

GPS to College - 10th Grade

Adopted by ICAN

August Tips

- Get involved. Find an activity at your school or in your community that you would enjoy (clubs, band, choir, athletics or volunteer activities) and be active.
- Remember that the grades you earn now will affect your ability to get into college. Colleges look at all four years of high school when making their decisions.
- EducationQuest and the Iowa College Access Network are available to help you through the college planning and financial aid process at no cost.

September Tips

- Talk to your school counselor about the possibility of taking the PLAN[®] Test. PLAN is the pre-ACT[®] test. Now is a good time to review your future plans with them and make sure you're on track for graduation.
- Attend college fairs in your area and meet with college representatives who visit your high school.
- Keep track of your assignments, test dates, activities and important events by using a planner or electronic organizer. They can also be used to set up a study schedule.

October Tips

- Explore colleges and careers at www.teammates.org/postsecondary in the “College Knowledge” and “Career Planning” sections.
- Know yourself. What do you like to do, what are you good at and what do you value most? Make a list of your answers. The first step in career planning is self-discovery.
- Talk with your parents about your college and career goals and what you can do to attain them.
- Let your mentor assist you with the college search process. Other good people would include teachers, parents, family members, family friends, etc.

November Tips

- It's not too early to start thinking about how to impress potential employers. Learn about developing the skills employers want today.
- Are you preparing to pay for college? Start talking to your parents now. Read about tuition and other college costs.
- Talk with family members, friends, teachers, school counselors and coaches about their college experiences.

December Tips

- Education after high school doesn't necessarily mean a four-year degree. There are certificate programs, two-year degrees and programs that go beyond four years. Explore the different degree options.
- College can be affordable. Try not to be put off by "sticker shock" and don't drop colleges from your search because of the price. With financial aid, most colleges can make sure the "sticker price" is not your out-of-pocket cost.
- Talk to your school counselor about college admission requirements so that you're staying on the right track with your class schedule.
- Think about volunteering during your holiday break.

January Tips

- Happy New Year! Get off to a great start by looking at your study habits. What's working for you? What isn't? Make a study schedule and stick to it.
- Organization is the key to success. Start tracking your extracurricular, volunteer and work experience, and the courses you've taken and contacts that may make good references.
- What's financial aid? It's made up of four types of assistance: grants, scholarships, loans and work-study. Grants and scholarships are free sources of money that don't have to be paid back. A loan is money given to you to help pay for college-related expenses and it must be repaid. Work-study allows you to earn money by working part time at a campus-approved job. For more information, visit www.teammates.org/postsecondary in the "Scholarship Resources" section. Even though you won't need to apply for financial aid until you're a senior, you can begin to learn about the process.

February Tips

- Start thinking about college majors. What matches your skills and interests? Have you thought about how specific majors relate to careers? Explore college majors and careers that might be right for you.
- Saving money is the best way to prepare for the cost of a college education. What are the best ways for you to save? Make a spending plan for yourself where you set aside a certain dollar amount each month to help pay for college.
- If you're an athlete hoping to play sports in college, it's important to begin planning. Find out what the NCAA academic requirements are at www.naaclearinghouse.net and check with your school counselor for more information.

March Tips

- Visit college fairs this spring to learn more about colleges in Nebraska and Iowa.
- Do you know someone who works in a job related to your career interest? Talk to them to find out what educational requirements and skills they needed to get their job. Find out what they like most about their work and why.
- Is your family planning a summer vacation? If so, try to visit a few college campuses as part of the trip.

April Tips

- Meet with your school counselor to schedule classes for your junior year that will allow you to meet college entrance requirements.
- Colleges look for involved students. Get involved in hobbies and extracurricular activities that match up with your career interests. Update your activities portfolio or resume with your most recent involvements and achievements.
- Look into different jobs through career fairs, job shadowing, volunteer work, internships or part-time jobs.
- If your school offers one, attend a college planning night. Check with your school counselor or search online for the date and time.

May Tips

- Look for a summer job that's in line with your interests. Be sure to save some of your summer earnings for college. It's never too early to start saving money!

- Ask your school counselor about AP® (Advanced Placement) classes that would fit into your schedule. Harder courses in high school make you more prepared for college. Also check into dual-enrollment classes that let you earn college credit.
- Look for academic camps being held this summer. They're a great way to catch up or get ahead.
- Read more! Reading is one of the best ways to improve your grades, and you can do it practically anywhere. Ask your local librarian for suggestions on books to read this summer or research online.

June Tips

- Compare different careers. Look at things like required education, daily tasks and starting salary, and think about what appeals to you the most.
- Update your summer reading list. Try to choose challenging subjects or books about careers or hobbies.
- Explore careers in line with your hobbies and interests. Maybe you could earn a living someday doing something you love!

July Tips

- Begin making a list of colleges that you want to look into.
- Will you be attending summer camp on a college campus? If so, look around and think about whether it's a school you'd like to attend. When you get home, look at the college online.
- Put some of your summer job earnings into a college savings account.