Read at least 20 minutes every day - websites, newspapers, magazines, and books. Look up new words online or in a dictionary.
3. Get involved in after-school, Saturday and summer programs at school. Keeping active and trying new things will make it easier to make decisions later.
4. Explore interests - hobbies, sports, music, favorite subjects in school, and careers - this can help prepare us to think about future.
5. Take Algebra in the 8th grade - it will give you more choices in high school and beyond.
6. If you will have choices of different high schools, start thinking about them in the 8th grade too. Find out what courses you need to graduate and what classes colleges require.
7. Talk to your parents about your education, now and in the future. Talk to guidance counselors and other adults you trust.

Freshmen & Sophomores

1. Get to know your counselor and college advisor. Meet with them and let them help you put together your plan for success.

Tomorrow's Leaders Plan Today

Today, there are many decisions that youths have to make - *Club TNT* wants to help tomorrow's leaders get started today. Every day, we make choices, —what to wear, who to hang out with, how to spend our time after school.

Some of the decisions we make today can affect the rest of our life. That's why it is important to learn how to make good decisions. A good start is deciding to get involved in our schools and communities. It also helps to start thinking ahead.

What are you going to do after high school? What do you see yourself doing in 10 years? What do you see yourself doing to earn a living? And what does it take to get there?

Including education beyond high school in your plan will help. Not everyone needs a college degree; there are other options for associate degrees and skill-training programs. Increasingly, continuing our education after high school is necessary for well-paying jobs.

We don't need to write our plans in stone - it's better to be flexible. We can plan for our future now and still leave ourselves change career paths, but it starts with a plan and the time to begin the process is before we begin high school. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Creating a plan is important, but we also need to do what it takes to make plans happen, keeping track of what we learn as you approach high school graduation. Want to know more? Watch *Club TNT*, each Saturday mornings on TVW 14, and check out the online resources at www.clubtnt.org and the *TNT Collegian* at www.tntcollegian.org.

2. Regularly check that you are taking the right courses to prepare for college, tech school, or skill-training programs.
3. Take some challenging courses, it will help you assess your study strengths and prepare you for college classes.
4. Attend writing, test-taking, and study skills workshops. Do your best in school and strive to get good grades.
5. Read at least 20 minutes a day, web pages, newspapers, magazine, and books. It is important to see how others use language.
6. Get involved in school, after school, clubs, extra curriculars, workshops, your community and even church.
7. Be sure to get help if you are having a hard time with classes or if you are having problems in or out of school.
8. Think about what you want to do after high school and talk about these ideas with parents, family, counselors, teachers, friends, and adults you trust.
10. When you have a chance, talk to college representatives about options after high school and visit at least one college for a tour - the next best thing are online virtual tours.
11. Attend a financial planning workshops or talk to family and counselors about how students fund their continuing education.

Juniors

1. Meet with your counselor to be sure you are on track to graduate and earn the credentials you need for school you are interested in. Ask if you are taking the “right” courses to make your plans work.
2. Take ACT and/or SAT prep classes. If this is not an option, be sure to use free online resources to prepare. You will find many links at www.tntcollegian.org When you are prepared, register for and take the ACT and/or SAT. Remember, you can take these important tests as often as you like.
3. Continue to practice writing and be sure to write at least one 7-10 page research paper with a complete bibliography. Work with a librarian to learn search strategies.
4. Keep on reading! Earlier we suggested 20 minutes a day. Now give yourself a page limit - try 75 pages of print a day, schoolwork or recreational
5. Keep involved in your school, community, and extracurricular activities and be a leader. Practice these important skills now.
6. Grades matter now – do your best. Always ask for help if you are having a hard time with classes or if you are having problems in or out of school.
7. Review entrance requirements for colleges you like and check them against your current courses and post-high school plans
8. Keep researching colleges, contacting them for information you to help you learn about their programs and how they might help you.
9. Plan your senior year courses - you are going to finish high school soon – congratulations!
10. Attend college fairs, tour college campuses, and look at specific degree and training programs

11. Learn about the financial aid processes. Talk to people and attend workshops. Identify scholarship opportunities.
12. Begin looking at the application process for the schools you may want to attend and be sure to note deadlines for applications.

Seniors

September – December

1. Meet with your counselor to ensure that graduation requirements have been met. Consider taking AP, honor, extra math, and science courses which will make you more competitive to colleges and universities.
2. Keep reading & writing – read and write at lot! Set a goal to read each day – perhaps 100 pages a day, including homework and recreational reading.
3. TNT Collegian recommends taking the ACT or SAT in the junior year – however, take ACT and/or SAT again now if you need a better score, but first enroll in ACT/SAT prep classes.
4. Finish with a bang - Keep involved, and be a leader in sports, clubs, activities, service work, and always get help if you are having a hard time with classes or if you are having problems in or out of school.
5. Continue attending college fairs, and workshops, and visiting schools you are most interested in.
6. Choose which schools or training programs you’ll apply to. Make a list of potential schools and apply to all of the schools that sound interesting and that can help you achieve your goals.
7. Complete at least five college applications, double-checking each application to be sure it is complete. Keep copies of each and notate them with the date you mailed or submitted the application.

8. Identify and apply for at least five scholarships.
9. File for a FAFSA – the Free Application for Federal Student Aid) PIN number before December 31. Get your parents to apply for a family PIN number too.

January - June

1. Double-check again - meet with your college counselor to ensure you are on track for graduation!
2. File for the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) by Jan 31st. Check your Student Aid Report (SAR) as soon as it comes and make corrections as necessary.
3. Watch your mail and open and read everything sent to you from the colleges you have applied. Answer any requests for additional information promptly.
4. Follow up on college application status. Send in mid-year grades, if required or requested.
5. Use your spring break to visit colleges.
6. Carefully review all college acceptance letters and financial aid award with your parents, guardian and counselor. Pay attention to deadlines and accept or decline the financial aid packages offered, informing schools of your acceptance or decline offers by May 1st.
7. Send in housing contracts, any deposits, etc. by their due dates.
8. Carefully review everything the school you plan to attend sends you. Read any books on the summer reading list. If offered, attend summer orientation.
9. Continue to plan your finances - save money for college, open a checking account, take a workshop on managing your finances, and create a budget for first semester.