

FEDERAL WAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FAMILY RESOURCE PACKET

LEADING THE LEAP:

EMPOWERING FAMILIES FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL JOURNEY

Leading your scholar from 8th grade through graduation, and beyond
fwps.org | Federal Way, WA | District #210



Presented by Washington Alliance for Better Schools

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS PACKET

- 1 High School 4-Year Milestone Timeline
- 2 FWPS Graduation Requirements Checklist
- 3 Washington State College Prep (Running Start & Beyond)
- 4 ParentVUE & StudentVUE Login Instructions
- 5 FAFSA & WASFA Step-by-Step Guide
- 6 College & Career Exploration Resources
- 7 School Counselor Contact Card
- 8 The '3 Bs' Parent-Leader Framework

Note to Families

FWPS uses the term "scholar" for all students. This packet uses both "scholar" and "student" so it feels comfortable for everyone. Some fields are left blank for you to fill in with your specific school's counselor name, portal login, and dates — because at FWPS, every scholar's path is personal.

1

HIGH SCHOOL 4-YEAR MILESTONE TIMELINE

FWPS scholars: plan ahead — every year builds toward graduation and your future.

FWPS KEY FACT

9th grade GPA is the single strongest predictor of on-time graduation. FWPS offers AVID, Running Start, AP, IB (Thomas Jefferson), and Cambridge (Federal Way HS) — ask your counselor which fits your scholar.

Area	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Academics	English 9, Biology, Algebra II/Geometry, World History, PE	English 10, Chemistry, Math (Alg II+), US History, Electives	English 11, Physics or Science elective, 3rd Math, Gov/Econ, AP options	English 12, Senior Seminar, Electives, Dual Credit / Running Start
GPA & Credits	Baseline GPA — every grade counts! Earn 6–8 credits/year toward 26 total	Check credit progress with counselor; aim for 13–14 credits by end of 10th	19–20 credits by end of 11th; counselor reviews your graduation plan	26 credits total required. Final transcript sent to colleges/programs
Assessments	Smarter Balanced (SBAC/SBA) — state required; PSAT 8/9	PSAT 10 (Oct); practice SAT skills; state SBA retakes if needed	SAT offered FREE at FWPS in spring; SAT/ACT retakes; AP exams	SAT/ACT final attempt; AP exam scores sent to colleges
Planning	Create High School & Beyond Plan with counselor; explore interests	Update HS & Beyond Plan; explore CTE, Running Start eligibility	Finalize college/career list; visit campuses; request rec letters (spring)	Submit applications (Nov–Jan); FAFSA/WASFA opens Oct 1; decide by May 1
Key FWPS Opportunities	AVID application; CTE exploration; Puget Sound Skills Center inquiry	AVID; Dual Credit in CTE; World Language Competency Test (March)	Running Start application (apply fall of 11th); AP/IB/Cambridge enrollment	Running Start; College in the High School; FWPS Financial Aid Workshops
College Bound Scholarship	Sign the College Bound pledge if income-eligible (deadline: 8th grade!)	Maintain 2.0 GPA, regular attendance, no felonies to keep eligibility	Keep requirements; verify eligibility with counselor	College Bound award applied to WA public college or university tuition

COLLEGE BOUND SCHOLARSHIP — WA STATE

If your family qualifies, scholars can sign the College Bound Scholarship pledge as early as 7th grade and no later than 8th grade. It covers tuition at WA public colleges for students who maintain a 2.0 GPA and meet other requirements. Ask your middle school counselor TODAY. Learn more: collegebound.wsac.wa.gov

2

FWPS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

26 credits required. Know what your scholar needs — track it every semester.

FWPS CREDIT SYSTEM

Each high school course is semester-length and worth 0.5 or 1.0 credit. Scholars who take a full schedule earn 6–8 credits per year. Total required: 26 credits. Source: fwps.org/academics/college-and-career-readiness/graduation-requirements

Required Credits by Subject Area

Subject Area	FWPS Credits Required	Earned So Far	Notes / Courses Taken
English / Language Arts	4.0 credits (4 years)		Eng 9, 10, 11, 12 — all required
Mathematics	3.0 credits (3 req., 4 rec.)		3rd credit chosen w/ family + counselor approval
Science (Lab-based)	3.0 credits (3 req.)		3rd credit chosen by scholar & family (WAC 180-51-068)
Social Studies	3.0 credits		Incl. WA State History + US History + Civics
Washington State History	0.5 credit		Usually taken in 9th or 10th grade
Arts or CTE Pathway	2.0 credits		Fine Arts, Music, Drama, CTE courses
Personalized Pathway (CTE/elective)	2.0 credits		Related courses aligned to HS & Beyond Plan
PE / Fitness	1.5 credits		Fitness requirement; exemptions possible
Health	0.5 credit		
World Language	0–2 credits (varies by path)		Up to 4 credits via WA Competency Test (March)
Electives	Remaining to reach 26 total		Running Start, Dual Credit, CTE, AP, etc.
TOTAL	26.0 credits		Confirm your count with your counselor every year

Additional FWPS Graduation Requirements

- High School & Beyond Plan:** Completed with counselor each year — includes college/career goals
- Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA):** State test; required or approved alternative (retakes available)
- WA State History:** 0.5 credit — confirm with counselor if already completed
- Fitness Standard:** Must meet FWPS fitness standard or have approved exemption
- Personalized Pathway:** Career/educational outcome courses tied to your HS & Beyond Plan

My Scholar's Progress — Write In

Scholar's Name	
High School (Circle): Federal Way HS Decatur HS Thomas Jefferson HS Todd Beamer HS	
Counselor Name & Email	
Current Grade Level	
Credits Earned So Far	
Projected Graduation Year	

3

WASHINGTON STATE COLLEGE PREP PATHWAYS

FWPS offers multiple pathways to college credit — before graduation.

Washington State is unique: your scholar can earn real college credits while still in high school, often for FREE. FWPS offers all of the options below. Ask your counselor which fits your scholar's goals.

Program	What It Is	Who Qualifies	How to Start
Running Start	Take community college courses for FREE — earns both high school AND college credits simultaneously	11th–12th graders (some 10th); must meet placement test requirements at Highline or Green River College	Apply fall of 11th grade; take the college placement test; meet with counselor to adjust schedule
AP Courses (College Board)	Rigorous college-prep courses at every FWPS high school; AP exam in May may earn college credit	Any scholar — AP is open to all FWPS scholars; counselor can help you enroll	Talk to counselor during course selection; FWPS offers SAT for FREE each spring
IB Programme	International Baccalaureate — globally recognized diploma; college credit possible	Thomas Jefferson High School only — IB Programme available	Apply to Thomas Jefferson HS; inquire with TJ counselors
Cambridge Programme	Cambridge International program — rigorous, globally recognized	Federal Way High School only — Cambridge available	Enroll at Federal Way HS; talk to FWHS counselors
Dual Credit / CTE	47 CTE courses at FWPS offer college dual credit — earn HS + college credit at the same time	Any scholar enrolled in qualifying CTE courses; available at all 4 high schools	Choose a CTE pathway during course selection with your counselor
College in the High School	College-level coursework taught at your high school by FWPS teachers	Varies by course — ask your school counselor for available courses this year	Request during course selection; counselor will confirm eligibility
WA Language Competency Test	Earn up to 4 HS World Language credits if proficient in another language	Grades 7–12; test offered every March; free	Contact your counselor before March each year to sign up

HIGHLINE & GREEN RIVER COLLEGE — RUNNING START

FWPS Running Start partners with Highline College (Des Moines) and Green River College (Auburn). Running Start is FREE for families — the state pays tuition. Scholars may need to purchase books. Contact your counselor to begin the Running Start application process during 10th or 11th grade.

SEAL OF BILITERACY

In 2025, 169 FWPS scholars earned the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy — awarded to scholars who demonstrate proficiency in English and at least one other language. With 47+ languages spoken across FWPS, YOUR family's language is an asset. Ask your counselor about the World Language Competency Test in March.

4

PARENTVUE & STUDENTVUE LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS

Your real-time window into your scholar's grades, attendance, and schedule.

FWPS USES SYNERGY / VUE SYSTEM

Federal Way Public Schools uses Synergy — accessed through ParentVUE (for families) and StudentVUE (for scholars). This is your most important tool. Check it at least once a week.

ParentVUE — For Families

How To Access	Details
Web Login	Go to: grades.fwps.org — click 'Activate Account' if first time, or 'Login' if you have a password
Mobile App (iPhone)	Download 'ParentVUE' from the App Store; enter Mobile App URL: https://grades.fwps.org/
Mobile App (Android)	Download 'ParentVUE' from Google Play; enter Mobile App URL: https://grades.fwps.org/
Forgot Password	Click 'Forgot Password' at grades.fwps.org — or call your school's main office for help
New Account	Contact your school office or go to sis.fwps.org to activate your ParentVUE account
Language Support	ParentVUE is available in English and Español; FWPS has multilingual family liaisons — call your school

StudentVUE — For Your Scholar

Access	Details
Web	grades.fwps.org — scholar logs in with school-issued username and password
App	Download 'StudentVUE'; enter https://grades.fwps.org/ as the district URL
Canvas LMS	Teachers post assignments and grades in Canvas — accessed via the FWPS tech hub or canvas.instructure.com

What You Can See in ParentVUE

- Grades (real-time):** See every assignment grade and course average as soon as teachers enter them
- Attendance:** View daily and period-by-period attendance; absences and tardies noted
- Schedule:** Your scholar's full class schedule, teacher names, and room numbers
- Report Cards:** Download official report cards from ParentVUE — no paper copy needed
- Messaging:** Some teachers use ParentVUE messaging — check your notification settings
- Contact Info:** Keep your phone and email up to date in ParentVUE — this is how FWPS reaches you

5

FAFSA & WASFA: FINANCIAL AID STEP-BY-STEP

Washington State has TWO financial aid applications. Don't leave money on the table.

FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid
For U.S. Citizens and eligible non-citizens.
Opens October 1. File at studentaid.gov

WASFA

Washington Application for State Financial Aid
For undocumented students and those not eligible for FAFSA. Also opens October 1. File at readysatgrad.org/wasfa

Step-by-Step Guide (Both FAFSA & WASFA)

When	Step	What To Do
ANY YEAR NOW	Create Your ID	FAFSA: Go to studentaid.gov/fsa-id — both the scholar AND parent/guardian each need their own FSA ID. WASFA: Create account at readysatgrad.org/wasfa . Do this before 12th grade!
Summer Before 12th	Gather Documents	Social Security numbers (if applicable), prior-prior year tax returns, W-2s, bank info, records of untaxed income. For WASFA: no SSN needed
October 1 — 12th Grade	Submit EARLY	FAFSA and WASFA both open October 1 of 12th grade. Submit as early as possible — many grants are FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED. FWPS financial aid workshops held at all high schools.
Oct–Jan — 12th Grade	Add All Schools	Add every college or program you're considering to your FAFSA/WASFA. It is free to add schools. You can update your list anytime.
After Submission	Check for Errors	Review your Student Aid Report (SAR). Correct any errors immediately. Keep a copy for your records.
March–April — 12th Grade	Compare Award Letters	Colleges send Financial Aid Award Letters. Compare them carefully: GRANTS = free money (no repayment). LOANS = must be repaid. WORK-STUDY = earn money at school.
By May 1 — 12th Grade	Accept & Commit	Accept your aid package by the college deadline (usually May 1 — National Decision Day). Accept grants first, loans last or not at all.

Washington State Aid to Know

College Bound Scholarship: Up to full tuition at WA public colleges for income-eligible scholars who signed the pledge in 7th or 8th grade. Apply: collegebound.wsac.wa.gov

Washington State Need Grant (WSNG): Income-based grant for WA students. File FAFSA or WASFA to be considered automatically.

FWPS Financial Aid Workshops: Each FWPS high school hosts financial aid workshops for families — ask your school counselor for dates.

FWPS Scholarship Guide: Visit fwps.org/academics/college-and-career-readiness/paying-for-college/scholarship-guide for district scholarship opportunities.

FWPS CLASS OF 2025 FACT

Graduating scholars earned nearly \$11 million in scholarships. 333 scholars were the first in their families to attend college. Financial aid is real, and it is available for your family. File early.

6

COLLEGE & CAREER EXPLORATION RESOURCES

Free tools for every FWPS family — start exploring in 9th grade, not 12th.

FWPS DISTRICT RESOURCE

The FWPS 'Life After High School' College & Career Fair is held annually at Federal Way HS for all middle and high school scholars — explore 2- and 4-year colleges, military, apprenticeships, and more. Ask your counselor for this year's date.

College Research & Application Tools (Free)

Resource	Website	What It Does for FWPS Families
College Bound Scholarship Portal	collegebound.wsac.wa.gov	Check eligibility and manage your WA College Bound Scholarship pledge
College Greenlight	collegelightapp.com	College list builder designed for first-gen & low-income students; scholarship matching
Common App	commonapp.org	Apply to 1,000+ colleges with one application — used by many FWPS graduates
Washington State University System	wsac.wa.gov	WA Student Achievement Council — WA college info, aid, and planning tools
College Board / BigFuture	collegeboard.org	SAT prep, AP resources, college search; FWPS offers SAT FREE in spring
Khan Academy Free SAT Prep	khanacademy.org/SAT	Free personalized SAT prep — official College Board partnership
QuestBridge	questbridge.org	Connects high-achieving low-income scholars with top colleges and full scholarships
Guaranteed Admissions Programs	fwps.org/academics/college-and-career-readiness/guaranteed-admissions-programs	FWPS scholars may qualify for guaranteed college admission programs — ask your counselor

Career Exploration Tools (Free)

Resource	Website	What It Does
CareerOneStop	careeronestop.org	Career exploration, skills assessment, salary data, local WA job market information
O*NET Online	onetonline.org	Detail on 900+ careers — skills needed, wages, education requirements
WA Careers (OSPI)	k12.wa.us/student-success/career-technical-education	WA state CTE and career pathway info; FWPS CTE programs align to this
Puget Sound Skills Center	fwps.org/academics/career-and-technical-education/puget-sound-skills-center	Regional vocational training for FWPS scholars — healthcare, trades, tech, and more
FWPS CTE Programs	fwps.org/academics/career-and-technical-education	6 CTE programs of study at all 4 FWPS high schools; 47 courses offer dual credit

FWPS Mentor and Me	fwps.org/academics/college-and-career-readiness/mentor-and-me	FWPS mentorship program connecting scholars with community professionals
High School & Beyond Plan	fwps.org/academics/college-and-career-readiness/high-school-and-beyond-plan	FWPS's required college/career planning tool — done with counselor each year

Post-Secondary Pathways — ALL Are Honored at FWPS

4-Year University	Community College Transfer	RunningStart (Free)	Trade /Vocational	Military Service	Workforce /Apprentice
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7

SCHOOL COUNSELOR CONTACT CARD

Your counselor is your family's partner. Build this relationship in 9th grade.

FWPS COUNSELING

Every FWPS high school has assigned counselors. View the full FWPS School Counseling Directory at: fwps.org/academics/counseling/school-counseling-directory

FWPS High School Counseling Offices

Federal Way HS(253)
945-5400fwps.org

Decatur HS(253)
945-5200fwps.org/Decatur

Thomas Jefferson
HS(253)
945-5600tjhs.fwps.org

Todd Beamer HS(253)
945-2570tbhs.fwps.org

My Counselor — Fill This In

MY SCHOOL COUNSELOR	
Counselor Name	
Email Address	
Phone / Extension	
Office Location / Room #	
Office Hours	
Scheduling Link (if available)	
FWPS Counseling Directory URL	

8

THE '3 BS' PARENT-LEADER FRAMEWORK

Three things to monitor every semester. Simple. Powerful. Proven.

Research on student success identifies three core areas that predict whether a scholar will graduate on time and thrive. As a family leader, these are your check-in points every semester at FWPS.

<h3>B1</h3> <p>BEHAVIOR</p>	<h3>B2</h3> <p>BELONGING</p>	<h3>B3</h3> <p>BENCHMARKS</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Attends school every day — 90%+ attendance rate	<input type="checkbox"/> Connected to at least 1 trusted adult at school	<input type="checkbox"/> On track: 6–8 credits per year toward 26 total
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrives to class on time	<input type="checkbox"/> Involved in a club, sport, CTE, or arts activity	<input type="checkbox"/> GPA at or above 2.0 (3.0+ for college prep/Running Start)
<input type="checkbox"/> Completes and submits assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> Has positive peer connections and friends	<input type="checkbox"/> HS & Beyond Plan updated each year with counselor
<input type="checkbox"/> Engages positively with teachers and peers	<input type="checkbox"/> Feels safe and welcomed — knows FWPS is for them	<input type="checkbox"/> State assessments (SBA) on track or retakes planned
<input type="checkbox"/> Follows FWPS school expectations and norms	<input type="checkbox"/> Counselor knows your scholar's name and goals	<input type="checkbox"/> College Bound pledge signed (if eligible)

Conversation Starters for Each B

For BEHAVIOR (Attendance):

"I checked ParentVUE and noticed you had an absence on [date]. Can you tell me what happened? Let's figure out a plan together."

For BELONGING:

"Who is one teacher, counselor, or coach at school that knows you well? Who would you go to if you were struggling?"

For BENCHMARKS:

"Let's look at your credits and grades together in ParentVUE. Which class are you most proud of? Which one do we need to make a plan for?"

"Every scholar in FWPS has a voice, a dream, and a bright future."

And behind every scholar is a family leader who showed up.

— Federal Way Public Schools | Family Academy | Leading the Leap