

Here's to new adventures. Focus on making the best grades you possibly can by studying hard and being prepared. Get involved. Taking part in extracurricular activities increases your chances of getting into college. If college isn't for you, know what other options are out there. Training programs, community college, and apprenticeships all open the door to exciting careers.



THIS SCHOOL YEAR -----

Talk about your goals for the future.

Be sure to meet with your guidance counselor at least once this year so he or she knows what you're planning and can provide you the best help possible. Talk to your friends about their goals and compare notes.

Keep your grades up.

The GPA you'll submit on college applications starts accumulating in 9th grade. To give yourself the best chance at being accepted to an Idaho institution, you'll need at least a 2.25 GPA. If your GPA is low, you'll need to score higher on entrance exams to get into college.

Take classes that will count toward college and career.

Consider dual credit or advanced placement (AP) opportunities that may be available to you in high school. Even if you're not planning to go to a traditional four-year college, there are career training programs you can begin in high school.

Get involved in extracurricular activities.

Joining a club, playing a sport, participating in a school play or volunteering at church—these all count toward becoming a well-rounded student, which will help when it's time to apply to school or for scholarships.

Seek out mentoring and support.

If you think you might be falling behind or you just need some extra guidance or encouragement, go after the help you need.

Know the facts and explore your options.

Whatever your career and salary goals, chances are they will require some education and training after high school. Explore the career information resources on the Next Steps website to get a sense how much you'll need to earn to live your desired lifestyle and what type of training you might need to reach your goals.

Understand how to pay for college.

If you're planning on going to college, you can definitely find a way to pay for it. You just need to have a plan. And that plan starts now.

Get familiar with your choices—you've got more than one!

Life after high school might mean going to a four-year college, enrolling in a technical training program, or starting an apprenticeship. Now is the time to start exploring post-high school opportunities. The more you understand now, the easier it will be to make decisions as you get closer to graduating.



THIS SUMMER -----

Study a little. Read a lot.

Next fall, you'll have the opportunity to take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) exam. You may want to set aside some time during the summer months to prepare, as the exam is offered in the fall semester. Get a head start on next year's reading by challenging yourself with different genres and authors.