



JUANITA HIGH SCHOOL

The Book of Basics



2024-2025

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How does high school work in America?

If this is your first time in the American school system, you'll quickly realize many things are different. For one thing, your classes will last all day. Depending on your school, you'll start somewhere between 6:30 and 8:30am and end 7-8 hours later. You'll be moving from classroom to classroom with each different subject. You'll have 5 minutes between classes to socialize, check your phone, and get to your next class. You'll also have a lunch break part way through the day. Teachers take attendance within the first 5 minutes of class, so it's important to be there at the start of class. After that you can ask to go to the bathroom at any time.

(image- bell schedule)

If you are frequently tardy or absent from class, the school will reach out to your parents via email and phone call. You might be issued detention – where you have to stay after school or complete extra work during school. If you continue to be absent, the school is required to take you to court. This is because students under the age of 18 are legally required to be in school. If you are going to miss a couple of classes, then a parent or guardian must call or email the attendance office.

When you're in class, your teacher might give you time to work on an assignment. Any work that isn't completed in class will become homework. Take full advantage of this time so you don't need to do work at home.

Another important difference is what happens when you aren't doing well in a class. If you do not pass one class then you only have to retake that class, not the whole year. So, if you

aren't doing well in English 11, you should still focus on keeping your grades up in your other classes. You may need to take English 11 again next year, but you wouldn't need to retake your math, or PE class.

Students typically are in high school for four years of study, with 7 core subjects and electives. Passing a course earns .5 credit for the first term and .5 credit for the second term. Students must earn at least 24 credits to graduate, among other requirements.

Students are required to complete a specific number of classes of each type:

4 English

3 Math (Algebra 1 & above)

3 Science (2 lab)

3 Social Science

2 Arts

2 Health & Fitness

3 CTE (Career & Technical Education)

2 World Language

1 Elective

To pass your classes, you must receive a D or above with A being the best grade. Evaluations can be expressed as a percentage score or a letter grade. For percentage scores, the typical practice is to start at 100% and deduct points for deficiencies.

Percentage	< 60%	60% - 69%	70% - 79%	80% - 89%	≥ 90%
Grade	F	D	C	B	A
Point equivalents	0.0	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0

Below 60% appears as a N which stands for 'not passing'.

There are people available to help you pass your classes, too. You can meet with your counselor to learn more about what classes you need to graduate, how to handle the class work and get more support for anything you don't understand. These are also the people to go to if you need to switch classes. If a teacher is making you uncomfortable for any reason, the first step is to meet with your counselor. They may have you talk one-on-one with one of the assistant principals to help you move to another class or resolve the problem.

Counselors are assigned based on the first two letters of your last name. You can find their emails on Juanita's website by clicking on the counseling tab.

What Classes to Take to Graduate from High School

Getting into college starts with graduating from high school. However, depending on the type of school your child wants to attend, it's important to know what types of classes to take, the grades necessary, and any other additional requirements beyond what's required for high school graduation. Here's what it takes:

Degree Type	High School Graduation & Community Colleges	4-Year Public Universities in Washington	Selective 4-Year Private Colleges & Universities
# of Credits	4 English 3 Math (Algebra 1 & above) 3 Science (2 lab) 3 Social Science 2 Arts 2 Health & Fitness 1 CTE 2 World Language 4 Electives	4 English 3 Math (Algebra 1, & above plus senior year math-based quantitative course) 3 Science (2 labs) 3 Social Science 2 World Language 1 Arts	4 English 3-4 Math (Algebra 1 & above to pre-calculus or statistics) 3-4 Science (labs recommended) 3-4 Social Science (including U.S. History) 3-4 World Language + Arts & Challenging Electives
Required	- High School and Beyond Plan - Complete a Grad Pathway - Earn HS Credits	- High School and Beyond Plan - Complete a Grad Pathway -High school graduation or equivalency - Minimum 2.75-3.00 GPA - No D's or F's in classes - SAT or ACT	- High School and Beyond Plan - Complete a Grad Pathway -High school graduation or equivalency - Competitive GPA - Mostly A's and B's - SAT, ACT, or portfolio of work (usually)

Recom- mended		Additional coursework and other factors may increase likelihood of admission	- Honors, AP, IB or college credit courses when available - Extracurriculars or special achievement
NOTE: Districts may have local requirements. Students and parents should check with school counselors for additional requirements for graduation.			

MYTH: Taking the easiest courses the high school offers will boost your student's GPA and help him or her get into college.

REALITY: College admissions officers understand the difference between an A in an easy class and a B in a more challenging class.

The most rigorous or challenging courses offered in a typical high school are honors and Advanced Placement or AP classes. In general, it is better to take advanced courses and work hard than to take easy classes and put in little effort. It is important to note that there is a big difference between meeting high school graduation requirements and taking classes that colleges expect to see on a student's transcript. Be sure to check out the websites of the colleges that you are considering to learn about their requirements.

Ask your guidance counselor or teachers what Advanced Placement courses are available, whether you are eligible, and how to enroll in them.

Did you know that high school students may be able to get credit for a language, other than English, that they already know? Learn more through the World Language Credit Program at:

<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/world-languages/competency-credits-students>

What is the High School and Beyond Plan?

Before your child graduates from high school, they will need to complete a High School and Beyond Plan that includes detailed information on their interests, classes, and plans. This plan can help them determine which courses they should take to meet their goals after high school. Xello is the app our school district uses for students to do their High School and Beyond Plan. The app is on their school laptops. Students will start by completing the Matchmaker profile and then be directed to the first section they need to complete.

Xello is set up so that there are unique sections for freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. Each is designed to help students develop and explore career interests over time. High School and Beyond Plan is required by law and needs to be completed by the end of senior year. If a student misses any year, they must go back and complete all sections for 9th-12th grade.

The High School and Beyond Plan will include a completed résumé. A résumé (or activity log) is a good way to introduce yourself. It's just a piece of paper, but it is helpful when it comes to applying for a summer job, internships, scholarships and college applications. A résumé summarizes a student's experience and what they can do.

Many scholarship providers will expect applicants to include a list of any past and/or current jobs, internships, volunteer positions, extracurricular activities, awards, honors, and leadership positions. All of these details can be easily combined into a résumé and save time when filling out scholarship applications.

Students are encouraged to complete Xello during dedicated school time like ACT or their weekly homeroom period, though Xello can also be done at home.

What are students' options post high school?

After high school, different paths lead to different types of credentials. Your student may need one (or several) of these credentials depending on his or her career interests.

Workplace	People who go straight into the workplace usually do not have any formal credentials beyond a high school diploma. However, some people in this path might complete an apprenticeship or other form of on-the-job training. - Certificate for completion of training - Apprenticeship
Armed Forces	Students with a green card or US citizenship can apply to become part of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air force, Space Force, Coast Guard, or National Guard. After completing basic training, students will receive free job training in a field of their interest across a range of industries.
Technical College	Most technical colleges award a certificate to show completion of a program of study. Some also award associate degrees. - Certificate or certification for completion of program (one year or less) - Associate degree (two years)
Two-Year College	Most community colleges award certificates or associate degrees, depending on the program. At some colleges, students can continue on for four years to earn a bachelor's degree. In two years, students typically earn an associate degree. - Associate degree
Four-Year College	Most four-year colleges award bachelor's degrees. The two most common types of bachelor's degrees are a B.S. (Bachelor of Science) or a B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) - bachelor's degree

Graduate Studies	Many careers require specialized training and education beyond college. Students attend graduate or professional school to receive this training and earn a graduate or advanced degree. Some advanced degrees include: - Master's degree: most common are M.S. (Science) or M.A. (Arts) - Business degree (M.B.A. for Master of Business Arts) - Medical degree (M.D. for Medical Doctor) - Law degree (J.D. for Juris Doctorate) - Doctorate degree (Ph.D. for Doctor of Philosophy or Psychology)
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JOB CORPS

Low-income students concerned about paying for training might consider looking into Job Corps. This free program covers housing, meals, and healthcare and provides students with a living allowance while they complete job training.

Job Corps training industries include: advanced manufacturing, automotive and machine repair, construction, finance and business, healthcare, Homeland Security, hospitality, IT, renewable resources, and transportation. Learn more here: <https://www.jobcorps.gov/about>

Why Go to College?

Options! There are many options for students after high school. College includes apprenticeships, on-the-job training programs, community college certificates, two-year degrees, four-year degrees, and more.

New experiences, people and places! Whether your student goes to a community college near your hometown, a state school a few hours away, or a private school in another state, he or she will have opportunities to meet people and make friends from different places. In college, students have the chance to take classes in subjects that interest them and even study abroad in another country if they want.

Money. Education pays! College graduates earn 60% more than a high school graduate, and those with advanced degrees earn two to three times as much as high school graduates. The jobs that require a college degree are more likely to have benefits and retirement plans, as well.

Independence. In college, students have control over the classes they want to take and how they spend their time. Your student might live at home, move into a college residence hall or dorm, or an apartment or house with friends.

Discover passions. Students can get involved on campus with student clubs, athletics, and community service. There are also hundreds or even thousands of courses to choose from at college.

Job security & satisfaction. Individuals with college degrees are more likely to have and keep their jobs, with lower unemployment rates than those with only a high school degree. In addition, having a college degree gives individuals more jobs to choose from and the opportunity to choose a career that is interesting and meaningful.

MYTH: College is only for the “smartest” students.

REALITY: There are many different colleges and postsecondary programs available for all students.

Some colleges require specific classes or high grades to be accepted, while others have no requirements beyond graduating from high school. College is an option for everyone – but the more challenging classes taken, and the better grades earned, the more options your student will have, in addition to greater access to scholarships.

Did you know: College students have more freedom in planning their schedule. This gives students greater autonomy to but it can also be tempting to skip classes. Depending on the size of

the college and the size of the class, attendance may or may not be taken, although that is starting to change with increased use of “clickers” – technology that polls an entire class, no matter the size.

While many classes don’t have an attendance policy, a student who skips classes runs the risk of getting behind on class notes and lectures. Many college professors test on textbook knowledge as well as in-class lectures and discussions. Missing class increases the risk of falling behind and even failing.

Types of Colleges:

What is a two-year college?

A two-year college is often a community college that offers programs where students can earn an associate degree in two years or even a certification in one year or less. Two-year colleges can also be technical schools that specifically focus on career training, such as welding, carpentry or mechanics. After earning an associate degree at a two-year college, many students choose to enter the workforce, but some choose to continue their education at a four-year college. Here are some benefits of choosing a two-year college:

- Affordability
- Smaller classes
- Flexibility
- Supportive community

What is a four-year college?

A four-year college is often a college or university that offers a variety of degree programs for students to earn their bachelor's degrees. Some students can also earn their master's degree after their bachelor's at many four-year colleges. A master's program usually takes two years to complete, and students typically need their bachelor's degree to qualify.

Two common degree programs are Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.). A B.A. program usually includes studies in humanities, such as English, history or philosophy. A B.S. program has a technical, medical or scientific focus, with majors in chemistry, physics or biology. In either program, students typically take general education courses for their first two years and major-specific courses for the final two years. Here are some benefits of choosing a four-year college:

- Campus life
- Clubs and activities
- Course variety
- Independence

	Two-year colleges	Four-year colleges
Affordable	x	
Smaller class sizes	X	
Larger class selection		X

Higher professor credentials		X
Flexible scheduling options	X	
Academic support	X	X
Higher admission standards		X
Degree options		X
Social life opportunities		X
Financial aid	X	X

2-Year Colleges Versus 4-Year Colleges: Which is Best?

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), there are 1,051 active community colleges in the United States. The vast majority of these are public institutions of education offering associate degrees and professional certificates to undergraduate students. Increasingly, community colleges are also adding bachelor's degrees to their list of offerings.

The Rise of Community Colleges

Historically, community colleges have been viewed as an easier alternative to four-year universities. With lower admissions requirements, these two-year junior colleges were considered last resorts for high school graduates who couldn't get into a "real" college. Times have changed, though. Community colleges have raised the bar in terms of academics and are a great alternative for students who choose a two-year credential as a substitute or stepping stone to a university degree.

Why Go to Community College?

Affordable (or Even Free) Tuition

Student debt is a major concern among university graduates, and many would-be university students are opting for community college instead of a four-year university as a way of saving money or avoiding having to take out hefty loans to pay for their education.

It's true that community college is far less expensive on average than a four-year university. According to U.S. News & World Report, the average tuition for in-state community college students is only \$3,660 compared to the \$9,716 in-state public college tuition and \$35,676 private college tuition.

Flexible Scheduling Options for Community College Students

Community colleges are more likely to offer flexible scheduling options than four-year universities. Designed with working students in mind, two-year schools are known for their convenient part-time and evening classes. In fact, the AACC reports that most community college students (i.e. 63%) attend school on a part-time basis.

Smaller Class Sizes in Community College

When you think of four-year universities, visions of huge, crowded lecture halls may come to mind. While this may be a stereotype, it is also the reality for millions of students who attend large universities. While the quality of the curriculum at these schools may be second-to-none, for many students, the instruction itself leaves something to be desired. Students who learn best from one-on-one instruction may perform better academically at a smaller, two-year college. These institutions typically feature much smaller class sizes that allow professors to give more of their attention to individual students.

More Academic Support from Community Colleges

In addition to smaller class sizes, community colleges also tend to offer more student support services, especially when it comes to academics. While larger universities generally expect students to enroll with the study skills and preparation necessary to succeed in their classes independently, community colleges realize that their incoming students may need a little more assistance. Many of these students are the ones who struggled in their high school courses and aren't sure whether college is for them. At a two-year school, students of less-than-stellar academic caliber will find tutoring services, remedial courses, and mentoring programs, for instance.

Opportunities to Improve GPA through Community College Classes

Many high school students don't realize the importance of earning good grades until it's too late (or so they think). Under-achieving students with aspirations of college degrees can save themselves, so to speak, by attending community college for their general education classes. If they commit to working hard, these students may be able to develop an academic transcript that will entice universities to admit them as transfer students down the line.

High-Paying Jobs with an Associate Degree

In some cases, students choose to attend community college because a four-year university simply isn't necessary for their chosen career paths. The recent boom in the healthcare industry has produced many lucrative jobs that don't require a bachelor's degree. Other occupations in STEM fields require only associate degrees and are associated with salaries over \$50,000 per year. For your reference, we've listed some of these jobs below along with their mean annual wages, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

- Dental Hygienists: \$74,820
- Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians: \$64,330
- Mechanical Engineering Technicians: \$56,250
- Nuclear Medicine Technologists: \$76,820

- Radiation Therapists: \$82,330
- Respiratory Therapists: \$60,280
- Paralegals and Legal Assistants: \$50,940
- Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides: \$57,620

MYTH: Community college is just an extension of high school.

REALITY: Community college is college. It requires skills gained in high school.

While community colleges provide higher education for all, they nonetheless have standards that students must meet to advance academically.

You can encourage your student to take challenging classes to bring his or her skills - especially in English and math - up to the level expected for success in college. That way your student can avoid having to take and pay for remedial classes in college.

MYTH: If students plan to go to community college, they can enroll anytime.

REALITY: Community and Technical Colleges' open-door admissions policy means you won't have to compete with others to be accepted. These colleges do not require SAT or ACT scores or essays, but they do require a placement test. Each college has a slightly different admissions process. These colleges are on a quarter calendar. Be sure to look at the instructional calendar for the quarter start and end dates at the college of your choice.

Keep in mind, being accepted into a college, does not always mean you are accepted into the specific program or classes of your choice. Certain programs have different admissions requirements, additional steps or forms: Running Start, International Students, computer science, and healthcare programs such as nursing, corrections/law enforcement, to name just a few.

Tenth-grade Smarter Balanced Assessment test scores can help your student decide which courses to take to be ready for college, and they tell colleges whether or not you're ready for college-level courses. A score of 3 or 4, means your student is ready for college-level math and English. Ask your student's counselor about Bridge to College courses if your student scores a 1 or 2.

Frequently-Asked Questions About Community Colleges

If you're considering attending community college, you likely have some questions. In this section, we'll address some of the inquiries we commonly receive about two-year schools and their academic offerings. Keep in mind, the answers provided here are general. For specific information about a particular school or degree/certificate program, it's best to speak to an admissions counselor at the community college you're considering attending.

Q: Are community college credits transferable?

A: In most cases, yes. Still, it's advisable to speak to your community college advisor and be clear about any intentions to transfer to a four-year university. He or she can counsel you on which classes to take and any articulation agreements that exist between the school and any larger universities.

Q: Are community college courses easier?

A: Not in the general sense. Community college courses can be just as rigorous as some university classes. However, it is possible that you'll receive more individualized instruction and academic support than you would at a four-year university.

Q: Can community college students get scholarships and other financial aid?

A: Yes. Students planning to attend community college should apply for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Part-time enrollment qualifies students for grants, loans, and scholarships from the federal government. Community colleges sometimes offer scholarships to prospective students as well.

Q: What community college classes should I take?

A: It depends on what the end goal is. If you intend to transfer to a four-year university, then it's recommended that you take only general education classes that will count as credit toward your university degree. On the other hand, if you plan to earn a technical or vocational degree from your community college, you should follow that degree plan.

Q: Is community college free?

A: In some states, yes! States like Rhode Island and Tennessee, for example, offer free tuition for community college students.

Q: How much does community college cost?

A: The cost of community college will vary based on the school you attend and how many credit hours you take per semester. Still, you can expect to pay significantly less than you would for a four-year university. On average, community college students pay less than \$4,000 per year.

Q: Will community college accept anyone?

A: Not exactly. Generally speaking, community colleges do have lower admissions standards than many four-year universities. Still, you will need a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent in order to be eligible.

Q: What is community college like socially?

A: Campus life at a community college is a unique experience that depends on the specific school you decide to attend. Generally speaking, though, you won't have as many opportunities to get involved as you would on the campus of a four-year university where fraternities, sororities, and other student organizations abound.

Why Attend a Four-Year University?

It's clear that community colleges have made impressive strides in recent years. There are still some advantages of attending a four-year university, though, that shouldn't be ignored.

Broader Course Selection from 4-Year Schools

Community colleges are aware that many students use their academic offerings as stepping stones toward a university education. Therefore, many have limited their course selections to the most basic general education classes. If you're searching for unique intellectual experiences, you may need to look elsewhere.

More Degree Options for University Students

Community colleges offer numerous professional certificates and a range of associate degrees. Some of them even offer a few bachelor's degree options. Still, four-year universities typically offer a much wider selection of subject areas and degree levels. While they may not provide an associate level education, they do offer bachelor's credentials in a variety of subject areas, including the humanities, social and behavioral sciences, STEM, education, and more. Many of these schools also offer options beyond the four-year degree such as master's and doctoral programs.

Better Professor Credentials

No matter what school they attend, students depend on their professors to teach them the skills they need to succeed. When you attend a community college, however, you may be taking a chance on the caliber of the professor who teaches your class. Professors at four-year universities are often required to hold higher-level degrees in their field (usually a doctoral degree) while community college instructors can be hired with only a master's-level education. Of course, that doesn't mean that there aren't many excellent faculty members to be found at two-year colleges. It just means they may be less qualified, at least on paper.

Vibrant Student Life on University Campuses

Many students attend college for an experience, not just an education. If this describes you, then a four-year university may be the better choice for you over a two-year community college. While some two-year schools offer some student clubs and organizations, most pale in comparison to what an active university can offer in terms of campus life. Students enrolled in four-year colleges and universities can take advantage of fraternities and sororities, campus sports, service-learning organizations, study abroad opportunities, and much more.

Networking Opportunities

Faculty members at large universities often have friends in high places, especially within the industry that they teach. For their students, this means almost guaranteed job placement after graduation via a professional recommendation. Community college instructors may have less connections.

Furthermore, four-year universities are known for forming partnerships with many of the businesses in the community that they serve. For students, this often translates into practicum and internship opportunities that have the potential to turn into employment arrangements upon graduation from their degree program.

Frequently-Asked Questions About Four-Year Universities

Enrolling in a four-year university is a huge commitment, both academically and financially. You're bound to have questions. In this section, we'll field some of the most common inquiries we receive about universities and their degree programs. Please note that we cannot comment on specific details about a particular school, though. For this type of information, you'll need to speak to a university admissions counselor or other school representatives.

Q: Should I transfer to a four-year university to complete my degree?

A: It depends on your career goals. For some occupations, it's sufficient to earn an associate degree from a community college. For others, you may need a more advanced degree offered by a university.

Q: How long does it take to complete a degree at a university?

A: Despite being dubbed "four-year" universities, these schools typically offer scheduling options that allow students to extend their time in school if necessary or complete degree requirements in less time. For example, students can earn a bachelor's degree in as few as two years or as many as six.

Q: How much does a university education cost?

A: Tuition costs vary from school to school. Public college tuition tends to range from around \$25,000 to \$34,000 per year while private universities can cost \$60,000 and above.

Q: Will my community college credits transfer to a four-year university?

A: Your general education classes should transfer, but unless there is a clear articulation agreement between the community college and the university, there is no guarantee. The best course of action is to speak to your community college advisor about your transfer plans.

Q: Can I live at home if I attend a four-year university?

A: Not always. Some universities require that students live on campus especially freshman year. Check with the school you're planning to attend for housing requirements.

Transferring From a 2-Year College to a 4-Year University

If you can't make the choice between a 2-year college and a 4-year university, then transferring from one to the other may be the solution. This would also save money on tuition.

Benefits of Transferring to a 4-Year University

If you've got your heart set on an occupation that demands a particular bachelor's degree or simply have a desire for a university experience but lack the grades or finances to make your college dreams come true right after graduating high school, then a transfer plan may be the ideal solution.

When you enroll in a two-year community college with the intent to transfer to a four-year university, you're buying yourself some time to get things in order and put yourself in the position to be accepted into and/or afford university classes. In a two-year school, you'll enjoy affordable (or even free!) tuition and the academic support necessary to improve your GPA while preparing for the move to more expensive and challenging courses.

The Transfer Process

An articulation agreement is a pact between the two institutions in which the university agrees to accept transfer credits from the community college. When you choose schools that have articulation agreements, you ensure a smooth transfer without the risk of losing hard-earned (and paid-for) credit hours.

Choosing schools with articulation agreements (most colleges in WA state) isn't always possible, especially if students change their minds about their career aspirations. However, most of the time it's still possible to find a university that will accept credits from the two-year school. It just may not be as seamless a transition, and there's a chance that not all credit hours will transfer.

Majors 101: Frequently Asked Questions

A major is the specialized area of study or program at a college or university. Some majors have a direct connection to a career path, like graphic design or criminal justice. Other majors might prepare your student with important job skills like communication, interpersonal relationships, organization and problem solving.

Here are some common questions about choosing a major:

- I have no idea what I want to study. How do I choose a major? Many students begin college without a clear choice of major. At many colleges, you don't have to choose a major until the end of your sophomore year. Until then, you can take courses in a variety of fields. You'll earn general education credits that count toward your degree, no matter what you major in. As you take different classes, you'll probably find a subject area you love. Academic advisors and professors are also available to help you consider your interests and review your options.
- Can I change my major? Yes! Even students who enter college having chosen a major are likely to change their mind at some point.
- Does my major dictate my career options? In most cases, there is not one specific major required to enter a career field. Employers who are hiring graduating seniors look for well-rounded individuals with good transferrable skills and relevant experience. There are some professional fields that do have qualifying or licensing requirements; for these, a student may have to select a certain major. Examples include nursing, accounting, and teaching.

Did you know? One in three students will transfer before graduating from college.

MYTH: Students have to declare a major and decide a career before they choose their college.

REALITY: Absolutely not.

Most college applications ask what your "intended" major might be, but that does not mean it is set in stone. College is a time for students to explore their academic interests and discover an area that they might want to major in. More often than not, students will find their major is something they never even heard of in high school, so they have a good amount of time to discover and decide in college.

MYTH: Big colleges are best if your child hasn't decided on a major field.

REALITY: Many students think because there are more courses to choose from, a large college offers greater options for undecided students. However, the number of choices alone should not be the deciding factor. If your teen is undecided, the best college is one that has core requirements or distribution requirements that help with exploration.

Look for colleges with the strongest academic advising and career counseling programs regardless of their size. Good advising can help your student choose an academic and career path he or she will enjoy rather than one he or she thinks he or she might like right now.

MYTH: All that my child has to do is meet the minimum requirements to get into college.

REALITY: Many colleges and universities use something called a “comprehensive review.”

Some factors include:

- Academic rigor or challenging coursework
- Quality of senior year courses
- Grade trends
- Extracurricular activities
- Ability to enhance the diversity of the school (racial, cultural, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic, family educational history)
- Academic performance compared to opportunities available at your high school.

Some schools offer different opportunities like Advanced Placement and honors classes and some schools do not offer those programs. Colleges will take this into account and consider whether you took advantage of the opportunities available to you.

How can I help my student find their Major?

Choosing a career is one of life's big decisions. Will a future career be exciting and fulfilling? Will it pay enough to support a family? Will there be opportunities to grow? Deciding on a career to pursue is exciting. But because there are so many career paths, it can be hard to choose. The best way for students to identify their career interests is through getting experience in a wide variety of work settings so they can identify what works best for them. For example, many majors lead to careers that have both customer-facing roles and internal roles. Some jobs are more physically intensive, some have tight deadlines, and others require intense networking. Here are some ways for your student to try different fields:

- Find volunteering opportunities related to their interests, like judging a board game competition, helping at a coding workshop, or spending a day with Habitat for Humanity.
- Get involved in community events. Help set up neighborhood art walks, church events, small music venues, board game competitions, or participate in community beautification projects like removing invasive plants and picking up trash.
- Start an entry level job, even if they end up quitting after a few months.
- Join a sport or club. If there aren't any through Juanita, explore <https://www.meetup.com>
- Take a community class. We are surrounded by many community colleges, art & dance studios, and parks & rec events. If money is tight, don't be afraid to email and ask about a discount for the program, many have created scholarships so that everyone can participate.
- Get involved with the ASB to find out about upcoming school events.
- Ask their peers! There are many things we don't see on social media, some of which are activities that your student might be afraid to ask to participate in.
- Sign up for summer programs. Many area colleges offer exploration programs specifically for teens.

Sometimes having the conversation to let your student know how much money is available in the budget for career exploration will help them to keep their eyes out for ways they want to get involved. Don't forget to offer to drive or pitch in for gas money for free events.

Remember, even if they don't enjoy their experience, this gives them valuable insight into what they may want to avoid in a job. Ask questions after the student has had time to rest. You may want to ask things like:

"You were excited to do ___, did it meet your expectations?"

"Did you like the people you were working with?"

"Is there any aspect that you did enjoy doing?"

"What would have made the whole thing more enjoyable?"

"What was your highlight?"

Other ways to help your student by encouraging him or her to explore options.

1. Ask your student to think about his or her interests. Need help? Have them try a career quiz at www.careerbridge.wa.gov.
2. Consider the path to that career. It's good to know what skills, classes and degrees different jobs require. Get information about education requirements for different jobs.
3. Help your student choose some of these ideas or come up with his or her own:
 - Volunteer where you're likely to meet someone who has one of the jobs you're interested in.
 - Look into a paid or unpaid internship.
 - Job-shadow for a day.
 - Conduct research at the library or online.
 - Find a mentor who can give you perspective and advice.
 - Talk to family members and friends who work in those careers or know others who do.

Teens might feel pressured to plan their whole lives before they even begin to apply to colleges. That's not necessarily the best approach. Though some people have well-focused career goals early in life, others don't — and they still find their way to the right job. Staying flexible can be helpful when it comes to thinking about the future.

What is a minor?

When students enter college they have a much wider selection of classes to choose from. When earning a bachelor's degree students will need around 120 credits, which is around 40 courses. However not all of these classes will be towards their degree path. Students have options for various elective credits. These can be across various topics as students explore possible careers.

Minors are when a student takes a series of courses to develop a secondary interest. For example, a student might take 30 classes in psychology and 10 classes in childhood development. They would graduate with a psychology major and childhood development minor, both of which can be listed on a resume and prove to an employer a secondary field of competence. This opens up more niche job opportunities. However, minors are not required and students frequently succeed without them.

Getting Back on Track

Can my student still go to college if they have bad grades?

MYTH: I'm not selective college material.

REALITY: Many students, especially first-generation or students who would be first in their family to go to college frequently sell themselves short. They think they won't fit into the best colleges in the country. Because of this myth, many amazing students undermatch or pick a college that isn't challenging enough for them.

Many first-gen students don't give themselves enough credit for their strengths. They might choose a lower-tier college because it's closer to home or because they are uncomfortable considering themselves highly selective college material. By second-guessing their abilities, these students are risking a college experience that isn't engaging. Studies show those who undermatch are much more likely to drop out of their college early. Choose a college that is appropriately challenging and gives you a chance for success.

Is your teen not finding success in school and in danger of leaving school? You have choices. Washington State is working to help open doors and create options for high school education. There are options. Your local school district is your best resource to get back on track. School districts want to see their students succeed, and most of them have programs and alternative routes set up to help complete the graduation requirements. Your school district can also find alternate paths to success such as vocational and technical training, GED preparation, and dual-credit programs through a community and technical college. They are aware of programs in your area to help with things like childcare, illness, and homelessness. Reach out and start exploring your options.

Most Washington state community and technical colleges operate one or more high school programs such as High School Completion, Technical High School, Credit Retrieval, Youth Re-engagement, External Diploma Program or other high school options. The goal of each of these various programs is to award a high school diploma to students who complete the graduation requirements. Find a [Community and Technical College](#) near you. Program names to ask about:

- Open Doors 1418 Reengagement Programs
- High school completion programs
- Technical high school programs
- High school reengagement programs
- Dropout intervention programs
- Dual-credit programs
- Career and workforce programs

MYTH: College will be way too hard. It's just not for my kid.

REALITY: There are many options for students after high school. There are apprenticeships, on-the-job training programs, community college certificates, two-year degrees, and four-year degrees.

In some ways, college may be harder than high school. But in other ways, college may actually be easier than high school. Students may not get the grades they expected or got in high school; however, college offers them the opportunity to explore their academic interests and pursue areas of study in which they know they will succeed. Colleges also offer opportunities to help students succeed in school, get to know their professors, and find other helpful resources on campus like tutoring and other support services.

Grades Matter

Getting good grades in challenging classes throughout your student's high school experience is important in college admissions decisions. Good grades also show that your student understands the material and is ready for the next step, whether that be the next semester, the next grade level, or college or training after high school.

Good Study Habits & Test Prep

It's worth your student's time to develop good study skills because having them will help them get the best possible grades. Those skills will also help them to be better prepared to succeed after high school.

Tips to improve study skills:

- Encourage making a "to do" list and stick to it.
- Recommend setting personal goals.
- Remind your student to prioritize! A test tomorrow is more important than an assignment due next week.
- Encourage good notetaking and review.
- Help determine where and when they work best - alone or in a group, bright or dim lighting, quiet or noisy. Help them figure out what kind of environment works best for them, and then encourage them to study that way.
- Encourage reading and writing frequently in- and outside of class.

What if my student isn't interested in going to college?

More and more students are getting burnt out from school or excited by entrepreneurial opportunities they see online. Believe it or not, there are many jobs in the trades that require no college and still bring home an impressive paycheck. Below are a few strategies and mindsets for working with a student who isn't interested in pursuing further education.

Remind them that college life is a whole different ball game.

The atmosphere in college is so starkly different from high school that many students who are resistant to college simply don't understand. You are able to choose your classes from a huge array of options, choosing a schedule, and even get to see if you'd like the teacher by using sites like www.ratemyprofessors.com. While they still may have to take a math class, they can choose between options like business math, aviation math, engineering math, statistics, and geometry. There are also a lot less classes each term, many universities consider 4 classes to be a full-time schedule.

College is also about the social life and having an easy transition out of the house, living with other people their age in dorms. There are also options for students who don't want to move away by taking classes at community colleges or online.

Low stakes, low effort sample of college life.

If the process of applying to college is too stressful, community colleges have your back. There is no essay required and a 100% acceptance rate. It shouldn't take any more than an hour to apply.

With the process being easy and local, you may encourage your student to sign up for one term of classes. During this term I suggest taking one class they are really passionate about, one that is a challenging topic while not being a dreaded class, and at least one that supports community engagement. Hands-on classes like sports, art, and mechanics are a great way to gain a sense of belonging. With this spread of classes, the student will get a good idea of what college life would be like and may be prompted to continue. Even if they choose not to, the classes will stay on their academic record and be transferable to any other college or university if they ever choose to return.

Explore non-college education paths

There are many training programs across industries. If college itself is the problem, you can explore coding academies, apprenticeships in industries like welding and carpentry, or beauty school.

Check out this book for apprenticeships and unions in the construction industry:

www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/FAS/PurchasingAndContracting/Labor/ApprenticeshipGuidebook.pdf

Gap year

Gap year programs were very popular with students during the pandemic. Others feel they haven't had a chance to really explore their interests and don't want to commit to a path yet. Taking a gap year can work incredibly well when done properly.

First, make a plan for what will happen during and after the gap year is over. Are they intending to work, go to school, travel, move across the country? By giving the gap year an official end date, students are more likely to stay committed to exploration without wandering aimlessly. Next decide what the goal of the gap year program is. Will they be trying to start a business, go abroad, or build work experience? Browse gap year programs online to get an idea of all the options available to you.

Set a budget and help your student understand what it feels like to become financially independent. Some students need to understand what it feels like to live paycheck to paycheck in order to get the motivation they need to pursue a path that will make them a higher income. We want our students to experience this in a safe way that allows them to grow, instead of being trapped in the poverty cycle. Therefore, spend time working with them on determining what they will pay for over the next year. Will they pay for the program, buy their own food, pay car insurance, or simply not get spending money from you?

When considering a gap year, remember this scientific law: a body at rest, stays at rest, and a body in motion, stays in motion. It can be very challenging to get back into the routine of school after a long break. Students should consider taking one class – even if it's online and simply for fun, like an art class – this will help students stay in the routine of doing work, turning in assignments, and staying engaged in the process of learning.

What is the college application process for 2-year schools?

The application process for the community colleges in our area is straightforward and easy to do. This usually takes less than 30 minutes. Students will not need an essay or social security number.

Students create an account at: <https://apply.ctc.edu/user>. They need to save their username and password. If the student has already taken classes through Running Start they will have already created an account. From there, they are able to start an application at any of the local community colleges. Students are prompted to pick a program and major. The type of program changes what majors are available. Click through the programs and majors until you find the one that interests you.

Students are able to change their major later on by connecting with the academic counselor at their college. Students should select either one major that they may be interested in studying or select the academic transfer degree. The transfer degree will set students up for any bachelor's degree by directing them to complete all of their required basic classes.

What is the college application process for 4-year schools?

WHERE TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

For 4-year schools students will create an account on commonapp.com or for students who are a part of underrepresented minorities they may apply through [Coalition Application](#). These sites will allow students to organize their applications for up to ten schools, keeping track of essays, requesting letters of recommendation, and organizing deadlines without having to fill out their home address and other basic information for every application.

What you will need:

- Basic information about the high school
- Unofficial transcripts which can be downloaded through Skyward
- Personal essay
- Support essays which are specific to individual schools
- Letters of recommendation from 3 teachers, school counselor, and/or or community supports outside of the family

[Common App](#) - Connecting Applicants with 4-Year Colleges
[Application Guide for First Year Students](#)
[Common App You Tube Channel](#)
[About Common App](#)

FAQ:

- Information about class size can be found on the Juanita website under 'school profile'.
- Students do not have a weighted GPA or student rank.
- Enter all your courses that appear on your transcript, you can leave the final grade box blank.
- Any classes you took for high school credit in middle school or at another high school should still be listed on your Juanita transcript, there is no need for you to add another school.
- FERPA. When the box pops up asking you about FERPA, it is asking you to waive the right to review your letter of recommendation. Waiving this right reassures colleges that your letters are candid and truthful.

[MyCoalition](#) - Helping Underrepresented Students Apply for College (offers fee waivers)
[Coalition Application](#)
[Coalition Counselor](#)
[About MyCoalition](#)

ESSAYS

Your personal statement is an essay –usually around 500 words – that you write to show a college admissions committee who you are and why you deserve to be admitted to their school. You may be asked to provide several shorter supporting essays on various topics. Here’s a simple guide to writing a quality essay:

- A good topic will show how you’ve grown because of something that has happened in your life or because of an experience/club/job
- Focus on your strengths and values
- This is not the place to share your life story, instead focus on one core part of your life
- Your story should talk about you, not someone who inspired you
- Please use paragraphs!!

For more tips and references: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>

To pick a topic, think of a time when you accomplished something important to you, overcame a challenge, what motivated you to pick your degree, or a time you grew as a person. You want your story to focus around one main event without having to explain a lot of back story. By picking one point in time, you are more easily able to follow the principle of ‘show don’t tell’ where students are encouraged to show how they grew and how this makes them prepared for college rather than bluntly stating so.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

A letter of recommendation for college admission is a short letter typically written by a teacher, counselor, or mentor highlighting your strengths and potential contributions to a school. A recommendation letter can help your application stand out, especially when it highlights your skills, accomplishments, and positive attitude toward education. Some colleges will ask for two or three letters of recommendation during the application process, others won't require any. Teachers need as much time as possible to complete a recommendation letter. They often have many recommendation letters to write, along with lesson planning and grading. Don’t ask for a letter of recommendation the day before an application is due.

Tips include:

- Waive your right to view recommendation letters on your application forms. Admission officers will trust them more if you haven’t seen them.

- Let teachers know the deadline for each college and ask them about their preferred turnaround time.
- Bring in multiple different opinions/people who will be able to highlight your different strengths.
- Utilize your connections in- and outside of school.
- Ask in person whenever possible, then send a follow up email that includes a brief overview of some of the things your recommender might be able to highlight in their letter.

REQUESTING TRANSCRIPTS

Complete the online transcript request form for current students. For Common App, Coalition App, and Send Edu: your counselor will upload your transcript! However, you must add your counselor to your application once you begin. There is no need to request a transcript for these applications.

Unofficial Transcript or PDF: These are electronic or hard copies of printed transcripts. Use Skyward to see and download an unofficial report on your transcripts. Go to 'profile' and select 'unofficial transcript' and download it as a PDF. Photo instructions for downloading unofficial transcripts can be found on the online Transcript Request Form on the JHS counseling webpage.

Official Transcript: This form is available on the JHS counseling webpage at <https://jhs.lwsd.org/counseling/transcript-requests>. Read the form carefully for directions and order with 2 -3 days' advanced notice. These are sealed in a JHS envelope. Do not open these transcripts otherwise, they will be invalid. You must place the sealed JHS envelope in your own mailing envelope to send to the schools or scholarships of your choice. You can find their mailing addresses on their websites. Check your school email for pick -up info!