



Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program

Diploma Project Toolkit

A Guide for Pennsylvania Parents and Students

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Produced by:



pennsylvania
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DIPLOMA PROJECT TOOLKIT

Introduction

The *Diploma Project Toolkit* is a handbook created to assure success for migrant students in earning a high school diploma and making a smooth transition to postsecondary education.

The *Diploma Project Toolkit* is designed for use by the Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program (PA-MEP) in conversation with migrant students and their families with input from the school guidance counselor and others. It includes practical guidelines for setting academic and career goals, planning a course of study based on the high school credits and courses required by the local school and district, preparing for standardized exams, and finding a suitable postsecondary program.

The *Diploma Project Toolkit* also provides guidance for the English language learner (ELL) to access English as a Second Language (ESL) program and support resources while completing required high school courses.

The *Diploma Project Toolkit* is divided into five units, which may be used sequentially or as stand-alone units. Each unit provides information, tips, and a culminating activity for review of the unit. Each unit also provides an action plan that encourages students and parents to apply their new knowledge. PA-MEP staff are advised to introduce the Toolkit as early as possible in a student's high school career and to use it as a reference tool whenever discussing a student's program and progress.



Unit 1 – Goal Setting (Self-Assessment and Self-Advocacy)

Unit 2 – High School Credits and Courses

Unit 3 – Assessments

Unit 4 – English Language Proficiency

Unit 5 – a) Preparing for Postsecondary Education

Unit 5 – b) Paying for Postsecondary Education

Key to Symbols

-  Did you know this?
-  Parent Tip
-  Student Tip

Unit 1. Goal Setting

 How can I begin to identify my strengths, challenges and desires?

Goal Setting at a Glance

This unit is a launching pad for students and parents who are beginning to think about education and career options after high school.

Highlights include:

- Self-assessments for students and parents to identify personal strengths, preferences and challenges;
- Career options and resources;
- Importance of forming a “planning team” that includes mentors;
- Overview of paths that lead from high school to a career; and
- Examples of college preparation programs.



Parent Tip

You will find these terms used to refer to students in high school:

Grade 9	Freshman
Grade 10	Sophomore
Grade 11	Junior
Grade 12	Senior



Student Tip

If your parents need a translator at a parent-teacher conference or any kind of school meeting, they may bring a trusted friend or family member—or you can request that the school arrange for a translator.



Self-Assessment for Students

Begin planning for your future by identifying personal strengths you can build on, challenges you can manage or overcome, and long- and short-term goals that can guide you. Understand the steps that will open a path to achieve your highest academic and career goals. Use this checklist to track your progress in these areas:

Strengths

- I enroll in challenging classes.
- I prepare myself for required college exams.
- I participate in school and extracurricular activities.
- I am involved in activities that match my talents and interests.
- I ask for help when I need it.
- Other: _____



Did You Know?

Knowledge of a native language is a marketable asset!

Challenges

- I spend a lot of time working at my job outside of school.
- I am the first in my family to have a goal to go to college.
- I sometimes hesitate or do not know where to get help.
- I have not figured out what I want to study after high school.
- I am not sure what courses I need to take to graduate from high school.
- Other: _____

Planning ahead

- I keep track of and document all of my achievements and honors as a student.
- I know about and am involved in college prep programs at my school.
- I ask my guidance counselor about scholarships I could pursue.
- I have identified scholarships in different free web-based search engines.
- I explore a variety of career options that match my talents and interests.
- Other: _____



Self-Assessment for Parents

As parents, you play a critical role in your child’s “planning team.” Begin by establishing a positive, supportive role to assure that your child has everything needed to finish high school. Work with your child and with the school to identify the steps that will lead to a satisfying occupation or college education beyond high school graduation. Use this checklist to determine how you are doing in these areas:

Strengths

- I trust that my child is capable of doing excellent work in his or her courses.
- I work as a team with my child, and I participate in the process of gathering the information that my child needs.
- I am willing to serve as an example of hard work, self-reliance, and tenacity for my child.
- I talk with my child often about his/her plans for the future, and I listen to his or her ideas and plans.

Challenges

- I am busy at work and do not always have time for a conversation with my child.
- My child is the first in our family to have a goal to go to college.
- I sometimes hesitate or do not know where to get help.
- I am not sure which courses my child needs to take to graduate from high school.

Planning Ahead

- I am prepared to make some economic sacrifices to help my child succeed in school.
- I identify sources of funding for my child’s postsecondary education and implement a savings plan.
- I work to coordinate our family’s schedule in support of my child’s academic schedule.

Did You Know?



In Pennsylvania, children have the right to receive a free public education until they are 21 years-old – regardless of immigration status, health, cognitive or physical abilities.

 **What kinds of careers might I choose?**

In the United States, many students identify their long-term career goals during high school. If your career goals are clear, they should determine your course selection throughout high school. (For example, if you are interested in languages and would like to become a translator, you should take an extra language course or two in high school.) If you are not certain of which career you will choose, take courses in high school that will help you strengthen your skills and interests while you decide.

There are many tools available that will help you decide what kind of job/career you might wish to pursue after graduating from high school. Many students enjoy exploring the various options, but be realistic. If mathematics is not your strength, for example, it does not make much sense to follow a path to becoming an accountant or bank manager.

Here are some resources to help you identify which careers might be of interest to you:



Sample of Career Assessment Resources

1. ***Career Match: Connecting Who You Are With What You'll Love to Do*** by Shoya Zichy with Ann Bidou
2. ***El Camino***: Dr. John Holland's RIASEC Model of Occupational Career Inventory. Self-Directed Search: www.self-directed-search.com
3. ***"The Career Game Explorer"***: Rick Throw Production, Inc., www.careergame.com
4. ***What Color is Your Parachute? 2012: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers*** by Richard N. Bolles

(Ask your guidance counselor or PA-MEP staff about these resources and more.)



 **How can I support my child's choice of career?**

As the people who know the child best, parents are in a unique and valuable position to give feedback and insights. Most parents have concerns about their child's choice of career path, even if they are excited that their child is discovering what he or she would like to do in life. Here are typical concerns you may have as well as suggestions for how to be helpful to your child's decision-making process.

How can I be helpful?

Think back on strengths, talents, and interests you have always seen in your child and suggest he or she include them in building a career profile.

Make a list of three or four friends, colleagues, family members, or members of the community who could talk with your child about career choices.

Ask your child about extracurricular activities that could help him or her develop a talent, skill or interest.

Encourage your child to stay in school.

Listen, listen, listen!

Help your child work through a process rather than arguing against ideas with which you disagree.

You know best what motivates your child—a smile, a joke, a hug—if he or she gets frustrated or overwhelmed.

Celebrate all steps in the right direction—even the tiny ones!

What are my concerns?

Can my child succeed at this career?

Does my child have the skills and knowledge required for this kind of work?

Will my child stick with his or her decision?

Can my child support him- or herself by doing this kind of work?

Will this career path require my child to leave our community to study and work?

 **Parent Tip**

Communication is a "two-way street." Students can bring valuable information from school and from mentors! Parents, including those who have not been to high school or college, can give good advice!

 Who can help me with planning for my future?

Successful students ask for help when they need it. It is not shameful to go to a knowledgeable person for help just as you would go to a book, brochure, or website.



Mentorships, internships, and volunteer work are great ways to explore possible careers.

A “mentor” is defined as a “wise and trusted counselor or teacher.” A mentor is your “go to” person when you need to discuss ideas or questions. If possible, ask someone you know—a trusted teacher, guidance counselor, coach, or family member (possibly an aunt or uncle), or an older student whom you respect as a role model—to serve as your mentor as you work toward your high school diploma and beyond.

Here are some topics you might discuss with a mentor:

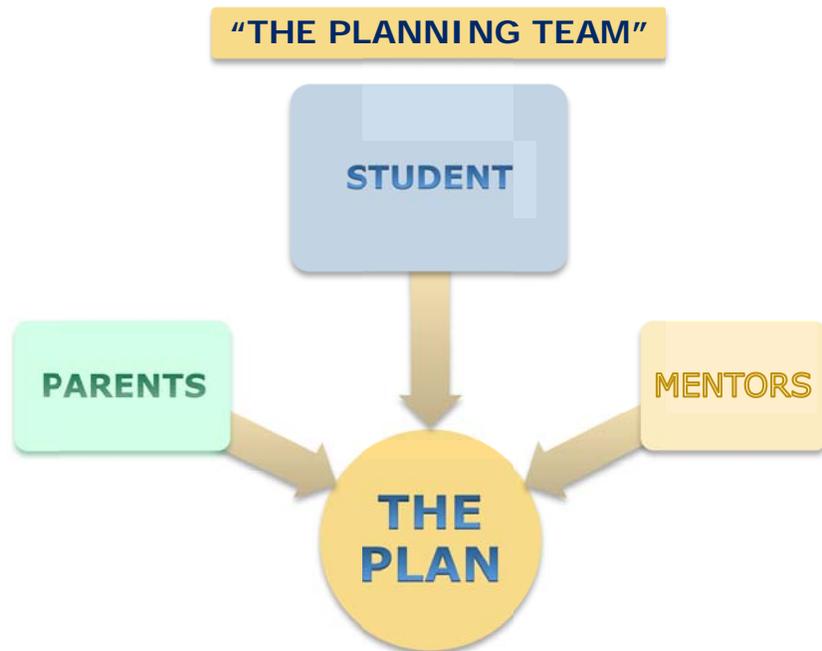
-  What courses should I take to develop the skills I will need for success in my career?
-  How did you (the mentor) prepare for your occupation?
-  What does it take to be successful in any occupation?
-  Who were some of the people who helped you along the way?
-  Are there other people you think I should speak with?
-  What can I gain in doing an internship?
-  How do you balance your job with your family life?
-  Can you recommend programs for students like me?
-  What were some of the obstacles you had to overcome?
-  Can you help me make an action plan?

 **Student Tip**

Mentoring does not take the place of parenting. Be sure to keep your parents informed and involved in the process!



-  In the U.S., parents meet with teachers, guidance counselors, and other support staff (such as PA-MEP staff) to discuss their child's future.
-  Keep the name and contact information for your child's guidance counselor, a trusted teacher, PA-MEP staff, and your child's mentor in a handy place and contact them when you need advice and support.
-  In the U.S., children can respectfully disagree with their parents. If you and your child are unable to resolve an issue, consult a guidance counselor, trusted teacher, or the child's mentor for solutions.
-  Remember to contact your "planning team" to celebrate successes, too!

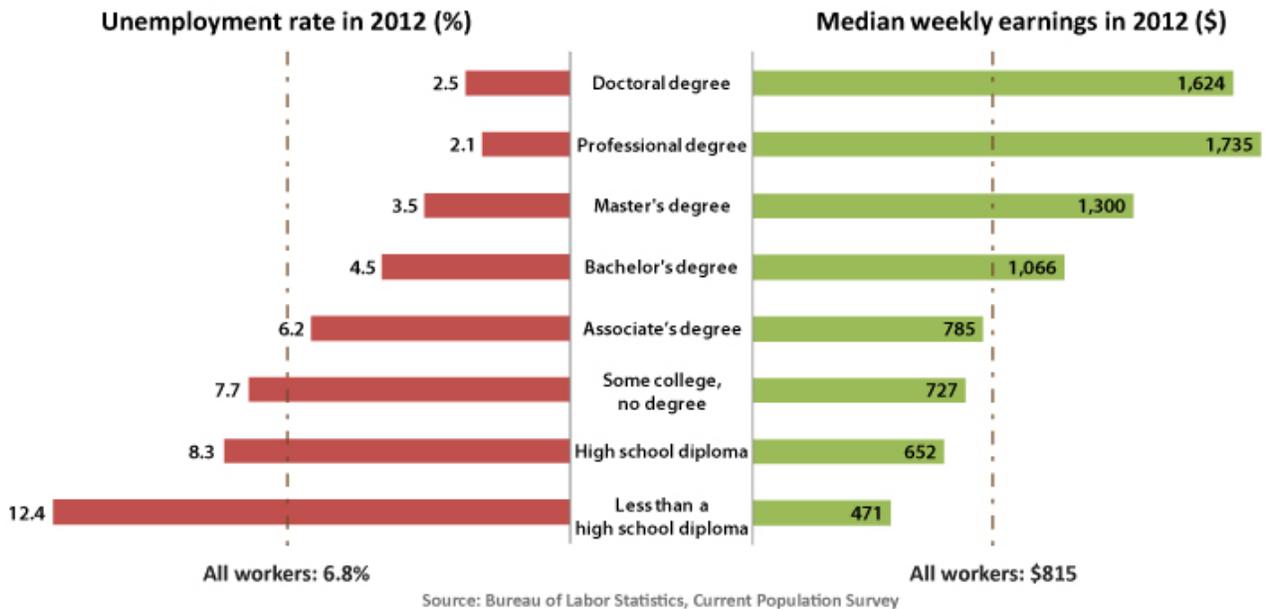


 What are the benefits of continuing my education after high school?

Are you thinking of leaving school to enter the workforce so you can contribute to your family’s finances? This decision has serious consequences for your future! Speak openly about your concerns to your guidance counselor, trusted teacher, and PA-MEP staff. They will help you find alternatives.

The chart below shows that a more advanced education results in higher earnings. A student who graduates from high school will likely earn far more per week than a student without a high school diploma, especially over the course of his or her lifetime. This proves the point that the decision to leave high school to enter the workforce has serious consequences.

Education Pays



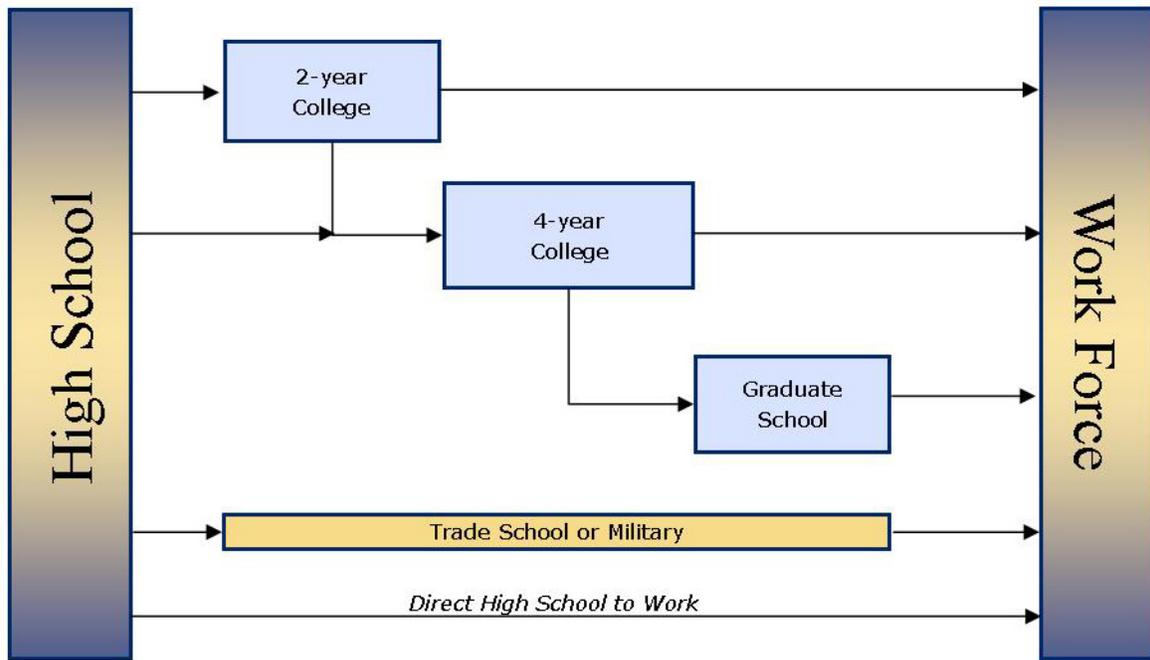
 **Parent Tip**

Join your PA-MEP Parent Advisory Council (PAC) to meet other parents with whom you can share information, resources, and support for parenting teenagers. Here is a link to a guide for parents of teens who have college ambitions:
<http://www.nacacnet.org>

 **Student Tip**

Some websites that will help you with all aspects of planning for post-high school education:
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
www.educationplanner.org
<http://www.myfuture.com>

 What are possible paths that lead from high school to a career?



 Are college preparation programs available in my school or district?

There are many programs to help students succeed in high school and prepare for further education after graduation. These programs fall into two categories:

- 1) Many colleges invite high school students to live and study on campus during the summer break.
- 2) Student leadership academies help students build confidence and explore postsecondary options.

Ask your guidance counselor or MEP support specialist for more information about these programs. Here are a few that come highly recommended:

Name of Program	Who Is It For?	Summary (details below)
Educational Talent Search (ETS)	6 th – 12 th grade students	Identifies and supports students who show potential and the drive to pursue college education
Upward Bound (TRIO)	9 th – 12 th grade students	Helps students gain academic skills and motivation
College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)	1 st year college students	Counseling, tutoring and workshops
Dual Enrollment	11 th - 12 th grade students	Earn college credit while attending high school

College Preparation Programs

Educational Talent Search

Educational Talent Search is a federally funded, pre-collegiate program that creates educational opportunities for low-income, first generation students while providing access to higher education and assisting in the transition to college. Educational Talent Search identifies and supports students in grades 6-12 who show potential and the drive to pursue a college education.

Students in Educational Talent Search benefit from work on career exploration, academic and personal counseling, fun and educational field trips, and workshops on study skills, as well as a week-long summer enrichment program. See your guidance counselor to pick up an application. For more information, please go to the U.S. Department of Education website:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triotalent/index.html>

Upward Bound (TRIO)

Upward Bound helps students in grades 9-12 gain academic skills and motivation in preparation for precollege and postsecondary success. The program is designed to assist first-generation-to-college and low-income students. Services include:

- Academic instruction in reading and writing, mathematics, and sciences
- English language acquisition support
- Tutoring, mentoring, and counseling where appropriate

Most Upward Bound programs combine two approaches:

1. Summer program where high school students take college prep classes and earn work experience at a college campus
2. Weekly follow-ups and possibly tutoring with students during the school year

Penn State, University of Pennsylvania, Lincoln University, and Temple University are some of the institutions that offer Upward Bound programs.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment programs are available in some school districts. These programs enable students to take college-level courses and receive both high school and college credits. Requirements for 11th and 12th graders typically include: at least a 2.5 grade point average, demonstration of academic ability and motivation, and good attendance.

Dual enrollment state grants will not be available in 2013-14, but check with your local school to find out if this option is open to you.

College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)

CAMP assists students who are children of migratory farm workers enrolled in their first year of trade school, college or university. The program assists in counseling, tutoring, skills workshops, financial aid, health services and housing assistance.

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/camp/index.html>

More information regarding the Penn State CAMP program can be found at: <http://equity.psu.edu/camp>



Unit 1. Goal Setting – Culminating Activity

Write down some of your (your child's) talents, skills and interests:

Talents: _____

Skills: _____

Interests: _____

Write down some careers or types of jobs that match your (his or her) talents, skills and interests.

Write down the names and contact information of the Planning Team who will help you (your child) to graduate from high school and plan for continuing education?

Guidance Counselor: _____

Trusted Teacher: _____

PA-MEP Staff:

Mentor:

Which paths to a career are you (your child) interested in knowing more about? (See page 10)

Unit 1. Action Plan

Contact (by phone, note or in person) your (your child's) Planning Team to introduce yourself and let them know you will be in contact with them to discuss your child's career options and the high school coursework required for graduation and beyond.

Unit 2. High School Credits and Courses

Credits and Courses at a Glance

This unit provides critical information about credits and courses that are needed to graduate from high school. It also gives helpful suggestions about the kinds of assistance that are available for students who are either missing credits and/or unable to keep up with their course work.

Highlights include:

- Explanation of graduation requirements;
- Samples of yearly plans for earning required credits; and
- Examples of support programs that assist with earning missing credits and/or supplemental instruction.

 How many credits do I need to graduate from high school?

 Which courses should I take to graduate from high school?

Every school district has different graduation requirements. Most schools require a total of four (4) credits in each of the key subject areas of English, math, science and social studies. Some schools require credits in a foreign language. Each credit represents one school year of study.

In addition, most schools require that the student take a minimum number of credits in physical education and other courses, called electives. Electives and physical education have varying credit and course requirements depending on the district.

Some high schools also require certain courses to be taken at a certain time. For example, a school may require that the life skills course be taken in 9th grade. It is important to know not only which courses are required but also when they must be taken.

Ask for information on the required credits and courses at your school. Then make a yearly plan that will lead to graduation.



Parent Tip

In the U.S. it is the parents' responsibility to know which courses are required for high school graduation.



Samples of Graduation Requirements

These samples are typical of high schools in your state. Your (your child's) list of course requirements will look similar to this, but be sure to find out your school's exact requirements so you (your child) can meet all requirements completely and on time. If you do not have easy access to this information through your school's website, make an appointment with the guidance counselor. He or she is the best person to ask for this information.

School "A" Yearly Plan

Course	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11	Gr 12	Credits
English	1	1	1	1	4
Mathematics	1	1	1	1	4
Science	1	1	1	1	4
Social Science	1	1	1	1	4
Foreign Language			1	1	2
Humanities	1	1			2
Electives			1	1	2
Health and Physical Education	.5	.5	.5		1.5
Other Graduation Requirements: Must complete a Multidisciplinary Project (Senior Project) and Service Learning Project; must achieve proficiency on Keystones Exams (see page 17)					Total = 23.5

School "B" Yearly Plan

Course	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11	Gr 12	Credits
English	1	1	1	1	4
Mathematics	1	1	1	1	4
Science	1	1	1	1	4
Social Studies	1	1	1	1	4
Electives (two of the elective credits must be in Arts and/or Humanities)	2	1	2	2	7
Health	1				1
Life Skills	.5				0.5
Physical Education	.5	1		.5	2
Other Graduation Requirements: Must complete graduation project and achieve proficiency on Keystone Exams					Total = minimum of 26.5



-  If I am missing credits, what are some ways that I can make them up while I am still in school?
-  If I am unable to keep up with my coursework and/or assignments, where can I find help?

Sometimes students need extra help to make up missed credits or to understand the information being taught at school. Successful students get help right away to keep from falling behind, and they are willing to put in the extra time and effort needed to get back on track.

Many of these “extended day” programs take place after school, on Saturdays, or during the summer. Transportation is not always provided. PA-MEP staff, teachers, or guidance counselors can help to identify the type of assistance needed.

Sources of Extra Help		
Community		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs offer homework, literacy and leadership programs. • YMCA/YWCA offer after-school and evening homework help. • Many of Pennsylvania’s public libraries offer “Brainfuse” for free online homework help. • Online (paid) “credit recovery” courses are available through the internet. • Private tutoring. 		
Local Public School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After-school or summer school “credit recovery” programs • Individual homework and study skills tutoring • Online courses 	Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program (where available) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer programs • After-school and Saturday programs • Help with earning credits 	State/Federal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read 180 • TRIO programs • GEAR UP • AmeriCorps



Unit 2. High School Credits and Courses – Culminating Activity

Write your (your child's) school website and/or telephone number here:

List the courses you (your child) are (is) currently taking:

Are you (is your child) missing credits that you (he or she) needs? If so, list them here. What is your (your child's) plan to make them up?

Unit 2. Action Plan

Complete the table below with the courses and credits required for your (your child's) high school graduation. Be sure to include other graduation requirements such as a senior project or community service hours.

Course	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11	Gr 12	Credits
Other Graduation Requirements:					Total = _____

Unit 3. Assessments

Assessments at a Glance

This unit provides basic information about state Keystone Exams and college admission exams that are given during high school. It also offers student and parent tips for how to prepare for and perform well on the exams.

Highlights include:

- Specifics about subjects and scheduling of Keystone Exams;
- Student and parent tips for improving test performance and results; and
- Information about the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT), the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT) college admission exams.

 What high school exams are given and in which years?

In order to be awarded a public high school diploma in Pennsylvania, students must take and pass the Keystone Exams to prove that they have gained sufficient knowledge and skills to meet state standards.

Keystone Exams

- The three Keystone Exams are in Literature, Algebra I and Biology.
- Students take the Keystone Exams in 11th grade. Students have the option of taking the Keystone Exams prior to 11th grade upon completion of a course.
- Students must score “proficient” or higher in all three Keystone Exams in order to graduate.
- Keystones are taken in the winter (December and January), spring (May), and summer (July and August).

Proposed Pennsylvania Keystone Exam Requirements

Proposed Pennsylvania Keystone Exam Requirements			
Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019	Class of 2020
Algebra I	Algebra I	Algebra I	Algebra I
Biology	Biology	Biology	Biology
Literature	Literature	Literature	Literature
		English Composition*	English Composition*
			Civics and Government*

*The English Composition, Civics and Government Keystone Exams will be required only if funding is available to develop the tests.

Note: In addition to demonstrating proficiency on the Keystone Exams, students may be required by their local school district or their local high school to pass exams in other content areas.



Student Tips – Examinations

-  Listen carefully to directions. If you are receiving ESL instruction, you may be permitted native language support to assist you with understanding exam directions. (See list of ESL accommodations on page 25.)
-  Read through written directions at least twice before starting on an exam section. If you are unsure of the examination directions, ask the teacher or examination proctor to explain them.
-  On multiple choice items, read each possible choice carefully before selecting an answer. There is no penalty for guessing, so make an educated guess if you are unsure.
-  On timed examinations, skip difficult items that take up a lot of time. Go on to other questions and return later to the ones you skipped.
-  Check frequently to be sure your examination questions match the numbers on your answer sheet.
-  When you are done, check your answers. Fill in any missing answers. Change any answers you think were incorrect. Be advised that your first answer is usually the correct one.



Parent Tips — Examinations

-  Write the dates of your child's examinations on your home calendar.
-  Keep your home calendar clear of appointments that conflict with your child's exam dates.
-  On exam days, make sure that your child has had a good night's rest and eats a balanced breakfast.
-  Encourage your child to do his or her best work on the exam



 What college admissions exams are given and in which years?

PSAT, SAT and ACT

Students who plan to attend college must take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT). These are standardized college admission exams. The SAT tests students in reading, writing and math. The ACT tests students in English, math, reading, and science.

Many students also take the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) in October of their junior year. It consists of three sections: Math, Critical Reading and Writing. The PSAT has the same question types and tests the same kind of knowledge as the SAT. The PSAT therefore serves as a short practice test for the SAT. The PSAT scores are also used to determine a student’s eligibility for National Merit Scholarship and other scholarship awards. The PSAT scores are not shared with colleges.

Generally, students take the SAT in their junior or senior year of high school. However, it is best for students to take the exam their junior year. That way, if they need to retake the exam, they have time to do so. Both exams are offered many times each year.

There is a fee for taking the PSAT, SAT, and ACT exams. However, the fee may be waived for students of low-income families. You can find more information at the College Board website: <http://www.collegeboard.com/testing/>.

PSAT Testing	SAT Testing	ACT Testing
2013-14	Offered Seven Times Per Year	Offered Six Times Per Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 15 & 18, 2014 • Oct. 14 & 17, 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January • March or April • May • June • October • November • December 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February • April • June • September • October • December



Unit 3. Assessments – Culminating Activity

List all required high school exams you (your child) will take this year:

List all required high school exams you (your child) must take to earn a high school diploma:

Will you (your child) be preparing for and/or taking any tests required for college during this school year? If so, please list here:

Unit 3. Action Plan

Check with your (your child's) teachers, guidance counselor, or PA-MEP support specialist on the availability of test prep instruction in your (your child's) district. Either sign up for a local test prep program or practice taking tests using a sample test booklet or online.

Unit 4. English Language Proficiency

English Language Proficiency at a Glance

This unit is designed to furnish key information to students who have been identified as English language learners (ELL) and their families. This designation qualifies ELLs to receive instructional support in order to keep up with their coursework.

Highlights include:

- Information on World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) language proficiency tests and what the results mean;
- Purpose of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction;
- Advantages of being bilingual;
- Tips for parents on how to support their child’s home language; and
- List of accommodations available to ELLs in class and on exams.



What is a language proficiency test and what do the results mean?

When a student enrolls in a school district, the district must assess the student’s proficiency in English if he or she speaks another language at home.

The district may administer the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), an assessment that measures the student’s level of English proficiency. This information helps ESL staff to determine the intensity and type of English instruction that the student will need.

The WIDA ACCESS for ELLs language proficiency test is given every year that a student qualifies for ESL services. It shows the student’s level of English language proficiency from Level 1 to Level 6. Each level describes how well students can speak, read, write, and comprehend English.

If the test shows that the student has limited proficiency in English, the district will identify the student as an “English language learner”. The student is placed into the district’s English as a Second Language or Bilingual Program where he or she can get support in learning English while taking classes toward high school graduation.

The six levels of proficiency guide teachers, parents, and students in determining and monitoring the educational plan for each student. (See Appendix for sample *WIDA Parent/Guardian Report*.)

1	Entering	Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual support
2	Emerging	Knows and uses some social and general academic language with visual support
3	Developing	Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual support
4	Expanding	Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language
5	Bridging	Knows and uses social and academic language working with grade-level material
6	Reaching	Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test

ELL students remain in the ESL or Bilingual Program until they understand English well enough to be successful in classrooms without additional language support. (Students receive ESL instruction for an average of 2-3 years although additional help is provided if needed.)

Guidance counselors, ESL teachers and PA-MEP staff can assist students by directing ELLs to supplementary language and academic services, and enrichment opportunities available in their school or district.

These services might include credit recovery programs, summer school, after-school or Saturday programs, and before/during/after school tutoring to meet the student’s needs. (See options listed in Unit 2, page 17.)

Did You Know?



- All Pennsylvania schools that have ELLs must have an ESL program.
- The school must provide English language instruction and content area instruction to ELL students.
- Schools must provide ELL students the same educational opportunities as every other student.



Student Tip

Having the ability to communicate well in more than one language can be a valuable asset! Continue to develop proficiency in your home language while you build your English language skills. Bilingual people often have an advantage when applying for jobs in many industries such as:

Health Care	Hospitality	Journalism
Education	Law Enforcement	Social Services
Customer Service	Financial services	Sales & Marketing
Foreign Service	Writing/Editing	Research
International Business	Speech Pathologist	Computer Programming
Environmental Studies	Data Entry	Physical Therapist
Translation Services	Legal Assistant	Parent Advocate
Outreach Worker	Insurance Representative	Software Designer
Patient Advocate	Restaurant Manager	Lab technician
Research Assistant	Tour Guide	Travel Agent



Parent Tips for Encouraging Home Language Use

Support your child’s home language skills! Students who have solid language and literacy skills in their first language can transfer those skills to learning English. Here are some ideas:

Encourage your child to speak, read and write in both languages.	Watch educational TV together and discuss the programs.	Keep books and magazines in both languages in your home.
Have “real” conversations about interesting topics.	Encourage your child to keep a journal in his or her home language.	Make time for reading as a family activity.
Model reading (in the home language) as a pastime.	With your child, listen to radio programs in your home language.	Play word games and puzzles.
Encourage your child to write for a local newspaper in his or her home language.	Encourage your child to enter a writing contest for stories or poetry in his or her home language.	If possible, visit countries where native language is spoken.
Listen to and sing music in the home language.	Encourage your child to email family and friends in the home language.	Tell jokes and stories in the home language.
Encourage your child to join clubs or organizations that sponsor bilingual activities.	Suggest that your child tutor younger students who speak your home language.	Seek out volunteer opportunities where your child can practice both languages.



What kind of language instructional support is available to me?

English language learners in their first 12 months of enrollment in U.S. schools may (but are not required to) take the Keystone Literature Exam in 11th grade. (A student's enrollment in a school in Puerto Rico is not to be considered as enrollment in a U.S. school.)

ELLs who are enrolled in a U.S. school after March 31st of each year are considered to be in their first year in a U.S. school and are not required to take the Keystone Literature Exam.

All ELLs are required to take the Keystone Algebra I and Biology exams in 11th grade, with accommodations deemed appropriate (see below).

Accommodations for English Language Learners

Note: These accommodations must be used in daily instruction before being allowed on the examination.

- ELLs may use a word-to-word translation dictionary, without definitions and without pictures, for the Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exams only. These dictionaries are not allowed for the Literature Keystone Exam.
- ELLs may have the help of a qualified interpreter/sight translator for all exams except the Literature Keystone Exam.
- Spanish/English versions of the Algebra I and Biology Keystone Exams are available for students who are literate in Spanish.
- ELLs may ask to take examinations in a small group setting.



Unit 4. English Language Proficiency – Culminating Activity

Are you (Is your child) receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) services? If so, what is your (your child's) proficiency level?

Please circle one:

1 - Entering

2 - Emerging

3 - Developing

4 - Expanding

5 - Bridging

6 - Reaching

Describe the kind of instructional support you (your child) are receiving from his or her ESL teacher:

Will you (your child) require English language learner (ELL) accommodations in coursework, homework, projects, testing, or examinations during high school? If so, please describe the accommodations that have been suggested to you:

Unit 4 - Action Plan:

Make a list of ESL-related questions you would like to discuss at your (your child's) next meeting with a guidance counselor or at a parent-teacher conference.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Unit 5. Preparing for and Funding Postsecondary Education

Preparing For and Funding Postsecondary Education at a Glance

This unit describes in detail the steps that students and their families will need to take in order to prepare for and fund post-high school education. These discussions and preparations should begin early and involve as many supportive educators, mentors, family members and peers as possible.

Highlights include:

- Description of main types of postsecondary schools;
- Yearly checklists on how to prepare for a trade school or college education;
- Detailed financial aid and funding options and descriptions; and
- Lists of helpful websites.



What type of postsecondary school/program best matches my talents and interests?

Students and their parents should begin discussing postsecondary options as early as 8th or 9th grade. (See Unit 1 - Goal-Setting.) Sensible choices in high school will make for a smooth transition to trade school or college. In the United States, you will find a wide range of postsecondary choices. It is generally the student's and the family's responsibility to research and find the program that best matches the student's career goals.

In the United States, every trade school, college, and university establishes its own entrance requirements. Fortunately, the information is easily available on the internet and through your high school's guidance counselor.

At the same time students explore the various program options, they should also seek out and participate in college preparedness programs available in their schools and districts. (See pages 10 and 11.)



Student Tip

If you wish to go to trade school or college away from home, and leaving home is not acceptable to your family or your community, contact a PA-MEP support staff member to schedule a meeting with you and your parents to discuss options.

Postsecondary Programs	
Type of School	Facts
Trade/ Technical School	<p>PROGRAM: training for medical assistant, computer programming, culinary arts, video production, digital design, hotel and restaurant management, veterinary tech, massage therapy, accounting, automotive, electrical, pharmacy tech, early childhood education, etc.</p> <p>COST: moderately expensive to expensive; financial aid available in some cases</p> <p>TIME COMMITMENT: varies depending on the program</p> <p>OUTCOME: certificate and/or license to practice a specific trade</p> <p>ADVANTAGES: preparation for a place in the skilled work force</p>
Community College (2-year)	<p>PROGRAM: academic, technological and trade programs</p> <p>COST: relatively low cost</p> <p>ADMISSION: non-competitive to moderately competitive</p> <p>TIME COMMITMENT: two years</p> <p>OUTCOME: Associate Degree; transfer to four-year college</p> <p>ADVANTAGES: flexible course schedules, close to home; time to perfect English language skills before entering four-year college</p>
College or University (4-year)	<p>PROGRAM: academic</p> <p>COST: moderately to very expensive; financial aid often available; in-state tuition sometimes available</p> <p>ADMISSION: moderately to highly competitive</p> <p>TIME COMMITMENT: four years</p> <p>OUTCOME: Bachelor of Science (BS) or Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree; step to graduate school (Master's Degree)</p> <p>ADVANTAGES: considered the "minimum" for supervisory jobs</p> <p>NOTE: Universities usually offer a wider range of programs with a larger campus and more students; otherwise similar to college.</p>

Preparing for Trade/Technical School

Student Checklist

9th Grade

- Enroll in classes that fulfill graduation requirements and build organizational and study skills.
- Match your interests with careers. (See page 5)
- Introduce yourself to your guidance counselor and discuss your plans.
- Seek out peers and mentors willing to support your plans.
- Read about the various trades that might be of interest to you.
- Ask your counselor if your high school offers a vocational option for 11th grade.
- Learn the basics and talk to your parents about costs, saving, and financial aid.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities that support your interests and build life skills such as leadership, self-reliance, creativity, teamwork, decision-making, and financial independence.

10th Grade

- Meet with your guidance counselor to make sure you are on track.
- Register for a vocational program for 11th grade if your school has this option.
- Use the guidance office, internet, and public library to find information comparing trade school programs, tuition and fee costs and scholarships.
- Continue to take classes that fulfill graduation requirements and build skills.
- Continue involvement in extracurricular or volunteer activities.
- Visit trade schools and participate in summer apprenticeship programs if available.

11th Grade

Fall:

- Continue taking the courses required for high school graduation.
- Start a vocational course of study if available.
- Continue involvement in extracurricular activities.
- Coordinate your two-year (grades 11-12) plan with your guidance counselor.
- Find out if the trade schools you are interested in require an entrance exam, portfolio, interview or audition. If so, prepare.

Spring:

- Visit trade schools. Make a list of 6-8 schools that interest you. Rank them.
- Talk to your parents and counselor about financial aid. Search for scholarships.

Summer:

- Visit the trade school if possible; schedule interviews with admission officers.
- Find a summer job or internship that matches your vocational interests and builds relevant skills.

12th Grade

Fall:

- Narrow your list to about 3-4 trade schools.
- Get an application and financial aid information from each trade school.
- Create a calendar that highlights important dates and deadlines.
- Meet with your counselor to discuss your progress and plans.
- If letters of recommendation are required, request them at least four weeks before your application deadline.
- If an application essay is required, write it.

Winter:

- Ask your counselor to send your transcript to your trade schools.
- Make copies of all documents you send. Keep a file. Contact colleges to make sure that they have received all materials.
- Submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (See page 37.) as soon after January 1 as possible. Ask for assistance from your counselor or other adult if you need help filling it out.

Spring:

- Review acceptance letters and carefully read all financial aid offers. Acceptance letters should arrive by mid-April.
- If you have not done so already, visit your chosen trade school before accepting.
- Notify trade schools of your acceptance or rejection of offers by May 1.
- Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your trade school.

Summer:

- Make sure that your tuition and fees are paid. Keep a record of all payments.
- Finalize housing and food plans.
- Prepare for the exciting year ahead!

Visit these websites for more information on trade and technical schools:

National source for trade and technical schools

www.education.org

Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology

www.stevenscollege.edu

Technical College High School – Chester County

www.technicalcollegehighschool.org/

Preparing for 2-year or 4-year College/University

Student Checklist

9th Grade

- Enroll in challenging classes that fulfill graduation requirements.
- Introduce yourself to your guidance counselor and discuss your plans.
- Seek out peers and mentors willing to support your plans.
- Read about different careers and professions, and match your interests with careers. (See page 5)
- Start saving money and make a plan to continue to do so for the next four years.

10th Grade

- Use the guidance office, internet, and public library to compare programs, tuition and fee costs, and scholarships.
- Continue to take challenging classes that fulfill graduation requirements.
- Become involved in extracurricular or volunteer activities.
- Meet with your guidance counselor, mentors and parents to discuss colleges.
- Visit colleges and participate in summer college prep programs.

11th Grade

Fall:

- Sign up to take the PSAT in October.
- Take the PSAT.
- Make a list of college preferences and areas of interest.
- Research and narrow down possible college majors and careers.

Winter:

- Register for the SAT. Deadlines are usually five days before the test.
- Prepare for the SAT; use PSAT scores to determine strengths and weaknesses.
- Continue exploring and making decisions about majors and careers.

Spring:

- Visit colleges. Create a list of 8-10 schools that interest you.
- Talk to your parents and counselor about financial aid.
- Search for scholarships that match your financial needs.
- Make a two-year plan of classes with your guidance counselor. Challenge yourself with honors and Advanced Placement classes.
- Plan summer activities: volunteer, attend summer programs, or find a job or internship that matches your interests and builds valuable skills.

Summer:

- Take campus tours and schedule interviews with admission officers.
- Prepare for the SAT if you are thinking about taking it in your senior year.

12th Grade

Fall:

- Narrow your list to about 5-8 colleges.
- Get an application and financial aid information from each college.
- Create a calendar that highlights important dates and deadlines.
- Meet with your counselor early in the year to discuss your college plans
- Ask for letters of recommendation at least four weeks before your application deadlines.
- Write application essays.
- Decide if you want to apply for early admission. If so, register to re-take the SAT in October.

Winter:

- If you are not applying for early admission, register to take the SAT in December.
- Ask your counselor to send your transcript to your colleges. Most applications are due between January 1 and February 15.
- Make copies of all documents you send. Contact colleges to make sure that they have received all materials
- Submit your FAFSA (see page 37) as soon after January 1 as possible.

Spring:

- Review acceptance letters and carefully read all financial aid offers. Acceptance letters should arrive by mid-April.
- If you have not already, visit your chosen college before accepting.
- Notify colleges of your acceptance or rejection of offers by May 1.
- Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college.

Summer:

- Make sure that your tuition and fees are paid.
- Finalize housing and food plans.
- Prepare for the exciting year ahead!

For more information on getting ready for college, visit the website below:

studentaid.ed.gov

www.collegeboard.org

Admission to Two- and Four-Year Colleges/Universities

The Student Profile

Most four-year institutions admit students who are “well-rounded” with a range of skills, abilities, experience and knowledge. The student must complete and submit an application available on the college website. There is usually an application fee, which may be waived for student from low-income families.

In most cases, the admissions committee will want to see:

- SAT or ACT scores
- High school transcript including grades, teacher comments, and the grade point average (GPA)
- Evidence of English language proficiency
- Involvement in the “life of the school” such as sports, student government, school clubs, and performing groups
- Letters of recommendation from teachers and community leaders
- Evidence of meaningful paid or volunteer work in the community

For most two-year institutions the student will complete the application and submit only the high school transcript and evidence of English language proficiency.



TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD COLLEGE ESSAY

-  Get started by brainstorming. Think about your personality traits and strengths.
-  Let your first draft flow. Organize your essay and decide where you want to include examples. Do not worry at this stage about making it perfect.
-  Find a creative angle as a focus for your essay.
-  Be specific. Make sure that everything you write supports the viewpoint or angle you have chosen.
-  Be honest. Answer the question honestly, not by trying to guess what the admission officer wants to hear.
-  Get feedback. Show your essay to friends and family. Ask if it makes sense and sounds like you. Listen to their suggestions, but be sure to keep your own voice.
-  Proofread and make corrections. Check for spelling and grammar errors and typos. Also ask a friend or family member to look it over since they may catch mistakes that you missed.

Immigration Status

Deferred Action

The Deferred Action Program offers undocumented youth a chance to remain in the United States to pursue their education. Anyone who came to the United States before age 16, and was over age 14 and under age 31 on June 15, 2012, is eligible if they have been in the United States for at least five years; and are in or have completed high school. Individuals under age 15 who are in, or get placed in removal proceedings, are also eligible to apply. If a Deferred Action application is approved, the individual will receive a two-year “work visa.” Deferred Action is only valid for a period of two years.

Documentation

Undocumented students can go to college, but there is no financial aid available for undocumented students in Pennsylvania. However, there are states that offer financial aid to undocumented students. If you (your child) are not aware of how your (his/her) immigration status will impact your (his/her) choices, discuss it with a trusted individual such as a PA-MEP support specialist. Have this discussion well in advance of beginning the college process.

In many states, public colleges and universities admit undocumented students but treat them as foreign students and charge them full tuition. They are ineligible for state financial aid and the lower tuition charged to in-state residents.

Did You Know?



In the U.S., all males must register with the Selective Service System (SSS) when they turn 18. This is the law, and it is also a requirement to receive financial aid. The SSS does not collect information regarding documentation status of immigrants. Register at: www.sss.gov



What funding sources are available to help me pay for college or continuing education?

College is not an impossible dream in the United States. There are many different types of programs and often scholarships, grants, and loans are available to cover some, most or even all of the cost.

Financial Aid

Financial aid falls into three broad categories: grants, scholarships, and loans.

1. A **grant** is a gift of money awarded to students with no expectation that the money will be returned or repaid. Some grants are directed, meaning that they must be used to cover a particular expense, such as tuition or overseas study. Other grants may be used at the discretion of the student. Millions of dollars are awarded in grants every year. Students compete for grants and there is certainly no dishonor in seeking out and winning a grant!

2. **Scholarships** fall into several categories. An academic scholarship is a reduction in tuition awarded to a student who has demonstrated exceptional academic ability. An athletic scholarship is awarded to a student who demonstrates athletic ability with the understanding that the student will participate on the college athletic team. Other scholarships may be awarded by a community organization or society to a student who wishes to work toward a degree associated with the mission of that organization. Students are not expected to pay back the money they are awarded in a scholarship so long as they fulfill the agreement set forth in the rules of the scholarship.
3. A **college loan** is money borrowed from a lending institution, usually at a lower interest rate, and used specifically for college-related expenses. Unlike grants and scholarships, loans must be paid back. Students and their families are advised to read any loan agreement carefully.

More About Financial Aid

The Federal Pell Grant Program

The Pell Grant provides need-based grants to low-income students attending a trade school or college. The program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Millions of students in the United States apply for Pell Grants to help cover their tuition, fees, and room and board expenses. The amount of money granted to an individual student is based on a number of factors explained on their website. To apply for a Pell Grant, the student must complete and submit a **FAFSA** form (see next page). For more information on the Federal Pell Grant Program visit: www2.ed.gov/programs/fpg/index.html

Internal Grants and Scholarship

Many trade schools, colleges, and universities offer internal grants and scholarships. These internal funds are established through donations from alumni or through corporate partnerships. When you find a trade school or college that interests you, go to their website to find out more about their internal grants and scholarships. The financial aid office at the institution will be glad to help you.

External Grants and Scholarships

Organizations, clubs, and associations give away billions of dollars in grants and scholarships to millions of students every year. In the United States, students compete for these funds. You (your child) should, too. The amount of the grant or scholarship varies. Most students apply for several different grants and scholarships and put them together to cover as much of their tuition and fees as possible.

Some external grants and scholarships are awarded for academic merit, but others are awarded for a wide variety of descriptors.

A student who is the first to go to college in his or her family can apply for one of the “First in Family” or “First Generation” funds. To explore these and other possibilities, go to: <http://www.scholarships.com>

Did You Know?



In the U.S., colleges and universities take pride in the amount of money awarded in grants and scholarships.

Work/Study

Most colleges and universities offer work/study programs that allow an eligible student to work on campus in exchange for reduced tuition. These jobs typically include part-time hours in the university library, sports center, health center or in a dormitory as a resident assistant.

****Beware of Financial Aid Scams - A grant or scholarship does not require an application fee, nor does it require re-payment. Read the agreement carefully and ask for help from the financial aid officer at the college or university.**

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The FAFSA is the standard application form used to apply for financial aid from all federal programs. The application process is free, and the form is available online. Although the FAFSA is used to apply for federal financial aid, most non-federal financial aid programs require the FAFSA as a starting point for stating the family's income and level of need. Based on this information, the trade school, college, or university decides how much financial aid will be provided to the student.

Many institutions award financial aid on a "first come, first served" basis. It is therefore to the student's advantage to fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible. However, to fill out the FAFSA, the student needs the family's income tax information. Income tax information comes to the wage earner after the first of January. If the student paid taxes, this information must be included, too. Students and their parents should work together to quickly gather all required information and submit the FAFSA before the end of January of the student's senior year.

- Go to www.fafsa.ed.gov. Fill in your name, date of birth, and Social Security Number (SSN).
- You will need a PIN (Electronic Password) before you can fill out the application. You can get your PIN at: www.pin.ed.gov.
- Get income tax information from the family's income tax return, including income tax paid by the student if applicable.
- Fill in the FAFSA and send it in to the address given in the website. If you need help, ask your PA-MEP support staff or the financial aid office at the college.

After You Send Your FAFSA:

- The U.S. Department of Education analyzes the information from the FAFSA.
- The U.S. Department of Education calculates the amount the family can pay toward the student's educational expenses. This is called the Expected Family Contribution.
- The difference between the Expected Family Contribution and the cost of tuition, room and board, and fees is the amount the student is eligible for through federal and state financial aid.
- The U. S. Department of Education sends the Student Aid Report to the student.
- The student then uses the Student Aid Report to apply for grants, scholarships, and loans.

College Scholarship Service Profile

Some colleges require a College Scholarship Service Profile to make their own determination regarding financial aid. Again, fill in the family's financial information and send it to the address provided.



Student Tips – Financial Aid

-  Include your name, address, and date of birth on each page of all your correspondence with the financial aid office.
-  Keep photocopies of the FAFSA and all financial aid forms.
-  If you have any doubt about how to fill out the form, do not guess. Seek the help of your PA-MEP support staff or the financial aid officer at the college.



Parent Tips – Financial Aid

-  Prepare the family's income tax return quickly and accurately and submit it to federal and state income tax offices. Keep a photocopy of the return.
-  Read through all financial aid information slowly and carefully. Make note of any unanswered questions and bring or send them to the PA-MEP staff or the financial aid officer at the institution.
-  If you have any doubt about how to fill out a form, do not guess. Seek the help of your PA-MEP support staff or the financial aid officer at the college.
-  In the financial aid process, the institutions ask pointed questions about personal finances. Some families find this intrusive, but it is simply part of the process of gathering information to determine the student's financial need.



Scholarship and Grant Resources and Links

www.fastweb.com

Website that includes career planning, scholarships and tips for finding the right college.

www.scholarships.com

Website that has a search engine to help navigate their extensive list of colleges that offer scholarships.

www.collegescholarships.org

Helpful source for state-specific college scholarships, grants and loans.

www.migrant.net/migrant/scholarships

Geneseo (New York) Migrant Center list of scholarships available to children of migrant farm workers.

www.scholarships360.org

Good variety of scholarships offered by external organizations. For example, the list includes a \$2,500 scholarship sponsored by the National Restaurant Association for students "who are pursuing an education and career in the food service industry."

www.finaid.org

Website that focuses on all aspects of strategies and resources for securing financial aid.

www.meritaid.com

Website that specializes in academic and merit-based scholarships. These scholarships are awarded based on qualifications rather than financial need.

www.hsf.net/Scholarship-Programs.aspx

Hispanic Scholarship Fund for: 1) graduating high school seniors; and 2) Gates Millennium Scholars.

www.apiasf.org/scholarship_apiasf.html

List of scholarships available to Asian students.

www.gmsp.org

Gates Millennium Scholars website. This organization offers a wide variety of opportunities from leadership academies, to good-through-graduation scholarships and ongoing financial support for college-bound students.



Unit 5. Preparing for and Funding Postsecondary Education – Culminating Activity

List five or six of the trade school or colleges you (your child) have (has) selected:

Write down the name and contact information of the financial aid officers at these places:

Who is helping you with information about funding your (your child's) postsecondary education? (Check all that apply.)

- School Counselor
- PA-MEP support staff
- Classroom Teacher
- ESL Teacher
- Other _____

List the funding options that you are pursuing:

Notes and Additional Resources

Notes and Additional Resources



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
333 Market Street Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
www.education.state.pa.us**