



# PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS

## How to help our kids plan their time in high school

**Welcome!** At each stage in our kid's life, there are new challenges, and we as parents must be prepared to help them and guide them, so they not only graduate from high school but also that they are ready for the next step, which is the path to college. Whether they choose a bachelor's degree, associate degree, or technical apprenticeship, there are options in high school that can help them save time and money in the future.

In this guide, we will explain some of the most common acronyms and terms that you will hear frequently during the time your child is in high school.

### GENERAL TERMS

#### Credits

It is the traditional method used to document that a student has understood and successfully completed the academic requirements to graduate from high school. Credits are awarded when a course is completed and passed.

Generally, if a course length is all year, that is, that requires two semesters to finish, it is equivalent to 1 credit, and the courses that last only one semester are considered half credit, that is, 0.5.

Most high schools require students to accumulate credits to graduate, but the number of credits required can vary depending on your school district and may even change from year to year at the same high school.

Starting in the year 2021 and up, the number of credits required to graduate from the Everett School District is 24 credits distributed as follows:

Requirements for graduation (class 2021+)	24
Core Credits	17
Personalized Pathway Requirements (PPR)	3
Elective Credits	4

#### Core Credits

Courses needed to graduate and be college and career-ready. These generally consist of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, Career and Technical Education.

#### Personalized Pathway Requirements (PPR)

Classes that develop the individual interests of each student and aligned to their High School and Beyond Plan\*\*

#### Elective Credits

Exploratory Classes of personal Interests

## GENERAL TERMS - continue.

### High School and Beyond Plan

This plan is mandatory in Washington State for all high school students.

In this plan, students work with their counselor -or another teacher- in planning the courses they will take in high school based on their interests and plans for life after graduation.

### GPA (Grade Point Average)

**Myth:** *The GPA is only important in the senior year of high school.*

**False:** Between October and February of the senior year, students begin to apply to the colleges which they want to attend, so colleges generally use the GPA of the first three years of high school to evaluate the student's commitment to study and work, and so decide if they will be able to meet the academic standards of their institution. The high school will send the final grades (final transcript) to the chosen college.

**Myth:** *You can have a GPA higher than 4.0.*

**False:** And this is why, although most of the colleges use an unweighted GPA -this means using a grade scale of 0 to 4- other states additionally use what is called weighted GPA, which is measured on a scale that can pass 4 points. For example, in classes like Honors or AP classes (Advanced Placement, see next) a grade of A would be equivalent to 5, a B would be 4, and so on. Note that colleges recalculate the GPAs of all applicants based on the scale they use, so students evaluated on a scale of 1 to 4 are not at a disadvantage.

It is the way schools use to measure academic achievement. At the end of each semester, students receive their final grades with their GPA for that semester. Our school district uses a grading scale like this one:

Grade	Numeric equivalence	
<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>3.7</b>
	<b>B+</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>2.7</b>
	<b>C+</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>1.7</b>
	<b>D+</b>	<b>1.3</b>
<b>D</b>		<b>1.0</b>
<b>F</b>		<b>0</b>

**Myth:** *It's better NOT to take difficult classes to get a better GPA.*

**False:** Colleges will not view your children's application very favorably if they only choose to take classes that don't challenge them academically. Remember that universities are looking for students who show interest in studying and who can succeed in their institutions. If your child maintains a slightly lower GPA by taking classes with more difficulty, the colleges will notice it. The GPA itself is not that important if it is not supported by classes that have academic value. It is better to find a balance between the courses to take. The high school counselors can help you do so.

## GENERAL TERMS- continue.

Schools offer additional programs that help students earn college credits, saving time and money on their path to higher education. The program that best suits your student will depend on their interests, abilities, and preferences for studies or post-graduation life plans. Some of these programs must be requested by students and approved by school counselors.

Remember to request the information in advance so as not to miss the registration deadlines.

Alternative learning options:

- **AP Advanced Placement** - From 9th grade (Freshman).
- **College in the High school** - From 9th grade (Freshman).
- **Running Start** (Dual credits attending Community College). From 11th grade (Junior).
- **CTE Dual Credit**. From 11th grade (Junior).

Before making the decision to pursue any of these paths, it is important to know the **OPTIONS THAT EXIST AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**, to help your student choose the program that best suits their future curriculum.

### Bachelor's Degree 4 years program

Requires 120 credits or more if pursuing an honors program. Universities generally offer a wide variety of programs targeting all types of abilities and interests. Although the cost is higher, there are ways to reduce costs with financial aid, government grants, and college scholarships, we will talk about that later. The main benefit of obtaining a college degree is reflected in greater job opportunities, better salaries, and the possibility of continuing with masters and doctoral studies. Institutions that offer these programs are: Public, state, or private universities.

### Associate's Degree 2 years program

It requires between 60 and 90 credits. Some benefits of this program are that you can obtain a degree in less time and at a lower cost. In addition, if in the future you want to continue with a bachelor's degree (BD), you can transfer the credits to most of the state's public universities\*\*. In the labor area, having an associate certificate will offer you the possibility of a better salary than having only a high school certificate.  
\*\* If you want to continue with a BD, we recommend confirming with the university you wish to attend if they accept transfers from the community college of your choice.  
Institutions that offer these programs- Community Colleges

### Apprenticeship or Trade

These programs offer specialized professional training. The advantage of these programs is that you receive financial compensation or salary during the learning time, and because most of these programs are offered by the same employers, the transition to full-time employment can be immediate. High school counselors can help with more information, and you can visit <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/career-seekers>.

### Military Service

Many students decide to pursue a college career through the United States Army. This institution offers a wide variety of programs and different options of financial aid, grants, and scholarships that can fully cover the cost of college and living.  
At the beginning of 10th grade, sophomore year, students can take the ASVAB- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test- to help them assess whether the students meet the qualities that would make them have a successful career in the military. See your school counselor for more information.

## FRESHMAN YEAR - 9.

### PreAP (Pre-Advanced Placement)

The Everett School District offers AP classes to all students in grades 8 to 10.

If your student took the PreAP class in 8 grade, they could only take PreAP in 9 grade. Note that these courses do not contribute to college credits.

### AP (Advanced Placement)

**Myth:** Only advanced students can take AP classes.

**False:** AP classes are available to all students who wish to take courses that offer more academic challenges.

It is a program created by the College Board, an independent institution that offers college-level study programs and exams for high school students. These classes give college credits by taking the AP exams and scoring 3 or more (the scale is 1 to 5). These optional tests have an additional cost that varies from \$95 to \$140 per subject, the school and the College Board can offer a discount on this fee; ask your AP coordinator or consul for more information. If your student does not obtain a passing grade (3) or does not plan to take the test, it is still important that they take AP classes. Note that if they do not get a passing grade, the results of the exams will not affect the class grade, and in general, colleges view favorably that students are striving to take the most rigorous classes that their high school offers. For more information visit the page: <https://ap.collegeboard.org/>

### CHS (College in the HighSchool)

This program is a collaboration between the Everett Community College and the University of Washington with high schools in the Everett School District. These courses allow students to earn college credits at these institutions while attending high school. These credits, in addition to being accepted by local universities\*\*, are equivalent to the credits necessary to graduate from high school, meaning your student continues to meet graduation requirements.

The student must pay a reduced tuition fee to the college to earn credit for the class taken.

\*\* If your student plans to attend an out-of-state university, we recommend that you research at your chosen university if they accept CHS credits.

For more information, visit <https://www.everett-sd.org/Page/14945>

### **Important tip!!**

*If your child speaks, reads, and writes a language other than English, they can take the World Languages Assessment and earn high school credits. Ask your school's counselor for more information.*

**FRESHMAN YEAR - 9 continue.****CTE (Career and Technical Education)  
Dual Credit,**

This program is a collaboration between Washington State High Schools and Community Colleges, that allows students in grades 9-12 to earn college credits while attending their school. These credits, in addition to being accepted by local colleges\*\*, are equivalent to the credits required to graduate from high school, meaning your student continues to meet graduation requirements.

The student must pay a reduced tuition fee to the Community College to earn credit for the class taken.

It is important to mention that to qualify for these credits, students must obtain a minimum grade of C.

\*\* If your student plans to attend an out-of-state university, we recommend that you research at your chosen university if they accept CTE credits.

For more information visit: [https://  
www.everett-sd.org/Page/14946](https://www.everett-sd.org/Page/14946)

## SOPHOMORE YEAR - 10.

### **PSAT (Pre-Scholastic Assessment Test)**

*Note- The Everett school district offers this test at no additional cost to its students. This exam is offered in October.*

This is the practice version of the SAT, which is taken at the end of 11 or 12 grade (see next). Your student must take advantage of the opportunity offered by schools to take this preliminary test to familiarize themselves with the format. Like the regular SAT, it consists of a module of written English, Reading, and Mathematics. The PSAT's score is calculated same as the SAT but on a slightly different scale - 320-1520- more information ahead for SAT.

### **PreACT (Pre-American College Testing)**

*Note- The Everett school district doesn't offer this test but can be taken at other locations in the state.*

This is the practice version of the ACT, which is taken at the end of 11 or 12 grade (see next). Like the regular ACT, it consists of an English, Reading, Math, and Science module. The PreACT is scored on the same rubric as the ACT of 1-36. More information ahead.

### **NHS (National Honor Society)**

It is a national organization that recognizes the leadership, academic achievement, and moral character of students in their high school years. It is one of the oldest organizations and is recognized nationally by all universities. The NHS only accepts students who have maintained a minimum GPA of 3.0.

This organization offers extensive benefits to its members, from college scholarships, volunteer opportunities to guides on how to apply for financial aid at colleges.

### **Clubs, sports, and extracurricular activities.**

Schools offer different extracurricular activities for a wide range of interests, from languages, arts, civics, and engineering clubs to sports and more. Encourage your children to participate in these activities, which not only will allow them to meet other students with similar interests but will have a positive impression on their college applications.

### ***Important tip!!***

*If your student is interested in Running Start programs (11th-grade) in 10th grade, is the time to contact your counselor and seek information on the deadlines to enroll in the next school year.*



## JUNIOR YEAR - 11.

In eleventh grade, students can take the assessment tests known by their initials SAT or ACT\*\* used by some private institutions that offer college scholarships and for college admissions applications\*. These tests are important, and your student must know their differences to choose the option that has the most advantages according to their abilities.

The purpose of these tests is to assess the student's readiness for college, and therefore to provide colleges and institutions offering scholarships with a benchmark or score that can help compare all applicants fairly.

Both are accepted by all colleges in the United States, and generally, the preference for one or the other is the popularity of the exam in the state where the student resides.

One of the main differences between them is the content. The ACT assesses what has been learned over time in high school, compared to the SAT, which is designed to assess students' abilities to predict how well prepared they are for college. At this link, you can find a reference table between the two exams.

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/inside-the-test/compare-new-sat-act> and <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act>.

Depending on your student's learning style, one of the tests may be more favorable than the other, the school counselor can offer more information. Here are some points to consider that can help you decide which test to take. And remember that you can take both tests if you want.

### **They prefer SAT if:**

- Your student works slower. The SATs contain fewer questions per section, so your student can review their answers and work more slowly.
- Has a large vocabulary. This test assesses the words used and adds value to the high-frequency words.
- The student likes to solve problems. The questions tend to assess problem-solving ability more than knowledge of data and events.
- Ability to write. Although the essay section is optional, the test covers reading and writing sections.

### **They prefer the ACT if:**

- Manages time well. The ACTs have significantly more questions per section but remember that the ACT assesses what students learned during high school; this can be beneficial if your student is good at remembering facts and events.
- The student is outstanding in Mathematics and Science. The SAT does not include a science section.
- They prefer the format and formulation of questions similar to high school exams.
- It is difficult for them to write essays.

Students must cover the costs (fees) to take these tests, and both institutions offer discounts and payment exceptions to qualifying students. For more information and assistance, see your high school counselor.

\* Due to COVID-19, some colleges have decided not to use the SAT or ACT assessment tests for their admissions processes. This decision varies by institution, but remember that some institutions that offer college scholarships continue to use these tests in their evaluations.

\*\* See more information on the next page.

## JUNIOR YEAR - 11 continue.

### SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)

*Note-. The SAT is offered on seven dates per year. Remember to register early to avoid late fees. More information in: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/dates-deadlines>*

***The Everett District offers this test at no cost in March on the junior year for its students.***

SAT is a multiple-choice test administered by the College Board, an independent institution. It consists of three parts and one optional, which are:

- English (Writing and Language), Reading and Mathematics.
- Written essay (optional).

The test duration is approximately 3 hours (an additional 50 minutes if you want to do the essay), and the scoring scale is from 400 to 1600.

### ACT (American College Testing)

*Note- The ACT is offered 7 dates per year, remember to register early to avoid late fees. More information at:*

*<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html>*

It is a multiple-choice exam administered by the independent American College. This test consists of four mandatory parts and one optional, which are:

- English (Writing and Language), Reading, Mathematics, and Science.
- Written essay (optional)

The test duration is approximately 2 hours and 55 minutes (an additional 40 minutes if you wish to do the essay), and the scoring scale is 1 to 36.

### Superscoring

*Note-. If possible, encourage your student to take the assessment test more than once..*

Superscore is when a university accepts the student's highest composite score. The students can take the test multiple times, and the institution offering the exam (SAT or ACT) will report the combination of results that is highest.

For example, if a student takes the ACT 3 times and gets the following results:

1- English 24, Mathematics 28, Reading 26, and Science 23.  
Composition  $24 + 28 + 26 + 23 / 4 = 25$

2- English 26, Mathematics 26, Reading 26, and Science 23.  
Composition  $26 + 26 + 26 + 23 / 4 = 25$

3- English 26, Mathematics 26, Reading 24, and Science 24.  
Composition  $26 + 26 + 24 + 24 / 4 = 25$

The ACT will report only the highest score per section:  
English 26, Math 28, Reading 26, and Science 24.

Final composition  $26 + 28 + 26 + 24 / 4 = 26$



**JUNIOR YEAR - 11 continue.****Running Start**

This program is offered through a collaboration between Washington State High Schools and Community Colleges that enables students from 11 and 12 grades, attend community colleges and receive high school and college credit simultaneously. These courses are free\*\* and can be transferred to most public universities in the state. This program is especially recommended to those students who are planning to attend a state university or want to acquire an associate's certificate in the state as well. Consult with your school counselor for more information and remember that you can request a translator if needed.

\*\* Registration is free, but the costs of books, laboratories, food, and transportation, among others, must be considered.

***Important tip!!***

***Students interested in Running Start programs can request an interview with community college counselors in addition to high school counselors.***

## SENIOR YEAR - 12.

### **FAFSA- Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

*Note-. All students are encouraged to apply, even if they have never qualified for financial aid or believe they do not qualify, as the FAFSA evaluates other variants, such as the ability to pay off other school loans, retirement savings, and more, and not only the income of the parents or guardians. Note that many institutions that award scholarships for students also use the FAFSA information to select their candidates.*

Before each year of college, students must complete the FAFSA to determine their eligibility for federal, state, and institutional (colleges) financial aid. This application is free, and a new application must be submitted before each academic year in which the financial aid is needed. These programs finance public and private technical colleges and colleges that offer two and four years study programs.

To fill out this form, you will need basic information about the student and the colleges they plan to attend, and if the student is an economic dependent, you will also need the tax return information for the last three years from the parents or guardians. It is important to mention that parents or guardians do **NOT need to have a Social Security number**, in case you do not have one, you must enter 000-00-0000 (DO NOT use your ITIN number).

After submitting, you will receive a letter with financial aid offer.

For more information visit <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

### **WASFA-Washington Application for State Financial Aid**

Students who are ineligible for federal financial aid due to their immigration status may be eligible for various Washington State financial aid programs, including the State Necessity Scholarship, the College Bound Scholarship, among others.

These programs finance two and four-year public and private universities and technical colleges. Learn more about eligibility and complete the WASFA at <https://readyssetgrad.wa.gov/wasfa-washington-application-state-financial-aid>

#### ***Important tip !!***

- To receive the most aid, you must submit your FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1st. of the year prior to entering college. The federal FAFSA deadline is June 30th, but remember that acceptance letters are sent by colleges in March and April, well before this deadline.***
- Be sure to use a permanent email address on these forms, not your high school email address, so you can use your FAFSA or WASFA account throughout college.***

## SENIOR YEAR - 12 continue.

### TERMS USED IN THE ADMISSION APPLICATION PROCESS

#### Early Decision (ED)

It is a college admissions plan in which students submit their applications for admission earlier in the year than regular admission and receive their admissions results earlier. Most colleges that offer early decisions receive applications between October and November and return results a month later. Students can only request an ED at one institution (college) but can apply for regular admission to other universities. If the student is accepted into the institution by early decision, they must withdraw their applications at all other universities and commit to attending the institution. Before requesting an ED, students should make sure that this is the university they want to attend because it is a binding contract, i.e., the student, parent/guardian, and counselor must sign accepting the terms when requesting the earlier decision.

#### Early Action (EA)

Early action allows students to apply earlier and obtain admission decisions early. EA requests are non-binding, and students can apply at multiple colleges. Although students receive advance notification of the college's decision, they have until May 1st (decision day) to choose the college they will attend.

#### Restrictive Early Action (REA)

Like early action, students will apply for college early and receive the admission decision early. Many REA colleges expect students not to apply to other early action or early decision colleges. However, students can apply for regular admission at other universities. Students applying REA have until May 1st (decision day) to decide which college to attend. This allows students to compare admissions and financial aid offers from all colleges before making the final decision.

#### Regular Decision

The application deadline for a regular decision is after the ED and EA deadline, between January and February. This gives students more time to prepare their applications for admission. Some colleges can send decisions quickly, but most send regular admission decisions until the middle to the end of March. Students will have until May 1st to decide which college to attend.

#### Rolling Admission

Refers to colleges that begin taking applications in the fall and continue to accept applications throughout the summer until no more are available. The result of the decision is sent within a few weeks of receiving the information. Although you can apply at any time, it is important to consider your financial aid and housing deadlines.

#### Decision Day

National College Decision Day is May 1st. This is the deadline for students to commit to the college where they will attend, this does not apply to continuous admission colleges. Many private colleges require freshmen to submit a non-refundable deposit by this date to save their spot.

## SENIOR YEAR - 12 continue.

<b>Grants</b>	It is a form of financial aid that does not have to be repaid unless there are specified exceptions, such as if you withdraw from school and owe a refund, or if you receive a TEACH grant and do not complete your service or other obligations. Please check your financial aid letter for any exceptions.
<b>Scholarship</b>	It is a form of financial aid that does not need to be repaid and is awarded by private companies or non-profit organizations, including colleges. These scholarships are not only available to those with academic or athletic achievements, although these are the most popular, there are also many other ways to obtain scholarships as well. Some scholarships are awarded to members of a specific heritage or identity, or to students planning to pursue a career in a specific field, or if they are the first member of their family to attend college. In addition to looking for national scholarships, look for scholarships available in your community or high school.
<b>Work-Study Jobs</b>	The Federal Work-Study Program allows you to earn money to pay for school by working part-time (hours a day) during your time in college.
<b>Aid From Your College</b>	Many institutions offer financial aid in the form of grants or scholarships. This information will come in your financial aid offer letter. For more information, contact the financial aid office.
<b>Direct Loan Pro-</b>	The Department of Education offers four types of loans, in which acts as a lender through the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program. Visit: <a href="https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/direct-loan-basics-parents.pdf">https://studentaid.gov/sites/default/files/direct-loan-basics-parents.pdf</a>
<b>*Direct Subsidized loans</b>	This is a loan for undergraduate students that need financial aid to attend college or community college. Subsidized loans do not accrue interest while students are studying (minimum part-time) or up to 6 months after finishing school. Note that if you drop below part-time enrollment or leave school your federal student loan goes into repayment.
<b>*Direct Unsubsidized loans</b>	This is a loan for undergraduate students that need financial aid to attend college or community college. In unsubsidized loans, the student is responsible for paying the interest when they receive the loan.
<b>*Direct PLUS loans</b>	These are loans for parents of dependent students to help pay for education expenses not covered by other financial aid. A credit check of loan applicants is required, and if you have poor credit, you must meet additional requirements to qualify.
<b>*Direct Consolidation Loans</b>	Consolidation loans combine authorized borrowed loans into a single loan. You or your parents or tutors must qualify for this option.

## SENIOR YEAR - 12<sup>o</sup> continue.

### LAST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING

