



# Planning for Success: Supporting Transitions through High School to College and Career

HELPFUL HINTS FOR NEW YORK CITY PARENTS/GUARDIANS



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# Letter from the Chancellor

Dear Families:

Our students' college and career readiness is more important now than ever before. Approximately 90 percent of the fastest-growing jobs in this country require post-secondary training. The benefits of educational achievement directly translate not only into meaningful careers, but also into higher future incomes for our students.

For these reasons, it is one of my top priorities as Chancellor to ensure that all New York City public school students graduate ready for college and the 21st Century workforce. In order to prepare all of our students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, for life after high school, the Department of Education is collaborating with schools, teachers, families, and community members to strengthen student work and teacher practices.

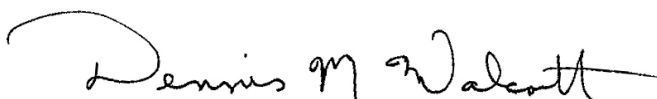
In recent years, we have made significant progress on this front. Before Mayor Bloomberg was elected to office, New York City's graduation rate remained flat for more than a decade. Graduation rates are now at an all-time high of 65 percent, and the number of students enrolled as first-time freshmen at the City University of New York campuses alone has increased by more than 9,000 – from 16,000 in 2002 to 25,500 in 2009.

But as we all know, tremendous work lies ahead. It is essential that parents and communities are fully engaged in the effort to prepare students at every stage in their education for life after graduation – from pre-kindergarten through high school.

This guide was written specifically for you by other New York City parents who have been where you are today. It includes practical advice for navigating the choices and supports your children need each year. It is an outstanding tool for parents and families to learn how to be involved throughout our students' journeys toward college and career readiness. I encourage you to make full use of the suggestions and strategies provided in this guide, and to share this resource with others in your community. I also recommend that you speak with your children's guidance counselors and teachers about how you can work together to ensure your children's future success.

I look forward to working with you to meet this challenge and wish your children success in their future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis M. Walcott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "W".

Dennis M. Walcott  
Chancellor

# Preface



In 2004, while I was the Chief Executive Officer for Student Enrollment at the New York City Department of Education, I met with a group of parents, UFT members, and school leaders to discuss overcrowding in some Brooklyn high schools. I was very impressed by this group. Everyone advocated with passion and commitment for their constituents, which represented the diverse demographics of our high schools.

As we worked together on enrollment issues, a sub group formed and we began to tackle other issues important to high school parents. Our first major collaboration resulted in the booklet “Getting to Know High School—Helpful Hints for Parents.” Following that success, in early 2010, my office developed a High School Admissions Ambassador program, which trained 53 parents on the details of the high schools admissions process. These parents went on to serve at high school admissions workshops and high school fairs, and some even began to advise parents in their own districts about the process.

After I retired in November of 2010, the parents and I stayed in contact and started to brainstorm ideas for another book for parents. We began to meet weekly to bring our ideas to fruition. We focused on college readiness and the transitions parents had to think about as their children progressed from middle school to high school graduation. It has been an exceptionally rewarding experience. Each parent had a different part of the “story” and I functioned in a mentoring and editorial capacity, helping them craft the booklet, challenging their thinking, and creating a product of which they could all be proud.

Parent partnerships are essential to any work we do in education. We are all thankful that Chancellor Walcott enabled this work to continue. Special thanks to the Office of Postsecondary Readiness for its support; the office was instrumental in vetting this work with the larger Department of Education and in finally getting this important work published.

As for me, it has been wonderful working with this dedicated group of parents. The last 18 months in particular have been especially exciting as I learned alongside them. We collected information together, collaborated on sharing our experiences, and produced a document for New York City parents written by New York City parents.

My sincere thanks to Beverly, Claudette, Maura, Mei, Monique, Morty, Nancy, and Rose, all of whom worked so hard to develop and compose this booklet. We also had help from Annie, Ramona, and Trevor. Of course, we drew most of our inspiration from the hundreds of parents we know and with whom we have interacted over the years.

This was a labor of love.

Elizabeth A. Sciabarra



# Core Parent Contributors



## **Claudette Agard**

I became a parent leader not only to help my children succeed, but also to help all the children in their schools. I determined that the best way for me to accomplish that goal was to equip parents with the information, knowledge, and understanding they need to play an active role in supporting their children. My years of experience include serving as the President of the Parent Association at the school level in middle school and high school, as the President of the Borough of Manhattan High School Presidents' Council, and serving on a citywide level as the Co-Chairperson of the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council. I have also served as a parent member of the New York State Education Department's Parent Advisory Council, which provided me with the opportunity to serve on at least five Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) teams. I am currently serving as the President of the Community Education Council for District 17 in Brooklyn.



## **S. Mei Chan**

I am an immigrant who was educated in the NYC public schools. Based on my children's experiences, I believe that in order to have the best outcomes for our children, we need to be active partners with their schools. My role as a Parent Coordinator at Brooklyn Technical High School also gives me insight into the challenges of raising children to be successful young adults. The reason I joined this parent group was to combine our experiences as public school parents, to impart what we learned as parents, and to empower other parents in similar circumstances. It has been my privilege to work with other parents in this group along with our mentor, Liz Sciabarra.



## **Rose Dasch**

I realized early in my career the importance of being involved in my children's education so that I could guide them in the right direction. I served as treasurer and then president of the Parents' Association in my children's elementary, middle, and high schools. I was elected from the Presidents' Council as a parent representative to the District 22 Leadership Team and to the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council. I am now the Parent Coordinator at Edward R. Murrow High School, a position I have held for the last nine years. Parents need help obtaining vital information to become informed decision makers to assist their children on their educational paths. This booklet shares with other parents our best advice about college readiness and what is expected in both the middle and high school grades.



**Monique Lindsay**

I am a single mother of two sons, one of whom is in a public high school in Brooklyn. I know how important it is to obtain a good education, and I am working hard to get my son to understand how doing what is needed now will put him on the path to becoming college- and career-ready upon his completion of high school. I have been a parent leader since 2008, and have participated in all levels of parent involvement. I have served on Parent Associations/Parent Teachers' Associations, School Leadership Teams, Title1 Parent Advisory Councils, District and Borough Presidents' Councils, District Leadership Teams, and the Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council. I am a Learning Leader for middle and high schools, a high school Admissions Ambassador, and an active member of the Education Ministry at my church. I am also a member of the United Federation of Teachers Parent Outreach Committee, and the Parent Advisory Council for High Schools. This booklet is filled with the information needed to guide our children in the best direction for a successful school experience.



**Beverly Marshack**

I have been involved in my children's education since 1989 when my first child started pre-kindergarten. Early on, I would cut and paste in the back of the classroom or go on class trips. In my first opportunity to work in a citywide role, I represented my district at Title I meetings. Then, I was elected to the Citywide Council on High Schools, where I served for many years. In 2004, I became an active member of the high school subcommittee of the UFT Parent Outreach Committee, which brought together DOE staff, parents, teachers, and guidance counselors in focus groups. In 2005, with the DOE Office of Student Enrollment, it produced "Getting to Know High School – Helpful Hints for Parents." In 2010, the Office of Student Enrollment trained a cadre of "Parent Ambassadors" for the high school admissions process. I see this booklet similarly, as parents sharing with each other about many aspects of their children's education.



**Morty Marshack**

I am a proud graduate of public schools in the Bronx and Queens, and believe passionately in public education. After three years teaching elementary school in the South Bronx, I started a new career as a lawyer. I am thankful that my sons were able to get a good education in New York City schools. To keep my finger on the pulse of their academic progress, I attended every parent-teacher conference, both in the fall and spring, and all orientation and open school sessions. As a result, I was ready to talk to my boys about their schoolwork and advise them when problems arose. I was an avid participant in the admissions processes, visiting schools and school fairs and helping my sons organize the college application process. This booklet covers much of what I did to ensure that my children were successful on the road to college and careers.





**Maura McGovern**

Even before my two children attended public elementary and high schools, I was active with parents in the system. I found them all concerned with getting information to help their children succeed. As a teacher and guidance counselor, I was able to assist, occasionally fielding questions from parents of children from different schools. The wide range of information readily available (or not) at individual schools is astounding. The varying backgrounds of our students' families make serving their needs very challenging. Many are not familiar with the New York system. They hail from out of city, out of state, or out of country. Some are tech savvy and some cannot communicate in English. They all need concrete information to provide the supports their children require for success. I'm happy to be part of the effort to ensure parents get access to the critical information they need about their children by giving my time and effort, helping to organize, explain, and publish guides for all parents and guardians.



**Nancy Sher**

I am a single mother of sororal twins currently enrolled as high school sophomores in the New York City Public School System. I found the high school application process to be as daunting as it was unnerving. This booklet was compiled by parents like me, who want to provide their children with excellent educations, and aspire for their children to attend a college or university that challenges them and prepares them for the future work place,. It is a handbook that reflects the needs of and the knowledge required by all parents to support their children's education and career ambitions. I hope our collective experience presented in this booklet will benefit your efforts on behalf of your children.

*Early Contributors:* Parents **Trevor Bowes, Ramona Floyd, Annie Leung**

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# Introduction

We are parents who wrote this booklet for YOU—other parents, guardians, and caregivers who support their children, just like we’ve learned to do, in their educational journeys from grade 6 through grade 12. It is designed to provide advice and information on how you could help your children prepare for each milestone in their school careers. We tried to use our experiences to show how you can help your children progress from one milestone to the next, from middle to high school and on to college and career opportunities. We’ve learned that all students need to understand how to prepare for the challenges of college and the work force. We’ve also learned that this preparation should begin before high school; the earlier, the better. We’ve decided to focus on the middle school years up through high school. During these years, working with pre-teens and teenagers is a constant learning experience for all of us.

We’ve learned that preparing students throughout middle and high school helps them make informed decisions about college and careers. With good academic preparation and planning in advance, we can ensure our children have the greatest number of options after high school, including two- or four-year colleges (leading to certificates, licenses, and associate or bachelor’s degrees), technical or vocational programs, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training. As our children progress from middle to high school and then from high school to college, we know that they are strongly influenced by both the courses they take and the way in which they approach schoolwork.

## College and Career Readiness: What It Is and Why It Is Important For All Students

There’s more to college readiness than earning a high school diploma. We’re using the phrase “college-ready” to mean that a student has the knowledge, skills, and behaviors to successfully complete college courses. Some of the basic skills and behaviors are pointed out in this booklet.

There is an academic path that your child should follow starting in middle school to ensure that he/she can enter college without having to take remedial classes. Remedial classes are basic skills courses for students who are not adequately prepared for college level courses. Remedial classes are required for students who do not score high enough on college placement tests. These courses are not credit bearing, but they will cost you money. Also, college readiness requires more than just completing coursework. In addition, your child has to develop strong work habits, study skills, and interpersonal and social skills, which we call academic behaviors. These behaviors will help him/her to perform at the high level required to create attractive options after high school.

Today, career options are very different. Our world is driven by innovation and technology. Jobs, occupations, and careers require, at the very least, specific specialized training beyond high school, while the better paying jobs require a college or post-college degree. In other words, a student with just a high school education will have fewer opportunities. More education results in the following:

- More and better job choices and opportunities
- Higher income potential
- Increased chances of employment and job stability
- More benefits, such as health insurance
- More competitive options in the job market.

## Higher Education Levels Increase Income Opportunities

Most of the fastest-growing 21st century jobs require education beyond high school

### Average income based on education levels:

High School Dropout	\$23,088
High School Diploma	\$32,552
2-year College Degree	\$39,884
4-year College Degree	\$53,976
Professional Degree	\$83,720

Source: U.S. Department of Labor,  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011.

## Parent/Guardian Involvement

As parents, we have a vital influence on our children's educational journey. We have the power to shape our children's attitudes and beliefs about the value and importance of education. As our children grow and learn, they can and should be able to take a greater role in their own education.

## Academic and Personal Behaviors

It is important that we become familiar with the actions or behaviors that children need to learn in order to succeed in school. We call these actions "Academic and Personal Behaviors."

<b>ESSENTIAL STUDENT BEHAVIORS/SKILLS</b> (linked to success in academics and careers)	<b>SAMPLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR</b> (Does your child follow the habits shown by "successful" students?)	<b>PARENT STRATEGIES</b> (in addition to asking for help and advice from agencies and from parents of children who are in the same grade, or a year or two ahead)
<b>Regular attendance</b>	Except when really sick, does he/she go to school without a fight?  He/she never claims a day is "off" when school is open.	Get a school calendar from the DOE website, a Parent Coordinator, or the guidance office. Check dates of holidays, exams, half days, and parent-teacher conferences.
<b>Punctuality</b>	Is he/she ready on time for ALL events? Does he/she leave home with 15 minutes extra in case of transit delay?	Set up an area near the door for school gear and a jacket for easy access. In the evening, see that clothing, a school bag, and any papers are ready for the next day.
<b>Cooperation/ Collaboration</b>	Does he/she work with others on homework and projects?  Does he/she do his/her fair share when working in a group?	Give age appropriate jobs at home to be done with someone else.  Help set up a "phone book" of classmates.  Welcome your child's friends to your home to share work on projects.
<b>Effective communication</b>	Does he/she give an answer or ask for additional information?  Does he/she speak clearly and use words that are easy to understand?	Make eye contact when speaking to someone else, including your child.  Be as clear as you can when giving directions.  Encourage reading to build vocabulary.

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<p><b>ESSENTIAL STUDENT BEHAVIORS/ SKILLS</b> (linked to success in academics and careers)</p>	<p><b>SAMPLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR</b> (Does your child follow the habits shown by "successful" students?)</p>	<p><b>PARENT STRATEGIES</b> (in addition to asking for help and advice from agencies and from parents of children who are in the same grade, or a year or two ahead)</p>
<p><b>Respect for self and others</b></p>	<p>Does he/she listen to others and not interrupt?</p> <p>Does he/she follow rules at home, in games, and at school?</p>	<p>Show your child YOU hear people out; don't rush to say what you want.</p> <p>With your child, talk out a problem; state both sides of the case.</p>
<p><b>Reliability:</b> meets commitments and responsibilities</p>	<p>Does he/she work without many reminders?</p> <p>Does he/she complete tasks as promised?</p> <p>Does he/she give you school notices without being asked?</p>	<p>With your child, write a list of all steps for a particular assignment or job. Have him/her check off each step as he/she finishes it.</p> <p>Make a place for all school notices so your child knows where to put them. (Make sure you clear them out each day.)</p>
<p><b>Study skills:</b> ability to work to improve understanding of academic content, focus on the tasks assigned, and perform well in oral and written work</p>	<p>Does he/she review notes from classes daily?</p> <p>Does he/she use textbooks (or other materials given by the teacher) at home?</p> <p>Does he/she work on assignments without a cell phone, TV, or computer (except when needed to complete the assignment)?</p>	<p>Set aside a place for your child to do homework nightly.</p> <p>Check notebook for neatness. Subjects should be in separate sections and work should be organized by date.</p> <p>Have your child explain the day's lessons to you.</p> <p>Help your child set up a school/ homework planner and calendar.</p> <p>Make sure your child studies all academic subjects and does not neglect homework assignments for any class. Encourage trying the most difficult homework first, not last.</p>

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<p><b>ESSENTIAL STUDENT BEHAVIORS/SKILLS</b></p> <p>(linked to success in academics and careers)</p>	<p><b>SAMPLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR</b></p> <p>(Does your child follow the habits shown by "successful" students?)</p>	<p><b>PARENT STRATEGIES</b></p> <p>(in addition to asking for help and advice from agencies and from parents of children who are in the same grade, or a year or two ahead)</p>
<p><b>Work ethic:</b> desire to complete tasks fully and on time, even when the job is difficult or dull</p>	<p>Does he/she start work without a reminder?</p> <p>Does he/she complete assignments daily?</p> <p>Does he/she make progress on long-term projects well before they are due?</p>	<p>Encourage your child to begin assignments as soon as they are given.</p> <p>Reinforce the need to do his/her best every time.</p> <p>Allow time every day for home study.</p>
<p><b>Motivation:</b> seeks extra educational enrichment</p>	<p>Does he/she participate in extracurricular activities?</p> <p>Does he/she visit cultural institutions across the city?</p>	<p>Help your child explore interests in the community or by joining clubs at school.</p> <p>Arrange family visits to libraries, museums, historical sites, etc.</p>
<p><b>Self-reflection:</b> ability to recognize areas of strength and weakness as well as what works best in a variety of settings; readiness to try to improve skills</p>	<p>If your child has stated career goals, do they match his/her best skills? (A student interested in a medical career, for example, must be good in science and math.)</p> <p>Does he/she try the most difficult homework first, then "easier" subjects? Your child should switch the order until he/she finds the best, most time efficient or comfortable method for him/her.</p>	<p>Help your child try different ways to structure a study time and place.</p> <p>Recognize when he/she needs help. Reach out for help. Accept requests as part of a normal learning process.</p> <p>Allow breaks, snacks, and even music if it helps your child to focus.</p>

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<b>ESSENTIAL STUDENT BEHAVIORS/SKILLS</b> (linked to success in academics and careers)	<b>SAMPLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR</b> (Does your child follow the habits shown by "successful" students?)	<b>PARENT STRATEGIES</b> (in addition to asking for help and advice from agencies and from parents of children who are in the same grade, or a year or two ahead)
<b>Writing:</b> organizes thoughts, uses large vocabulary, edits, and rewrites to include feedback; presents ideas clearly using correct grammar, spelling, and usage	Does he/she write an outline for long assignments, then revise, write a draft, and revise again? The final draft should be checked for spelling and grammar errors before it is written or typed for the teacher.	Have your child read daily. This improves vocabulary.  Look at the first draft of assignments with your child; have him/her suggest ways to make it better. Show the draft to someone who knows about the topic.  Make sure your child's work is not copied from a friend or a website.
<b>Analysis:</b> ability to go through data and other information, to compare statements, explain charts and information, and give summaries	Does he/she know the difference between facts, ideas, and opinions?  Given two or more pieces of information, can he/she identify each separate "fact" and tell how each is similar or different from the others?	Point out tables, charts, and graphs in newspapers and magazines.  Ask your child to explain a graph or table to you.
<b>Interpretation:</b> use of logic/reasoning in fact-based answers; knowing similarities and differences	Can he/she identify the result of a specific action? (If it snows, someone will have to shovel!)	Explain "cause and effect" in daily situations.  Have your child tell you what he/she expects when he/she does something. (Press on the brake, the bike/car/stroller slows down.)



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<b>ESSENTIAL STUDENT BEHAVIORS/SKILLS</b> (linked to success in academics and careers)	<b>SAMPLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR</b> (Does your child follow the habits shown by "successful" students?)	<b>PARENT STRATEGIES</b> (in addition to asking for help and advice from agencies and from parents of children who are in the same grade, or a year or two ahead)
<b>Precision and accuracy:</b> gives specific, fact-based answers after repeated review of information	Can he/she give a short list of specific items, or facts, in response to a question?  Can he/she add more items to the list after reading or research?	Ask your child questions that require factual or detailed answers, not just a yes or no answer.  When going over work, ask your child whether anything else could be added to make the answer more complete.
<b>Problem solving:</b> use different strategies to solve problems and select the most appropriate; think creatively and adapt strategies or create new ones	When given a task, does he/she try different ways of getting information, such as through a textbook, encyclopedia, computer search, newspaper, news magazine, or other publication? He/she should select those that have the best information to complete the assignment.	Share with your child how you decide how to complete daily tasks (prioritizing).  Point out other ways of getting jobs done. Explain how you decided the "best way" for you.

Academic behaviors are strengthened when parents work in partnership with the school. We as parents should communicate concerns to the school, ask the school to help us understand what our children need to succeed, and figure out ways to work together to help our children get the best education possible. We found that attendance at the parent-teacher conferences is very important, from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. It sends a powerful message to our children that we care about them and a powerful message to the school that we want what's best for our children.

## Common Core Learning Standards

New York State recently adopted a new set of learning standards known as the Common Core Learning Standards. These standards will phase in gradually through 2015.

The Common Core Learning Standards clearly lay out what students should know and be able to do at every grade level to ensure they are college- and career-ready upon graduation from high school. For New York City, this means that schools will be including these new standards in the classroom lessons over the next three years. To learn more about the Common Core standards, visit [schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary](http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary).

The Common Core Learning Standards will be accompanied by revised New York State ("NYS") Assessment Tests. These new tests will help us—and teachers and students—understand, at each grade level, whether our children are becoming college- and career-ready.

## Testing

It is important for us to help our children shape positive attitudes toward taking exams and to reduce anxiety about taking tests. Our children need a good place to study. We can remind our children that by doing their daily homework, studying, and participating in class, they will be prepared for their exams. Our children can also get additional help and information by visiting:

[www.homeinstructionschoools.com/shack/3-8examreview.html](http://www.homeinstructionschoools.com/shack/3-8examreview.html)

[www.homeinstructionschoools.com/regents.htm](http://www.homeinstructionschoools.com/regents.htm)

[www.regentsreviewlive.net](http://www.regentsreviewlive.net)

[www.regentsprep.org](http://www.regentsprep.org)

As our children progress from middle school to high school on the road to college and career goals, New York State exams and Regents exams will measure what they are learning in their different subjects. Throughout the course of their experience in middle school and high school, students are also given periodic assessments. These are used by schools to determine areas of strength and weakness in academic skills within the core subject areas. These tests are used by students, teachers, and parents like yourselves to help prepare for colleges and careers.

*We need to help our children develop good learning habits, which will help them prepare for and take the exams.*

We need to help our children develop good learning habits, which will help them prepare for and take the exams. We should also encourage them to take courses with high standards and to work hard to do well on all exams taken during both the middle school and high school years.

Special Note: It is important to keep in mind that if your child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with Section 504 accommodations, then your child may receive additional time

or other special accommodations on tests, including the college entrance tests. Also, if your child has Limited English Proficiency or is an English Language Learner, then he/she may be able to take tests in his/her native language, or receive additional time or other special accommodations.

## **NEW YORK STATE TESTS FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

### **Middle School**

In middle school, students take NYS intermediate tests:

- 6th Grade – English Language Arts (ELA) Exam; Math Exam
- 7th Grade – ELA Exam; Math Exam
- 8th Grade – ELA Exam; Math Exam; Science Exam.\*

\*Some middle schools offer accelerated courses that conclude with a Regents exam at the end of the school year. These are high school level courses. If a student passes both the course and the Regents exam, he/she may be able to earn high school course credit. Talk with your child's school for information about your child's specific options. At the end of middle school, you should check to make sure that your child's academic record includes any accelerated courses and/or Regents scores, so that the high school can place your child in appropriate classes.

### **High School**

In high school, students take NYS Regents exams and NYC LOTE exams:

- English Language Arts (ELA) Regents
- Math Regents: Integrated Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II/Trigonometry
- Science Regents: Living Environment, Earth Science, Chemistry, Physics
- History Regents: Global History & Geography, U.S. History & Government
- LOTE (Languages Other Than English) Exams: Regents-like comprehensive exams for many foreign languages.

Students must pass at least five specific Regents exams with a minimum grade of 65% (English, Math, Science, Global History & Geography, and U.S. History & Government), to receive a Regents Diploma.

In order to earn an Advanced Regents Diploma, students must pass at least eight Regents exams (the English Regents, three specified math Regents, a Living Environment Regents, a Physical Science Regents, Global History and Geography Regents, and the U.S. History and Government Regents) as well as a LOTE exam with a minimum grade of 65%. Note too that an Advanced Regents Diploma requires three years of foreign language study;

therefore, you should encourage your child to start studying a foreign language no later than 10th grade. These requirements vary for students completing an approved sequence in the Arts or in Career and Technical Education (CTE) and depend on when a student starts 9th grade. All students participating in CTE programs are prepared to take an end-of-program technical assessment as proof of their proficiency in a CTE program. Many of these exams lead to an industry certification.

For more information on credits and exams required for graduation, including those for students with disabilities and students in CTE programs, visit [schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/GraduationRequirements/default.htm](https://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/GraduationRequirements/default.htm). We urge you to meet with your child's guidance counselor or advisor to discuss these requirements and to find out when your child will be scheduled to take Regents and LOTE exams.

*Some colleges may prefer the SAT over ACT scores. Many accept both. Your child will need to know which one he/she needs to take for his/her college choices.*

## **EXAMS FOR STUDENTS GETTING READY FOR COLLEGE**

### **College Entrance Tests**

These are standardized, national tests your child will need to take to be considered for college. Some colleges may prefer SAT over ACT scores. Many accept both. Your child will need to know which one he/she needs to take for his/her college choices. If the colleges will accept both, your child should try sample tests and take the one that he/she is most comfortable taking. Samples are available at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) and [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

- **PSAT – Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test** – Offered through the College Board, this test measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills. It is used as an indicator for how well your child will do on the SAT, and it provides an opportunity for colleges to contact your child about potential scholarships. This test may be taken by sophomores and juniors; it may be taken twice and is offered free of charge during the school day to all NYC public school students. Only the score your child earns as a junior, however, will qualify him/her for National Merit and National Achievement Scholarship consideration. For more information about this test, visit [www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html).
- **SAT I – Scholastic Assessment Test I Reasoning Test** – Offered by the College Board, this is a multiple-choice exam with an essay. It is designed to measure critical reading, mathematical, and writing skills. It is usually taken in the 11th and/or 12th grade, and the maximum score is 2400. As it may be taken more than once, it is important for your child to consider taking it in the 11th grade. Colleges usually will consider your child’s highest scores when making their decisions. If necessary, remember to have your child ask the school counselor about fee waivers and disability accommodations, both of which are available. For more information about this test, visit [sat.collegeboard.org/home](http://sat.collegeboard.org/home).
- **SAT II Subject Tests – Scholastic Assessment Test II Subject Test** – These tests are designed to measure knowledge in a specific subject and one’s ability to apply that knowledge. The SAT II tests are required by more selective colleges. They should be taken immediately after your child finishes taking the corresponding courses in high school. Ask about fee waivers and disability accommodations if needed. For more information about these tests, visit [sat.collegeboard.org/home](http://sat.collegeboard.org/home).
- **ACT – American College Testing Assessment** – Administered by American College Testing, this is an alternative form of assessment to the SAT I Reasoning Test. It is offered with or without writing. Subjects are English, Math, Reading, Science, and Writing, and the maximum score is 36. Ask about fee waivers and disability accommodations if needed. For more information about this test, visit [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

Colleges use the scores from these exams to judge how your child might perform in college. However, once your child has been accepted to a college, he/she may have to take college placement exams as well.

## Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

These are exams given at the end of official College Board courses called Advanced Placement courses. Colleges look for scores of 3, 4, or 5 as a measurement of college readiness and often will grant college credit to a student who scored a 4 or a 5. AP courses on a high school transcript indicate to college admissions officers that a student has taken a challenging curriculum. For more information about these tests, visit [www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html).

# Keeping Track

To follow your child's progress, you need to know how your child performs on tests, but also whether or not his/her homework assignments and longer-range projects are satisfactorily completed. Your child will respond if you are showing real interest. You should create expectations and rewards as your child progresses. Any poor performance must be addressed right away, and a real effort must be made to speak with the teachers, guidance counselors, assistant principals, and, if necessary, the principal.

*Your child will respond if you are showing real interest. You should create expectations and rewards as your child progresses.*

Learn how to use the ARIS Parent Link for personalized, updated information about your child's progress (log on at [arisparentlink.org/parentlink](http://arisparentlink.org/parentlink)). It's available in ten languages. To log on to your child's account, you'll need an e-mail address, your child's ID (OSIS) number, and your password. Before logging in for the first time, contact the parent coordinator at your child's school for a temporary password. If you need an Internet-connected computer, you can visit any New York Public Library.

Find out which subjects/classes are offered at your child's school. You can do this by speaking with the guidance counselor or advisor. Check that your child is taking the right classes and, if possible, have your child sign up for more courses that will require him/her to work hard, both in middle school and in high school.

Check your child's report card each marking period. Make sure that your child's permanent record in middle school reflects accurate grades and correct attendance and lateness information. In high school, check your child's transcript at the start of each school year to ensure that the correct grades in both coursework and exams have been entered. It is really important when your child is in high school to check on the number of credits he/she earns each semester so that it is clear which grade your child is in and how close he/she is to graduation. For graduation requirements, visit [schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/GraduationRequirements/default.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/GraduationRequirements/default.htm).

When you meet with teachers at your child's school, you may wish to ask for examples of student work to see how your child's work compares to the work of others in his/her class. If your child is a middle school student, you need to know how he/she is progressing in each class and whether he/she is reading at grade level, how grades are determined in the class, and how much time should be spent on homework each night and whether there are any areas that need improvement. For high school students, you may wish to ask these same questions

in addition to whether or not he/she is earning credits and how he/she will be prepared for any Regents exam in the subject. Ask what services and support he/she can receive in the areas of college counseling, PSAT and SAT preparation, and career exploration. For both middle and high school students, you can request exercises to do at home with your child to help him/her meet grade-level expectations.

Attend orientation sessions for parents. Attend PTA meetings. Consider scheduling appointments with teachers in addition to the parent-teacher conferences. Take advantage of any parent workshops offered by the Department of Education, the United Federation of Teachers, and your child's school. Visit the Department of Education website for a current calendar of events and to learn about new opportunities: [schools.nyc.gov](http://schools.nyc.gov).

## High School Choice

As a parent of an eighth grader in middle school, you will have to go through the high school admissions process with your child. The high school admissions process requires eighth graders to list programs in order of their preference. Your child will be matched to his or her highest possible choice subject to admissions methods, admissions priorities, seat availability, and how he or she is ranked by schools, if applicable. Since there are so many high school programs to choose from, we as parents who have already gone through this process with our children suggest that you start learning about high schools when your child is in the sixth grade.

It is very helpful for you to establish a strong and ongoing relationship with the middle school guidance counselor. It is through the counselor that information on admissions is given out. More importantly, the guidance counselor must know your child to help you and your child make the right choices.

The Office of Student Enrollment hosts information sessions throughout the year to introduce students to the different types of high school programs and the Specialized High Schools. It is useful to attend these throughout your child's middle school years so that you do not leave everything to the eighth grade.

The final seventh grade report card is the one high schools see for the high school admissions process. Therefore, it is important for your child to do his/her best not only in each class but also on the seventh grade standardized tests. If your child performs at his or her full potential, it means he/she can be considered for the widest range of programs.

*The final seventh grade report card is the one high schools see for the high school admissions process.*

As you consider the wide range of schools and programs, make sure you keep in mind school size and location. The following are among the many choices available:

- Specialized High Schools that require the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test
- Other academically selective schools and programs that require students to meet various academic criteria
- Performing arts schools and programs that require an audition or portfolio presentation
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Schools and programs that combine academic study with workforce skills in a variety of specific career pathways
- Schools that require attendance at an information session
- Charter schools that have their own application processes and timelines. (Consult the Charter School Directory at [schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/charters/Directory.htm](https://schools.nyc.gov/community/planning/charters/Directory.htm).)

The High School Directory and the Specialized High Schools Student Handbook are distributed to all public school seventh graders by the end of the school year. This is done so that you and your child can review the information over the summer, before the start of the eighth grade.

All high school admissions publications, including an online searchable directory of high schools, are available at [schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/Publications](https://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/Publications).

Translated versions of the publications are available on that page as well.

During the fall semester, there are several fairs that you should attend to get more information about high schools. High schools from all over the city are represented at these fairs: staff, students, and parents are at the exhibit tables and available to answer questions.

You and your child should begin to attend these fairs when your child is in seventh grade. This will allow you and your child more than a year to learn about the high

school programs. As you become familiar with the information, you will be able to work with your child to set goals. There are videos of the 2011 summer high school admissions workshops posted on the Department of Education website at [schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/videos.htm](https://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/videos.htm).

Many middle schools host their own High School Night and invite representatives from local high schools. If your school hosts a High School Night, attend and speak to the representatives to get information on what each school offers.

*You and your child  
should begin to  
attend high school fairs  
when your child is in  
seventh grade.*



Many high schools offer tours. Check the High School Directory for tour information. If it is not in the Directory, use the contact information on the school page to reach out to the school directly. In some cases, you can start these tours when your child is in the seventh grade. You will be able to get a sense of what the school is really like.

By the time your child becomes an eighth grader you and your child should have taken the train or the bus to the schools that you have found interesting. This will help you learn how long the ride is, which will be important as you consider schools. Information on travel routes can be obtained at [www.hopstop.com](http://www.hopstop.com).

You can also sign up for e-mail updates about high school admissions at [schools.nyc.gov/Subscribe](http://schools.nyc.gov/Subscribe).

Besides all the information available within the Department of Education, you can get other information from [insideschools.org](http://insideschools.org), a project of the Center for New York City Affairs. Other parents of high school students also may be helpful to you. The Parents' Association in your middle school may do presentations or give out information. Speaking with the parents of your child's classmates can ease the journey from middle school to high school.

## OTHER OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS ALREADY IN HIGH SCHOOL

If your child has a tough time in high school and doesn't earn the right number of credits each semester, he/she may fall behind and not be ready to graduate in four years. You and your child should explore other pathways to graduation. Transfer Schools are small high schools that try to connect to students in a personalized way and offer career and college opportunities. The Learning to Work (LTW) program offers in-depth job readiness and career exploration activities at Transfer Schools and also at Young Adult Borough Centers (YABCs), which offer evening academic programs for older students. You can find a complete listing of transfer schools, YABCs, and GED programs in the Additional Ways to Graduate directory. A copy is available for download at [schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/AlternativesHS/default.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/AlternativesHS/default.htm).

## NEW YORK CITY ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS

As a parent looking for the right high school with your child, we think you should learn about the New York City Accountability Reports. There are three types: the Progress Report, the Quality Review, and the School Survey.

- **Progress Report** – Every fall, most schools receive a report and a letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F) measuring their success in student learning during the prior school year. The Progress Report measures each student's contribution to student academic progress, no matter where each child begins his or her journey to graduation and post-secondary readiness.

- **Quality Review** – During the school year, many schools receive a two- or two-and-a-half-day school visit by experienced educators, which includes meetings with the school leadership, teachers, students, and parents, as well as classroom visits. The results of the visits are published online in detailed reports describing how well each school supports student achievement.
- **School Survey** – Every year, parents, teachers, and students in grades 6 through 12 take the NYC School Survey. Survey questions gather the community’s opinions on academic expectations, communication, engagement, and safety and respect. School leaders can use survey results to better understand their own school’s strengths and areas for improvement.

## Next Frontier: Beyond High School

*You and your child need to do research to determine which options are best. Work with your child’s guidance counselor.*

Your child will have a number of options once he/she graduates from high school. You and your child need to do research to determine which options are best. Work with your child’s high school guidance counselor or the staff who are responsible for college and career guidance to help you figure out the direction in which you and your child would like to go.

Among the options are universities and four-year colleges. Universities

are generally large schools with a wide variety of degree programs, research facilities, and graduate schools. Liberal arts colleges are usually smaller, often with smaller class size, and offer bachelor’s degrees. Community and junior colleges are two-year institutions that offer associate degrees and sometimes non-degree certifications in career-oriented subjects. Some students earn associate degrees and then transfer to a four-year college to work towards a bachelor’s degree.

For detailed timelines and checklists and more guidance for college planning and admissions, consult the New York Urban League’s “A Parent’s Guide to College,” which is available online at [www.nyul.org/pages/Parent\\_Guide\\_Order\\_Form](http://www.nyul.org/pages/Parent_Guide_Order_Form).

New Visions for Public Schools has “The Road to College,” which may be found at <http://www.newvisions.org/the-road-to-college/overview> and the Department of Education’s “Tools to Help Students Prepare for College,” another good resource, is also available online at [schools.nyc.gov/StudentSupport/GuidanceandCounseling/CollegeCareerSupport/default.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/StudentSupport/GuidanceandCounseling/CollegeCareerSupport/default.htm).

Technical, trade, and business schools focus on preparing students for specific careers, usually in two years or less. These schools may help your child earn licenses, certificates, and special certifications, and sometimes associate or bachelor's degrees. Credits from these programs, however, are not necessarily transferable to academic degree programs.

Public colleges and universities are supported by states and cities and tuition is generally less at these schools than at private institutions. Public school tuition for a resident is usually much less than for a non-resident.

The City University of New York (CUNY) is a large network of over twenty public colleges and universities. For additional information, visit [www.cuny.edu](http://www.cuny.edu).

The State University of New York (SUNY) is a large network of over sixty public colleges and university campuses in New York State. For additional information, visit [www.suny.edu](http://www.suny.edu).

## Financing College

Private post-secondary school tuition is more expensive than public post-secondary school tuition, but private post-secondary schools sometimes have greater ability to offer financial aid and scholarships to qualifying students.

Whether you consider a private or public institution, you need to know how much it will cost. But you should not let financial concerns stop you from considering all of your child's college options. With the help of federal and state financial aid and scholarships, most students can afford to go to college. Below is a very brief description of some of the resources available.

- Financial Aid – The amount of financial aid your child will be eligible for depends largely upon your income, the number of people you are supporting, and whether other people in the family are attending college. The first step is for your child to apply to college. The next step is for you and your child to apply for financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- FAFSA is the single most important application for need-based financial assistance. It is a federal form that looks at your need and determines a student's eligibility for federal, state, and college sponsored financial aid, including grants, educational loans, and work-study programs. See [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). In addition, many schools require the CSS/Financial Aid profile. See [www.collegeboard.com/profile](http://www.collegeboard.com/profile).

*With the help of federal and state financial aid and scholarships, most students can afford to go to college.*

It is very important that you know the different options available to help finance your child's college education and understand that based on your financial need, you may have to apply to several different sources to complete your child's college financial package.

## **LOANS**

When you borrow money it is called a loan, and it must be paid back. Depending on the source, each loan will have different terms.

### **Government Loans**

There are both federal and state student loan programs. Federal aid programs are based on financial need and are the single largest source of financial aid for college. Government loans offer the most reasonable rates and terms. Usually a government loan will not pay for all college and college-related costs, so these loans will have to be supplemented with other sources. The following are the most common federal government loans: Federal Perkins Loan; Federal Subsidized Stafford Loan; Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loan; and Federal PLUS Loan. Visit [www2.ed.gov/finaid](http://www2.ed.gov/finaid) for more information.

### **State Loans**

Most states provide a variety of aid for both need-based and merit-based financial assistance. Eligibility for most state loan programs follows the federal guidelines for need-based aid. See [www.hesc.org](http://www.hesc.org), or call 1-888-NYS-HESC.

### **Private Loans**

Private loans are obtained through private lending institutions such as banks and can be an excellent source of funds to address any gaps in covering college expenses; however, the terms and rates are not as attractive as government loans. Colleges may also offer loan programs for incoming students.

## **GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

Grants and scholarships represent financial support awarded based on merit or merit plus need. *They do not need to be repaid.* The most common sources for scholarships and grants are schools, businesses, institutions, associations, government, and private industry. Most schools offer some sort of scholarship aid, and the amount and eligibility is based on a number of factors decided by each college including need, academic merit, academic concentration, interests, and other criteria. It is important to ask about the financial aid available at each college you apply to.

## **WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS**

The Federal Work-Study Program is a federally subsidized program that offers part-time campus or community service jobs to students with financial need. Most students work 10-12 hours per week and make at least minimum wage.

# A Timeline: The Importance of Planning

In general, remember that New York City is unique because students have so many opportunities to explore their interests and career areas, access services and programs, and meet mentors outside the school. If students are well-rounded and interested in a variety of things, it will strengthen their postsecondary school applications and support academic achievement. Encourage your child to use the City as a resource and to seek out opportunities, especially in the summertime.

Remember, it is necessary for you to work with your child's school to get important dates, to meet deadlines, and to follow your child's progress. The high school and college admission processes include various steps with specific deadlines. It is best to plan in advance and be organized. One useful technique is to have an educational "Hope Chest." At the start of the sixth grade, create a file box to keep all of your child's report cards, awards, certificates, and letters. This "Hope Chest" will keep you and your child organized through high school graduation.

Finally, through our experiences, we think the recommendations outlined in the following pages should help you with the journey from grade 6 through grade 12.

*New York City is unique because students have so many opportunities to explore their interests and career areas, access services and programs, and meet mentors outside the school.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Grade 6

- Continue or begin good homework and study practices. Make sure that your child has the materials needed to complete assignments.
- Make certain your child is taking the most challenging coursework available.
- Join the Parents' Association.
- Visit the Department of Education website at <http://schools.nyc.gov> for detailed information about expectations and the calendar for the academic year, and log into the ARIS Parent Link, which will give you important information about your child's performance.
- Meet with teachers during the fall and spring conference periods.
- Make sure you see your child's report cards, usually four or six during the year.
- Call the parent coordinator and/or teachers if you have any questions.
- Get to know your child's guidance counselor or advisor.
- Learn about tutoring or other help available if your child is struggling in any subject area.
- Know when the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and Math exams are given during the spring term and make sure your child understands the importance of these tests. Scores on these exams affect promotion, summer school, and placement in classes for the following year. Work with your child's schools to obtain specific ways in which you can help your child be ready for these tests.
- Use the City as a teaching tool. During weekends and school holidays, visit museums, cultural institutions, and historical sites, and have your child conduct follow-up research.
- Summertime is not down time. Go online and look for programs that would interest your child. There are many free programs, and many others offer scholarships. Participation in these programs helps to develop your child's profile.
- Use the summertime to prepare for seventh grade standardized tests. Have your child develop a habit of reading, and apply for a library card at your local library branch.

### Grade 7

- Reach out to parents of slightly older children for their experiences in finding the "best" high school for their children.
- Meet with teachers during the fall and spring conference periods.
- Attend high school fairs arranged by the DOE. Representatives of high schools will be present to provide information to interested parents and to answer questions about course offerings and eligibility requirements.
- Maintain contact with teachers and other middle school staff.

(Recommendations continued)

## Grade 7 continued

- If your child did not score well on the NYS ELA and/or Math Exams last year, try to help him/her improve scores this year. Ask what tutoring will be available through the school. Sign on to the DOE website for links. Scores from this year will be sent to high schools next year as part of the application process.
- Career exploration is available through [www.bls.gov/k12](http://www.bls.gov/k12) and [www.careerexplorer.net](http://www.careerexplorer.net). Many high schools focus on a particular career cluster. Your child's interests should be considered when applying.
- Use the summertime as learning time. Check out computer camps, science programs, performing arts opportunities, etc.
- It is the middle school's responsibility to ensure that all grades are entered into your child's permanent record. However, you should check to make sure that your child's academic record is up-to-date.
- Where possible, visit high schools and take public transportation to the location. This will help you learn more about high school options and the travel route and the time it would take your child to get to school every day.

## Grade 8

- Pay careful attention to all the necessary deadlines for the high school admissions process. Use the High School Directory, attend workshops, and check with your school's guidance counselor or advisor regarding these deadlines.
- In September, register for the Specialized High School Admissions Test. Applications are available at your child's school, usually from a guidance counselor.
- From September through November, go to high school fairs, continue to make appointments to visit individual high schools, and check the High School Directory for programs with entrance requirements (interviews, portfolios, information sessions, auditions, tests) so that you can plan properly.
- Attend high school admissions workshops, school open houses, and information sessions.
- By December, complete the high school application. Work with your child and select programs that are a close match to your child's skill level and interests and within reasonable travel time from your home. Remember, up to twelve choices may be listed on the high school application.
- If you are interested in charter high schools, consult the charter school directory or check with each school for application deadlines.
- Meet with teachers during the fall and spring conference periods.
- Use the ARIS Parent Link to continue to monitor your child's progress.

(Recommendations continued)

## Grade 8 continued

- In the spring, New York State exams will include ELA, Math, and Science. Scores may be used by high schools to place students in courses in the ninth grade.
- Students taking high school courses in grade 8 must take the Regents exams in June to earn high school credit.

## Grade 9

- Join the Parents' Association and attend meetings.
- Encourage your child to join at least one student club or activity.
- Set up a folder to save report cards from every term and transcripts which should be received each year.
- Meet with teachers at the fall and spring conferences. Parent coordinators can tell you whether teachers post information online. Call for appointments to meet teachers, guidance counselors, and/or assistant principals. They will want to set time aside for you.
- Focus on homework as well as class work. High school will be more challenging than middle school, and will become more so each year.
- Remember that colleges will consider all grades beginning with grade 9 when evaluating your child's applications.
- Have your child aim for the highest GPA possible to increase his/her options for college.
- Continue career exploration with the Occupational Outlook Handbook at [www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco) and the Princeton Review at [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com).
- Suggest that your child visit the high school's College Office, or connect with those in the school who are involved in college guidance, to begin gathering information. Discuss college options and create an expectation of college admission upon graduation. Discuss the benefits of attending college.
- Compile a list of three colleges that interest your child. Include the GPA and SAT requirements.
- Encourage your child to pursue a strong academic program, including foreign language study starting no later than tenth grade (as Advanced Regents diplomas require three years of foreign language study).
- Summertime is learning time. Your child should consider taking advanced coursework or registering for internships (paid or unpaid). Students who fail a class should retake it as soon as possible to stay on track, to graduate on time, and to ensure more college/career options.
- Review graduation requirements, including required courses and exams, with your child. Information is available at the DOE website or through the guidance counselor. Make sure you understand graduation requirements and college-ready requirements.



(Recommendations continued)

## Grade 9 continued

- General education students will need at least eight credits to be promoted to tenth grade; completion of 11 is highly recommended.
- Check out this parent guide for graduation information: [schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/GraduationRequirements/default.htm](https://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/GraduationRequirements/default.htm).
- Consider visiting at least one college each year your child is in high school.
- Continue to encourage your child to read outside of school.
- Make sure your child creates an appropriate e-mail address that will be used for communication to colleges and universities, possible summer jobs, and internships. We recommend a straightforward e-mail (yourname@gmail.com/yahoo, etc.). Most information about the status of applications will be e-mailed.
- Remind your child that entries on Facebook or other social networking sites are accessible to college admissions officers and prospective employers. Your child should use good judgment and be mindful of his or her entries.
- Save some money for SAT II subject tests.
- Ask whether AP courses are an option for your child. Check with a teacher, guidance counselor, or assistant principal.

## Grade 10

- Review your child's transcript at the start of the school year in order to make certain that all coursework and exam grades have been recorded accurately. Your child needs 8-12 credits to be considered a sophomore.
- If your child does not have enough credits, consult with a guidance counselor or advisor at the school.
- Update the list of colleges that you and your child put together in grade 9. Check requirements; for example, some colleges require the SAT II test.
- The PSAT exam scheduled in October is free for all NYC students. Taking it is strongly encouraged. The results will indicate which subject areas need improvement in preparation for the SAT or ACT. When a student takes the PSAT in the 11th grade, based on his/her score he/she can qualify for a merit scholarship. This is why it is important for your child to take the test in the 10th grade to become familiar with the test.
- Meet with teachers during the fall and spring conference periods.
- Have your child aim for the highest GPA possible to increase his/her options for college.
- Have your child sign up for a free account at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).
- Begin attending college fairs.

(Recommendations continued)

## Grade 10 continued

- Encourage your child to take the most demanding course schedule possible. Not all courses are available to all students, but each student should show the desire to work hard.
- Ask whether Advanced Placement courses are an option for your child. Check with a teacher, guidance counselor, or assistant principal.
- Discuss the possibility of taking SAT II exams if your child excels in a particular subject. You will need to register and pay for this test.
- Find out about and register for College Now or other college-level courses at your high school.
- Summertime is learning time. Encourage your child to do community or volunteer work over the summer. College Now is offered at many City colleges, as are summer institutes for high school students. If you are interested in a particular college, contact that school for possible summer programs. Studying for the PSAT/SAT is also a good idea for this summer; you might want to inquire about preparation programs at your child's school.

## Grade 11

- Review your child's transcript at the start of the school year in order to make certain that all coursework and exam grades have been recorded accurately. Your child should have 20-22 credits, with four in English and four in required social studies courses to be considered a junior. If your child does not have enough credits, consult with a guidance counselor or advisor at the school.
- IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CHILD TO MEET ALL DEADLINES. IF DEADLINES SLIP, OPTIONS SLIP WITH THEM.**
- Make sure your child takes the PSAT in the fall. This is the qualifying exam for National Merit and Achievement Scholarships.
- Contact the Guidance Office for the schedule of SAT and ACT exams. Make arrangements for your child to take the needed exam(s) in May or June.
- Consider exam preparation programs available, choosing the one that best fits your family schedule and finances. Sometimes schools offer their own prep classes. Check with your school.
- Fill out school lunch forms; this might help you obtain fee waivers for SAT and ACT exams.
- Meet with teachers during the fall and spring conference periods.
- Attend college fairs, visit colleges, and make sure you understand the admissions criteria, costs involved, and application processes.
- Continue to support and expand extracurricular and co-curricular activities for your child both in and outside of school. Activities outside the required courses are an asset when applying for a job as well as post-high school education.

(Recommendations continued)

## Grade 11 continued

- Make sure your child schedules SAT II exams if colleges of interest require them.
- Visit college campuses of interest. Many colleges have virtual tours on their websites, so take advantage of this in case you are unable to physically travel to the schools.
- Attend all college presentations sponsored at your school; some schools have specific month-by-month schedules set up so that students do not fall behind in their college search. You should ask the guidance office for a copy of this calendar; then post it in a place where you and your child can follow it.
- Encourage your child to take the most demanding course schedule possible. Not all courses are available to all students, but each student should show the desire to work hard.
- Have your child aim for the highest GPA possible to increase his/her options for college.
- Help your child choose a summer activity that will help him/her develop skills, improve academic performance, and clarify career goals.
- Use the summer to visit more campuses of interest and encourage your child to look for a job, internship, or SAT or college prep program.
- Find out about and register for AP courses, College Now, or other college-level courses at your high school.
- Do the FAFSA 4Caster, and have your child meet with a counselor to determine whether he or she is eligible for New York State's Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP). For more information, see [www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/colldev/HEOP/documents/HEOPWebBrochure2011-12.pdf](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/colldev/HEOP/documents/HEOPWebBrochure2011-12.pdf).
- Have your child make the first draft of his or her college list, with three schools in each category: safety schools, target schools, and reach schools.
- Have your child write the first draft of his or her essay that will be used for applications and scholarships.
- If you are not eligible for waivers, start saving for application fees, including CUNY's, for which fewer waivers are now available.

(Recommendations continued)

## Grade 12

- Review your child's transcript at the start of the school year in order to make certain that all coursework and exam grades have been recorded accurately. Your child requires 30 or more credits to be considered a senior.
- Keep in regular contact with your child's counselor and teachers to make sure he/she has taken the classes and exams needed to graduate on time.
- Meet with teachers at fall and spring conference periods.
- Make sure that your child has a social security number, which will be needed on applications.
- Assist your child with an autobiography, frequently required by college admissions offices. Support efforts on essays that are part of college applications. RESIST THE TEMPTATION to write for your child. The work submitted must have the earmarks of having been written by a teenager.
- Apply for scholarships. This will mean disclosing your assets and income. Keep copies of tax records, W-2 forms, etc.
- Make sure your child schedules SAT II exams if colleges of interest require them.
- Make sure that your child researches the application process and deadlines for the schools that he/she is interested in attending.
- Review all the correspondence that your child receives from colleges. Work with a counselor to weigh the financial aid packages and determine in which school to enroll.
- Make sure that your child sends in all required enrollment paperwork and any required deposit. Colleges will not hold a space if the deposit and paperwork are not sent.
- Make sure your child attends all required college orientation and assessment testing sessions.
- Watch for signs of "Senioritis." Frequently, there is a period of let-down after the demanding college application process. Ask your child about homework and class work. Check attendance. (Each school has an attendance office that can tell you official absences, as well as absences from subject classes.) Continue to monitor your child through the spring semester. If your child fails any subjects, he/she will not graduate on time. It is also possible for a college to change its decision regarding acceptance or scholarship assistance if your child's final grades are not at the same level as the prior seven terms.

(Recommendations continued)

## Grade 12 continued

- Keep track of these milestones for the months of October, November, December, January, April, and May:
  - October – Make sure your child submits the CUNY application. Make sure that your child asks people to write letters of recommendation. He/she should consider teachers, counselors, and people that know his/her work, volunteering, or extra-curricular activities.
  - November – Make sure your child submits the SUNY application, including SAT scores.
  - December – Make sure your child submits private school applications, including supplemental applications and SAT scores.
    - Have your child take the SAT and/or ACT before December. If he/she does not score well, another exam might be possible before the deadline for many colleges.
    - Complete the FAFSA before February 1.
  - January – Make sure forms and essays have been submitted if your child is HEOP eligible.
  - April – You and your child will review the decision letters. Work with the college advisor and decide which school your child will attend. Remember, this is a decision that you will make together.
  - May – Submit your completed registration forms to the school of your choice. Complete housing forms (if needed) and medical forms, and give a deposit.

# Internet Resources

## GENERAL EDUCATION INFORMATION

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NYC Department of Education	<a href="http://schools.nyc.gov">schools.nyc.gov</a>
NYS Department of Education	<a href="http://www.nysed.gov">www.nysed.gov</a>
U.S. Department of Education	<a href="http://www.ed.gov">www.ed.gov</a>
NYC Children's Services Education Resources	<a href="http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/education">www.nyc.gov/html/acs/education</a>

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## HOMEWORK HELP

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U.S. Department of Education	<a href="http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html">www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/hyc.html</a>
Discovery Education	<a href="http://school.discoveryeducation.com/homeworkhelp">school.discoveryeducation.com/homeworkhelp</a>
Infoplease Homework	<a href="http://www.infoplease.com/homework">www.infoplease.com/homework</a>
New York Public Library	<a href="http://www.homeworknyc.org">www.homeworknyc.org</a>
NYC Dial-a-Teacher	<a href="http://www.uft.org/dial-a-teacher">www.uft.org/dial-a-teacher</a>

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## TEST PREPARATION

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Regents Review 2.0	<a href="http://www.regentsreviewlive.net">www.regentsreviewlive.net</a>
Home Instruction – Middle School Tests	<a href="http://www.homeinstructionschools.com/shack/3-8examreview">www.homeinstructionschools.com/shack/3-8examreview</a>
Home Instruction – Regents Exam Review	<a href="http://www.homeinstructionschools.com/regents">www.homeinstructionschools.com/regents</a>
Regents Exam Prep Center	<a href="http://www.regentsprep.org">www.regentsprep.org</a>
NYS Department of Education	<a href="http://www.nysedregents.org">www.nysedregents.org</a>
College Board (PSAT, SAT, AP)	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.org">www.collegeboard.org</a>
ACT	<a href="http://www.act.com">www.act.com</a>
Number 2.com	<a href="http://www.number2.com">www.number2.com</a>

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(Internet Resources continued)

## **CAREER INFORMATION**

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Occupational Outlook Handbook	<a href="http://www.bls.gov/oco">www.bls.gov/oco</a>
Mapping Your Future	<a href="http://www.mappingyourfuture.org">www.mappingyourfuture.org</a>
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	<a href="http://www.bls.gov/k12">www.bls.gov/k12</a>
Career Explorer	<a href="http://www.careerexplorer.net">www.careerexplorer.net</a>
Careers and Colleges	<a href="http://www.careersandcolleges.com">www.careersandcolleges.com</a>
College Board	<a href="http://myroad.collegeboard.com/myroad/snavigator.jsp">myroad.collegeboard.com/myroad/snavigator.jsp</a>
Princeton Review	<a href="http://www.princetonreview">www.princetonreview</a>

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## **COLLEGE SEARCH, APPLICATION, AND FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION**

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The National Application Center	<a href="http://www.nationalappcenter.com">www.nationalappcenter.com</a>
New Visions for Public Schools, The Road to College	<a href="http://www.newvisions.org/the-road-to-college/overview">www.newvisions.org/the-road-to-college/overview</a>
NYC Dept. of Education, Tools to Help Students Prepare for College	<a href="http://docs.nycenet.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-331/College%20guide%2007_01_08">docs.nycenet.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-331/College%20guide%2007_01_08</a>
National Association for College Admission Counseling	<a href="http://www.nacacnet.org">www.nacacnet.org</a>
All About College	<a href="http://www.allaboutcollege.com">www.allaboutcollege.com</a>
Campus Tours	<a href="http://www.campustours.com">www.campustours.com</a>
Common Application	<a href="http://www.commonapp.org">www.commonapp.org</a>
City University of New York (CUNY)	<a href="http://www.cuny.edu">www.cuny.edu</a>
State University of New York (SUNY)	<a href="http://www.suny.edu">www.suny.edu</a>
New York Learns (State Education Dept.)	<a href="http://www.highered.nysed.gov/NYLearns/home.html">www.highered.nysed.gov/NYLearns/home.html</a>
Education Planner	<a href="http://www.educationplanner.org">www.educationplanner.org</a>
My Essay	<a href="http://www.myessay.com">www.myessay.com</a>
College Toolkit	<a href="http://www.collegetoolkit.com">www.collegetoolkit.com</a>

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(Internet Resources continued)

## FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

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FastWeb Scholarship Search	<a href="http://www.fastweb.com/">www.fastweb.com/</a>
FAFSA	<a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>
Federal Student Aid	<a href="http://www.studentaid.ed.gov">www.studentaid.ed.gov</a>
NYS Higher Education Services	<a href="http://www.hesc.com">www.hesc.com</a>
U.S. Department of Education	<a href="http://www2.ed.gov/inaid">www2.ed.gov/inaid</a>
Scholarships.com	<a href="http://www.scholarships.com">www.scholarships.com</a>
For Undocumented Students	<a href="http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/undocumented.phtml">www.finaid.org/otheraid/undocumented.phtml</a> <i>and</i> <a href="http://www.getreadyforcollege.org/gpg.cfm?pageid=1586&amp;1534-d83a_1933715a=d87c2125f86">www.getreadyforcollege.org/gpg.cfm?pageid=1586&amp;1534-d83a_1933715a=d87c2125f86</a>

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## MULTICULTURAL RESOURCES

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First in the Family	<a href="http://www.firstinthefamily.org">www.firstinthefamily.org</a>
Gates Millennium Scholars Fund	<a href="http://www.gmsp.org">www.gmsp.org</a>
Hispanic Association of Colleges ;and Universities	<a href="http://www.hacu.net">www.hacu.net</a>
Hispanic Heritage Scholarship List	<a href="http://www.hispanicheritage.org/youth.php">www.hispanicheritage.org/youth.php</a>
Hispanic Scholarship Fund	<a href="http://www.latinocollegedollars.org/directory.htm">www.latinocollegedollars.org/directory.htm</a>
NAACP Scholarship Opportunities	<a href="http://www.naacp.org/page/s/scholarship2">www.naacp.org/page/s/scholarship2</a>
National Urban League Parent's Guide to College	<a href="http://www.nyul.org/pages/Parent_Guide_Order_Form">www.nyul.org/pages/Parent_Guide_Order_Form</a>
United Negro College Fund	<a href="http://www.uncf.org">www.uncf.org</a>
Historical Black Colleges & Universities	<a href="http://www.hbcuconnect.com">www.hbcuconnect.com</a>
200 Free Scholarships for Minorities	<a href="http://www.blackexcel.org/200-Scholarships.html">www.blackexcel.org/200-Scholarships.html</a>
Black College Dollars	<a href="http://www.blackcollegedollars.org">www.blackcollegedollars.org</a>
Scholarship List by Categories	<a href="http://www.scholarships.fatomei.com/minorities.html">www.scholarships.fatomei.com/minorities.html</a>
Scholarships and More for Black Students	<a href="http://www.blackstudents.com">www.blackstudents.com</a>

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# Calendar At-A-Glance

GRADE	September/October	November/December	January/February	March/April	May/June
All	Log onto the <a href="http://schools.nyc.gov">schools.nyc.gov</a> parent tab for important dates. Keep a copy of your child's OSIS ID number to confirm your identity when calling the school for information. Fill out lunch form. Monitor daily attendance, homework, and class work.	<b>Attend Fall Parent-Teacher conferences.</b> Monitor daily attendance, homework, and class work.	Mid-year report cards. Call for appointments with teachers if needed. Check student progress on ARIS (DOE data system with academic & attendance data) and/or school and teacher web sites. Monitor daily attendance, homework, and class work.	<b>Attend Spring Parent-Teacher conferences.</b> Monitor daily attendance, homework, and class work.	Contact parent coordinator about summer programs. Required exams. Final report cards. Monitor daily attendance, homework, and class work.
6th	Set up place for home study. Learn about and join Parents' Association. Help child adjust to new school.	Copy child's OSIS ID number. It's often used for security when you call the school for information.	Mid-year report card. Log onto ARIS through DOE web. Track your child's progress and attendance.	Get information about summer programs. Review child's courses for next year. Get ready for state exams.	Register for summer programs. Get reading list from ELA teacher. Make a folder to keep report cards from everyday term. NYS ELA and Math Exams.
7th	Start attending Borough and City-wide High School Fairs.	Call high schools to arrange visits. Visit schools that are of interest.	Meet with other parents to learn about HS application process. Mid-year report card.	Get information about summer programs. Review child's courses for next year.	NYS ELA and Math Exams.
8th	Use High School Directory to check for open houses, tours, auditions, etc. Register for Specialized High School test. Attend high school fairs and open houses.	Complete the High School Application. Meet with guidance counselor for additional information.	Mid-year report card. Check student progress on ARIS. Main round of notices from DOE about student-high school matches.	DOE sends supplemental notices of high-student matches.	NYS ELA, Math, and Science exams. Regents for advanced courses. Attend new school orientation if given.
9th	Fill out new lunch form. Join the Parents' Association. Continue to monitor daily attendance and work. <b>Attend Fall Parent-Teacher conferences.</b>	Using the school website, handbook or meetings, learn about school-wide rules, procedures and timelines regarding report cards, testing, class scheduling, etc.	End term report card shows final grades. Students begin to earn credits towards graduation. Call for appointments to meet teacher if necessary following end term report card.	Find out about summer programs. Review class selections for next year. Contact guidance counselor or advisor about possible AP or advanced courses. <b>Attend Spring Parent-Teacher conferences.</b>	Possible NYS Regents exams in Math and Science.
10th	Review child's transcript for grades, course sequences, and credit accumulation. PSAT exam. <b>Attend Fall Parent-Teacher conferences.</b>	Begin attending college fairs sponsored by high school or colleges. Call for appointments to meet teachers following second report card if needed.	End Term report card. Call for appointments to meet teachers, if necessary. Check student progress on ARIS.	Find out about summer programs. Review class selections for next year. <b>Attend Spring Parent-Teacher conferences.</b>	NYS Regents exams in Math, Science, Global History. SAT II if recommended. AP exams for students in Advanced Placement courses.
11th	Review child's transcript as above. PSAT exam. Begin college visits. <b>Attend Fall Parent-Teacher conferences.</b>	Attend College fairs. Visit Colleges of interest. Consult College Office for help in search.	End Term report card. Call for appointments to meet teachers, if needed. Save Income Tax Form 1040 for senior year financial aid applications.	Find out about summer programs. Review class selections for next year. Student takes SAT/ACT. Consult college office for help in college search and financial aid opportunities.	NYS Regents exams in Math, Science, English, U.S. History. AP exams if AP courses taken.
12th	Review child's transcript. Student must write autobiography and essays for college applications. <b>Attend Fall Parent-Teacher conferences.</b>	SAT I and II/ACT exams. Complete college applications. Visit colleges.	End term report card. Check student progress toward graduation on ARIS. Apply for scholarships, fill out FAFSA for possible financial aid.	Closely monitor attendance, work in class, tests, and homework. <b>College acceptance letters do not guarantee graduation.</b>	AP Exams. Final Regents exams needed for graduation or advanced Regents certification.

