



College and Career Readiness Booklet

Ponaganset High School

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Overview

How to use this handbook: This handbook is composed of numerous articles and links. Any link you will find will be in bold and green. We hope that this handbook will be of some value as you progress through your years at Ponaganset High School.

Table of Contents

High School Course Requirements

Freshman Year

Sophomore Year

Junior Year

Senior Year

- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Recommendations
- The College Essay
- Tips on College Visits and Interviews
- SAT vs. ACT
- Decision Types
- NCAA

Appendix materials



High School Courses Required for 2 year and Technical Schools (These institutions accept a high school diploma. The following are the credit guidelines for high school graduation. Please note digital portfolio and graduation exhibitions are also requirements for earning a diploma from PHS.)

4 Credits of English

4 Credits of Math (1 course can be math-related)

3 Credits of Science (1 course can be science-related)

3 Credits of Social Studies

2 Credits of PE (At least .5 taken each year)

.5 Fine Arts

+5.5 elective credits

= 22 credits

High School Courses Required for Most 4 year Colleges (**Please Note: PHS Graduation requirements are different from other schools and some colleges require more courses and specific courses depending on the college and the major. Please check with the college directly or your counselor if you have specific questions). Also refer to the [Creating a solid Academic Portfolio](#)

4 years of English

4 years of math (Algebra II is a requirement)

3 years of science (at least two lab science classes)

3 years of social studies (usually US History is required)

2 years of a foreign language (3 years is highly recommended)

Plus 2 additional academic electives (any classes taught within the academic core: English, math, history, science, language).

Dual and Concurrent Enrollment Opportunities: Ponaganset High School offers many dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities. Please see your school counselor for more information.

Freshman and Sophomore Year

To Do:

- Take challenging classes in core academic subjects. Most colleges require four years of English, at least three years of social studies (history, civics, geography, economics, etc.), three years of mathematics, and three years of science, and many require two years of a foreign language. Round out your course load with classes in computer science and the arts.
- Work with one of your parents to estimate your financial aid using [FAFSA4caster](#) and be sure to save for college.
- Get involved in school- or community-based activities that interest you or let you explore career interests. Consider working, volunteering, and/or participating in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops, and camps with specialty focuses such as music, arts, or science. **Remember—it's quality (not quantity) that counts.**
- Ask your school counselor or teachers what [Advanced Placement](#) courses are available, whether you are eligible, and how to enroll in them.
- Use Richer Picture to set SMART Goals and create your academic plan.

- Start a list of your awards, honors, paid and volunteer work, and extracurricular activities. Update it throughout high school and you will begin to build your resume through your Naviance Account and your Digital Portfolio.

To Explore:

- Check out [*KnowHow2Go: The Four Steps to College*](#), which suggests some actions you can take as you start thinking about education beyond high school.
- Learn about [managing your money](#).
- Explore [reasons to consider college and ways you can get help](#) preparing.

There are some steps you can take as a ninth- and a 10th-grader to make sure you're on the right track for college. This list will help you navigate the college planning process:

[Freshman/Sophomore College Planning](#)

[Understanding College Admissions Tests](#) - Know your Tests

Junior Year

[Financial Aid Checklist](#)

[Importance of Junior Year Article](#)

[Five Ways College can Change Your Life](#) - Creating a solid academic plan.

Junior Year General Timeline

SEPTEMBER

- If you have not already done so, be sure to register for the October PSAT. [Why taking the PSAT Matters](#)

- Step up your involvement in one or two organizations. It's not the number of organizations you belong to, but that you have leadership experience that matters the most.
- Begin keeping track of your community service activities and hours.
- Continue to identify accomplishments and achievements you will list on your resume.

OCTOBER

- Take the PSAT.
- Talk with teachers, family members, and other adults you respect about the colleges they attended.
- Begin the [career exploration](#) process with some assessment tests using Naviance.

NOVEMBER

- Keep your focus on your grades. You'll want your grades for this entire junior year to be as strong as possible.
- Continue your research in potential colleges and careers.
- Continue gathering materials for your resume and portfolio.

DECEMBER

- Once you receive your PSAT scores, make plans for how to maximize the good and plan to improve. The PSAT links to Khan Academy. Here you can use this site to hone in on your areas of weakness and do more practice work. Also, there are SAT questions of the day on the SAT App and many practice tests on the SAT website and Naviance.
- Look ahead to the spring and summer and begin mapping out the dates for your other standardized tests: AP Placement Exams, ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests. Prepare for these tests by using practice tests online.
- **Stay focused on grades.**

Comparison Chart

- [SAT vs ACT](#)

JANUARY

- Continue your research on potential colleges and careers.
- Consider asking to job shadow one or more people you know to learn more about those careers firsthand. Dr. Lynn Bedard, our School Based Coordinator is very helpful in getting job shadows, you can email her at lbedard@fgschools.com.
- **Stay focused on grades - doing the best you can in each of your classes.**

FEBRUARY

- Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to discuss possible college choices.

- Begin to focus on the key 10 to 15 colleges that are a good fit (based on your academics and career choice).
- Begin reviewing for the SAT - you can use Khan Academy (free resource)

MARCH

- Develop (if you haven't already) a file for each of the schools on your list.
- Start learning about scholarships and grants.
- Brainstorm and research rewarding summer jobs, internships, or scholarship opportunities.

APRIL

- Take the RI State Assessment exam - SAT School Day
- Work with your school counselor to assure a challenging senior year of courses.
- Register for the May and/or June SAT tests.
- Consider visiting some of the colleges on your list.
- Begin identifying teachers who may be willing to write recommendation letters for you.

MAY

- Take AP Placement Exams if you have taken AP courses.
- Firm up your summer plans, including visits to other colleges on your list.
- Push yourself hard to end the year with solid grades.

JUNE

- Take the SAT and SAT Subject Tests.
- Continue contemplating various careers and colleges.
- Be sure to get the most out of your summer vacation.
- Ask for summer reading lists.
- Visit colleges and utilize the [College Visit Checklist](#)

JULY

- Get ready for your senior year by reviewing this [College-Bound High School Senior Planning Calendar](#).
- Begin writing your [college essay](#).
- Begin searching for scholarships. www.fastweb.com or www.rischolarships.com

Career Planning

- Naviance has multiple assessments/surveys you can do to help you explore careers. We encourage you to also utilize [Roadtrip Nation](#) which can help you through this process.

- [BLS.gov](https://www.bls.gov) is another great website along with Naviance that gives you a great deal of information on career outlooks, up to date projected growth in the area as well as salary ranges by state.

Senior Year-

Senior Year Checklist

Fall

- Narrow your list of colleges to between five and 10. Meet with a counselor about your college choices and, if you haven't done so yet, download college applications and financial aid forms. Plan to visit as many of these colleges as possible.
- Create a master list or calendar that includes:
 - Tests you'll take and their fees, dates, and registration deadlines
 - College application due dates
 - Required financial aid application forms and their deadlines (aid applications may be due before college applications)
 - Other materials you'll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.)
 - Your high school's application processing deadlines
 - Writing your [College Essay](#) tips.
- Ask a counselor to help you request a fee waiver if you can't afford application or test fees.
- **Take the SAT® one more time:** Many seniors retake the SAT in the fall. Additional coursework since your last test could help you boost your performance. Plus you already know what to expect on test day.
- Be sure to have your SAT scores sent to the colleges you're applying to.
- **Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** To apply for most financial aid, you'll need to complete the FAFSA. Oct. 1 is the first day you can file the FAFSA.
- **Complete the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE®:** PROFILE is an online application used by certain colleges and scholarship programs to determine eligibility for their aid dollars. This profile is used only for specific schools, not all.
- Prepare **early decision/early action or rolling admission applications** as soon as possible. Colleges may require test scores and applications between Nov. 1 and Nov. 15 for early decision admission.
- **Ask a counselor or teacher for recommendations** if you need them. Give each teacher or counselor an outline of your academic record and your extracurricular activities. For each recommendation, provide a stamped, addressed envelope for those colleges that may not use electronic communication
- Write first drafts and ask teachers and others to read them if you're submitting essays. If you're applying for early decision, finish the essays for that application now.

- Complete at least one college application by Thanksgiving.
- Ask counselors to send your transcripts to colleges. Give counselors the proper forms at least two weeks before the colleges require them.

Winter

- Keep photocopies as you finish and send your applications and essays.
- Have your high school send a transcript — it is sent separately by mail to colleges if you apply online to colleges.
- Give the correct form to your counselor if the college wants to see second-semester grades.
- Your college may or may not require an Interview. Here is a great video on what **not to do** during an interview [Interview tips for college or workforce](#)
- The college interview is a part of the college application process at many colleges — but not all of them. You may meet in person to talk with someone from the admission office, a current student or a graduate of the college. Or you may be able to take part in a video interview, often via Skype.
- For more information refer to the following link: [Setting up an Interview](#)

Spring

- Keep active in school. [If you are waitlisted](#), the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and the time you learned of its decision.
- Visit your final college before accepting. You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April. Notify your counselor of your choice. If you have questions about housing offers, talk to your counselor or call the college.
- Inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid by May 1. Colleges cannot require your deposit or your commitment to attend before May 1. Talk to your counselor or adviser if you have questions.
- Send your deposit to one college only.
- [Take any AP® Exams](#). Show what you've learned in your AP classes. A successful score could even earn you credit, advanced placement, or both in college.

- **[Waitlisted by a college?](#)** If you intend to enroll if you are accepted, tell the admission director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask whether funds will be available if you're accepted.
- Work with a counselor to resolve any admission or financial aid problems.
- Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college.
- **[Review your financial aid awards:](#)** Not all financial aid awards are the same, so it's important to choose the aid package that's best for you and your family. Be sure to note what you have to do to continue receiving financial aid from year to year, and how your aid might change in future years.
- Complete the Senior Graduation Survey on Naviance.

THE COLLEGE MAJOR: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO CHOOSE ONE

It's OK if you don't know what you want to major in now, but eventually you're going to have to decide. Get the facts you need to choose well.

[Read this article](#) on college majors.

STUDENTS SPEAK: HOW I CHOSE MY NEXT STEP

What college do I want to attend? What major should I choose? What careers am I interested in? See how these students found what was right for them.

[Read this article](#) on how to choose your next steps.

References and Appendix Materials.

Collegeboard.com  **CollegeBoard**

BLS.gov

Interested in the Military:

[Military Options](#)

Interested in Trades:

<https://www.bfri.org/>