

How to Prepare for College: Section I Table of Contents and Resource Links

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POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Children's Law Center is pleased to share its revised "Post-Secondary Education" Practice Kit with you. Children in foster care face a number of obstacles in accessing, transitioning to, and succeeding in post-secondary education. The Casey Foundation's 2010 report Supporting Success (included in Section V. B. Additional Reading) notes that lack of guidance and a stable support network, as well as a lack of information about college, contribute to the underrepresentation of foster children in institutions of post-secondary education.

This practice kit seeks to improve access to post-secondary education for foster youth in the District of Columbia by collecting information about financial aid, scholarships, and college access programs geared to or accessible to youth in care. The Kit addresses admissions processes, important timelines and deadlines, standardized testing, obtaining and managing financial aid, and identifying appropriate programs. The kit also includes a special section on for-profit schools; discussing both their benefits and perils.

The process of completing post-secondary education is a difficult thing to do alone, especially for a teen without a strong understanding of the post-secondary system. This Kit is intended to serve as a starting point for those working with foster youth who desire to further their education. It is important for young people to find helpful allies to help them through the process. It is our hope that this kit will help you be a valuable ally for the youth you serve.

Preparing for College: Helpful Links

DC College Savings Plan: <http://www.dccollegesavings.com>

- ◆ The DC College Savings Plan is a college savings investment plan offered by the District of Columbia (DC). The plan is designed to help families and individuals save for higher education expenses and is available to DC residents as well as non-residents nationwide.

College Navigator: <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>

- ◆ College Navigator is a tool made possible by the National Center for Education Statistics. It allows users to search for colleges by name, state, zip code, degree programs offered, etc. Users can also build a list of schools ("*Favorites*") for side-by-side comparison.

Mapping Your Future: <http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/>

- ◆ Mapping Your Future provides resources for students and families, including career selection, early awareness, college planning, and money management tools.

Going2College: going2college.org

- ◆ Going2College allows students to explore career options, plan for college and locate financial aid resources. The site utilizes interactive tools for career exploration and provides state-specific resources so users can learn about local college prep services and programs.

National College Access Network: www.collegeaccess.org

- ◆ National College Access Network provides counseling, advice, and financial assistance through a network of national, state and local programs that work to improve access to and success in post-secondary education for first-generation, underrepresented and low-income students.

The College Board: www.collegeboard.com

- ◆ The College Board provides resources and information in three areas: college readiness; college connection and success; and advocacy and education reform. The College Board also serves as the official home for the SAT and AP exams.

My College QuickStart: www.quickstart.collegeboard.org/posweb/login.jsp

- ◆ My College QuickStart provides information about the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) which is also the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT). The site provides personalized feedback, practice and college planning based on PSAT/NMSQT results.

PayScale: <http://www.payscale.com/>

- ◆ PayScale allows students to compare earnings for graduates of 1,058 colleges and universities as well as national median starting and midcareer salaries for 130 majors. PayScale provides median midcareer salaries (10 years plus), which is a more realistic measure of how much liberal arts degrees pay off, since degree holders often work at coffee shops in the early years. Note that earnings are self-reported so results are biased towards workers who are researching salaries online.

Overview

Graduation and Promotion

This section of the Education Toolkit outlines the regulations and policies governing graduation and promotion requirements for DC Public Schools (“DCPS”) and Prince Georges County Public Schools (“PGCPS”). Youth in foster care often attend many schools on their path to graduation and, partially as a result, have lower graduation rates. Monitoring credits earned and requirements met each year is essential to ensure on-time graduation.

This section provides information about the DC and Maryland regulations that govern graduation and promotion, as well as the local school policies in DC and PG County. It also provides practical worksheets outlining the academic requirements of each jurisdiction in order to keep track of credits as they are earned.

DC Regulations & Policies

DC requires students to complete twenty-four (24) Carnegie Units in order to graduate with a DCPS diploma, one of the highest credit requirements in the country. However, unlike Maryland, DC does not require that students pass any state-level academic exams or assessments. In order to be promoted to 10th grade students must successfully complete both Algebra and English 1. One hundred (100) hours of community service are also required for graduation.

Under DC regulations, although students can be retained in any grade, they can only be retained once while enrolled in DCPS without a comprehensive review and approval by the regional superintendent.

Students who have graduated or withdrawn from school after 1999 can request a copy of their DCPS high school transcript from their high school registrar. Students who graduated before 1999 or attended a high school that is now closed should contact the Office of Closed Schools Records at (202) 576-7756.

Maryland Regulations & PGCPS Policies

PGCPS requires that students complete twenty-one (21) credits in order to graduate, as well as earn passing scores on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Maryland High School Assessments (HSAs). At least four (4) credits must be earned after the completion of Grade 11. A combined seventy-five (75) infused and independent service-learning hours are required for graduation. Hours are pro-rated for students who transfer in to PGCPS.

In PG County, retention in elementary school is ultimately determined by the school principal, and in middle school, by the associate superintendent. An appeals process is made available to parents who disagree with a retention decision and provide written notification of the intent to appeal. Promotion to middle and high school is based on acquisition of transition skills outlined in Administrative Procedure 5123.2. Middle school students who fail two core courses must complete summer school coursework successfully in order to be promoted.

Current students, or those who have graduated or last attended PGCPs within the last three years (2015-2018) should contact their last school of attendance to order their student records; students may be able to obtain informal copies of records and informal transcripts free of charge. Students who have withdrawn at any time during the current school year should similarly contact the last school attended for copies of records. All requests for official copies of student records/information will be submitted and paid for online using a credit or debit card; for those unable to pay by credit or debit card, PGCPs will accept a money order made out to Prince George's County Public Schools. Requests will be processed by the PGCPs Student Records Department.

Special Education/English Language Learners

In DC, special education students are eligible for promotion as determined in accordance with the agreement of the Individualized Education Program ("IEP") team. For English Language Learners, any decision on retention must be made in conjunction with the bilingual/English as a Second Language ("ESL") teacher.

A special education student in the District who does not earn a diploma may earn a Certificate of IEP completion. The decision that a student will pursue a Certificate rather than a high school diploma must be made by the multi-disciplinary IEP team no earlier than the student's 9th grade year.

In PG County, consideration of all promotion/retention/graduation options are determined by the IEP team with the agreement of the parent based upon the student's IEP. A special education student who does not earn a diploma can earn a Maryland Certificate of Completion. If a Certificate is received before age 21 a student is still entitled to a free appropriate education ("FAPE") under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") (see 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400-1409).

English Language Learners should not be retained solely on the basis of their lack of proficiency in English. However, all ESL students must meet the same credit, service learning, and functional test requirements for graduation as non-ESL students unless they receive a waiver.

Legal & Policy Resources

- DC
 - [D.C. Mun. Regs. 5-A, §§ 2201-2299](#) (DC Graduation Policies)
 - [D.C. Mun. Regs. 5-E, § 2201](#) (DC Retention and Promotion Policy)
- MD
 - [Md. Code Regs. 13A.03.02](#) (Graduation Requirements for High Schools in Maryland)
- PGCPs
 - [Administrative Procedure 6150](#) (Educational Requirements and Options)
 - [Administrative Procedure 6151](#) (Student Service-Learning Graduation Requirements)
 - [Administrative Procedure 5123.2](#) (Promotion/Retention/Acceleration)

Graduation Requirements Worksheet

District of Columbia Public Schools

Subject	Required Credits	Earned Credits	Still Needs	In Progress	Best Case Needs
English	4				
Science	1				
Lab Science	2				
Biology	1				
Math (upper level)	1				
Algebra	1				
Algebra 2	1				
Geometry	1				
DC History	.5				
U.S. Government	.5				
U.S. History	1				
World History 1	1				
World History 2	1				
World Languages	2				
Music	.5				
Arts	.5				
Phys Ed. / Health	1.5				
Electives	1.5				
Career/College	2				
TOTAL	24				

Graduation Requirement Worksheet

Prince George's County

(Effective for entering freshman in Fall 2014 and after)

Subject	Required Credits	Earned Credits	Still Needs	In Progress	Best Case
English	4				
Lab Science	2				
Biology	1				
Math	1				
Algebra	1				
Algebra 2	1				
Geometry	1				
LSN Gov't	1				
US History	1				
World History	1				
Health	.5				
Fine Art	1				
Phys Ed.	.5				
Tech Ed.	1				
Completer Sequence	2-9*				
Electives	0-2*				
Total	21				

*2 language credits and 2 elective credits OR 2 advanced technology credits and 2 elective credits OR 4-9 credits of MSDE approved career and technology program.

Assessment Requirements

To earn a Maryland High School Diploma students must achieve a passing score in Algebra, Biology, English and Government courses.

School Year 2015-2016 - Grade 9

- PARCC English 9
- PARCC Algebra 1 HSA Biology
- HSA Government

School Year 2016-2017 - Grade 10

- PARCC Algebra 1 or PARCC Geometry or PARCC Algebra 2 PARCC English 10
- HSA Biology HSA Government

School Year 2017-2018 - Grade 11

- PARCC Algebra 1 or PARCC Geometry or PARCC Algebra 2 PARCC English 11*
- HSA Biology HSA Government

*College and Career Ready Determination

School Year 2018-2019 - Grade 12

- PARCC Algebra 1 or PARCC Geometry or PARCC Algebra 2 HSA Biology
- HSA Government
- 17-18 increases to 733 combined score for Algebra 1 and English 10 HSAs
- Transition courses if a student is not college and career ready

Must meet individual scores or combined score requirement of 794/1450			
Subject:	Date Passed:	Score: HSA/PARCC	Method:
Algebra 1		/412/725	
English 10		/396/725	
Biology		/400	
Government		/394	

Students who fail the assessments twice can satisfy the requirements via a Bridge Academic Validation Plan if they are on track to graduate and participate in intervention activities. Bridge plans are project modules that are completed on the topic. The number of modules correlates to the score achieved.

Accommodations:

HSA – Students with disabilities are entitled to all accommodations in the student’s IEP

PARCC – Allows more accommodations for all students, but does not permit as many accommodations as the HSA and are more stringent to obtain.

Graduation, Promotion, and Records Requests

Resources and Links

◆ DCPS High School Academic Standards

- <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/high-school-academic-standards>
- This website offers DCPS's published details regarding high school academic standards, grading policies, requirements for selective high school admissions, and links to DCPS graduation requirements and other relevant documentation.

◆ DCPS Inactive Student Records Center

- [https://dcps.mycusthelp.com/webapp/_rs/\(S\(po10zbofupwdpt3y5heewlfu\)\)/supporthome.aspx](https://dcps.mycusthelp.com/webapp/_rs/(S(po10zbofupwdpt3y5heewlfu))/supporthome.aspx)
- This is DCPS's portal for students to access records from a DCPS school that has been closed. This website also offers links to Frequently Asked Questions regarding records requests pertaining to DCPS.

◆ DCPS Community Service Website

- <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/community-service>
- This website offers details regarding DCPS's community service graduation requirements, including links to DCPS's approved Community Service Hours Verification Form and published guides to community service.

◆ PGCPs Records Request Portal

- <http://www.pgcps.org/studentrecordsandtransfers/Student-Records/>
- This website links to the PGCPs Student Records Department. Please select "How to Request a Student Record," and you will be redirected to the website through which requests for formal student records should be made.

◆ PGCPs Administrative Procedure 5123.2, General Procedures Pertaining to Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration of Students

- <http://www1.pgcps.org/generalcounsel/index.aspx?id=179107>
- This particular administrative procedure pertains to promotion and retention of students within Prince George's County School System. Promotion and retention shall be based upon the degree of success the individual student has achieved in completing the educational program designated to meet his/her needs. This website links to PGCPs's Office of the General Counsel's list of all procedures involving students. Please scroll through the list of procedures for Administrative Procedure 5123.2.

- ◆ **PGCPS Administrative Procedure 5121.3, Grading and Reporting for High Schools, Grade Nine through Grade Twelve**
 - <http://www1.pgcps.org/generalcounsel/index.aspx?id=179107>
 - The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to provide guidance to administrators and regarding the grading and reporting systems used in all high school and centers within PGCPS. This website links to PGCPS's Office of the General Counsel's list of all procedures involving students. Please scroll through the list of procedures for Administrative Procedure 5121.3.

- ◆ **PGCPS Administrative Procedure 5129, Student Transcript Request**
 - <http://www1.pgcps.org/generalcounsel/index.aspx?id=179107>
 - The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide procedures for completion, collection, and dissemination of student transcript requests submitted by students, and parents/guardians. This website links to PGCPS's Office of the General Counsel's list of all procedures involving students. Please scroll through the list of procedures for Administrative Procedure 5129.

SAT Test Preparation, Fee Waivers, and Accommodations for Students with Special Needs

SAT Preparation: Helpful Links

- Visit the SAT section of the College Board website:
<http://sat.collegeboard.org/practice>
- Getting Ready for the SAT Subject Tests:
<http://sat.collegeboard.org/SAT/public/pdf/getting-ready-for-the-sat-subject-tests.pdf>
- Official SAT Practice Test:
https://satonlinecourse.collegeboard.org/SR/digital_assets/assessment/pdf/0833A611-0A43-10C2-0148-CC8C0087FB06-F.pdf

The College Board Fee Waivers for SAT and SAT II

The College Board offers fee waivers for the SAT and SAT II subject tests to high school students who:

- are in the 11th or 12th grade if taking the SAT *or*
- are in grades 9-12 if taking the SAT II *and*
- meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - are enrolled in a free or reduced-price lunch program;
 - are enrolled in a program for economically disadvantaged students like AVID or a TRIO program like Upward Bound;
 - family's income falls within levels listed by the USDA for enrollment in a free or reduced-price lunch program (can be found here: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-05-08/pdf/2018-09679.pdf>);
 - family receives public assistance;
 - family lives in federally subsidized public housing;
 - student resides in a foster home.

SAT and SAT II Fee Waiver Applications

- High school students
 - Students should ask their guidance counselors for a fee waiver. They may need to provide documentation (i.e., a copy of a tax return showing family income, a court order showing that the student is currently living in a foster home).
- GED students
 - Students should contact the guidance counselor at their most recent high school. Even if the student is no longer enrolled, the counselor should be able to supply the student with a fee waiver OR to give the student a list of authorized agencies where they can obtain a fee waiver.

- **NOTE:** The College Board does not have a policy in place regarding fee waivers for GED students. They encourage such students to contact their high school counselors. The College Board's fee waiver criteria do not include GED students, but school counselors do have discretion to grant them. These students and their advocates should be prepared to work closely with school counselors to obtain a fee waiver.

Using SAT and SAT II Fee Waivers

- Once a school counselor determines that a student is eligible to receive a fee waiver, he or she will give the student up to four fee waiver codes. Each code can be used only once so students and their advocates should ensure that they receive four codes, especially if the student has special needs or feels that taking the SAT more than once would benefit them. Students can use their codes for up to two SAT tests and up to two days of SAT II testing. However, each code used for SAT II tests can be used toward the cost of three SAT II tests if taken on a single day.

Requesting Application Fee Waivers

- Students should also ask school counselors for the Request for Application Fee Form. Each student can receive four forms, and these forms can be used to waive application fees at any university published in the SAT Fee Waiver Directory of Colleges. If a student is applying to a college not on this list, he or she should contact the admissions office directly and discuss the application fee.
- Both the College Board and the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) provide fee waiver forms to school counselors. Even if a student did not receive an SAT fee waiver, they may still be able to get a NACAC form, since the criteria are less stringent and are subject to the counselor's knowledge of the student's circumstances.

Requesting Accommodations for Students with Special Needs

- Students with special needs may be eligible for certain accommodations when taking the SAT program tests. To find out if your client is eligible, and to apply for accommodations, please visit: <http://student.collegeboard.org/services-for-students-with-disabilities>

ACT Test Preparation

The ACT test is a college readiness test that assesses a student's academic readiness for college. ACT test scores are accepted by some colleges and Universities as an alternative to the SAT test.

- Information on how to register for the ACT test can be found here: <http://www.actstudent.org/>
- Information for students with special needs who would like to take the ACT test, can be found here: <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/accommodations.html>
- Practice tests and other information to help students prepare for the ACT test, can be found here: <http://www.actstudent.org/testprep/>

Office of Youth Empowerment: Overview

CFSA's Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) serves as the administrative unit responsible for assisting foster youth aged 15 and older to receive supports and services to prepare them for their entrance into adulthood. To refer youth to OYE, social workers must use the OYE Universal e-Referral form located on the Agency's website and enroll the youth within 30 days of the youth's 15th birthday. A youth eligible or receiving OYE supportive services at case closure can continue to receive such services after the case closes. See section I.e.vi for the OYE Referral Form.

Contact Information

Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE)
Child and Family Services Agency
3350 9th Street NE
Washington, DC 20017
(202) 727-7500

OYE Educational Unit

OYE offers pre-college services, including but not limited to: individual consultations surrounding college entrance requirements and application processes, assistance preparing for and paying for standardized tests required for college, assistance obtaining funding through the Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program, assistance obtaining funding through the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), financial assistance for medical services not covered by DC Medicaid, and a personal allowance while living on the campus of a post-secondary educational institution. See section I.e.iii for more information.

OYE Career Pathways Unit

OYE's Career Pathways Unit provides vocational and employment services, including, but not limited to: assistance identifying and applying to vocational training programs, linkage with the D.C. Department of Employment Services vocational programs, and individual consultations regarding job readiness support, such as instruction in basic employability skills, referral to industry specific programs, career exploration assistance, referrals to community resources, and financial assistance for vocational training. See section I.e.iv for more information.

CFSA's Office of Well Being

OYE partners with CFSA's Office of Well Being to explore options for youth ages 15-17, including the District's Summer Youth Employment Program.

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency**



Office of Youth Empowerment Universal e-Referral Form

Client Information

Name:	DOB: / /	Age:	FACES ID:
Placement Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Home	<input type="checkbox"/> ILP	<input type="checkbox"/> Group Home	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Placement Address:			
Placement Phone: - -	Client Cell Phone: - - -		
Email Address:			
Is youth a teen parent (Y/N):	If Yes, Name and DOB of each child:		
Does youth have a learning disability/ies (Y/N)?	If yes, please specify:		
Does youth have a mental health diagnosis (Y/N)?	If yes, please specify:		

Referral Source

Social Worker:	Administration:	Agency:
Desk Phone:	Cell Phone:	Email:
Supervisor:	Desk Phone:	Cell Phone: Email:

Type of Support Services Requested

<input type="checkbox"/> College	<input type="checkbox"/> Vocation/Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Literacy
<input type="checkbox"/> Teen Parent	<input type="checkbox"/> Transition Planning	

Please complete each section fully as it applies to your youth

College	Current Grade: GPA: Graduated from High School <input type="checkbox"/> or obtained GED <input type="checkbox"/> Graduation Year: Has an IEP or 504 Plan (Y/N): If yes, has youth been referred to Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) (Y/N): Please check all the financial aid applications completed by youth: FAFSA <input type="checkbox"/> DC TAG <input type="checkbox"/> DC CAP <input type="checkbox"/> ETV <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarships <input type="checkbox"/> Has youth taken SAT/ACT (Y/N): Score:
Vocation/ Employment	Has youth completed a Career Interest Form (Y/N): Has the youth attend or completed a vocational training program in the past (Y/N) If yes, name of the program: Date Completed: Certification received: Is youth currently employed (Y/N): If yes, full/part-time and where: Does youth have a resume (Y/N):

Financial Literacy Does youth have a bank account (Y/N)? If yes, which banking institute?
Is youth currently participating in ESCROW program (Y/N)?
Has youth completed ESCROW (Y/N)?
Is youth interested in developing a savings to support their transition (Y/N)?

Teen Parent Support New Heights Program (Education support for teen parents)
 Connecting Dads/FEED (Fatherhood Education Empowerment & Development)
 Teen Parent resource consultation

Transition Planning Date of last YTP: / /
 Consultation/Technical Assistance on Transition Toolkit
 Aging out review or support for youth 20 years old
 Resource consultation

Reason for Referral

Please describe youth's current situation regarding the supportive services being requested and be as specific as possible.

Save this form as a Word document and e-mail as an attachment to cfsa.oye@dc.gov. If more space is needed please use the body of the e-mail to provide the information.