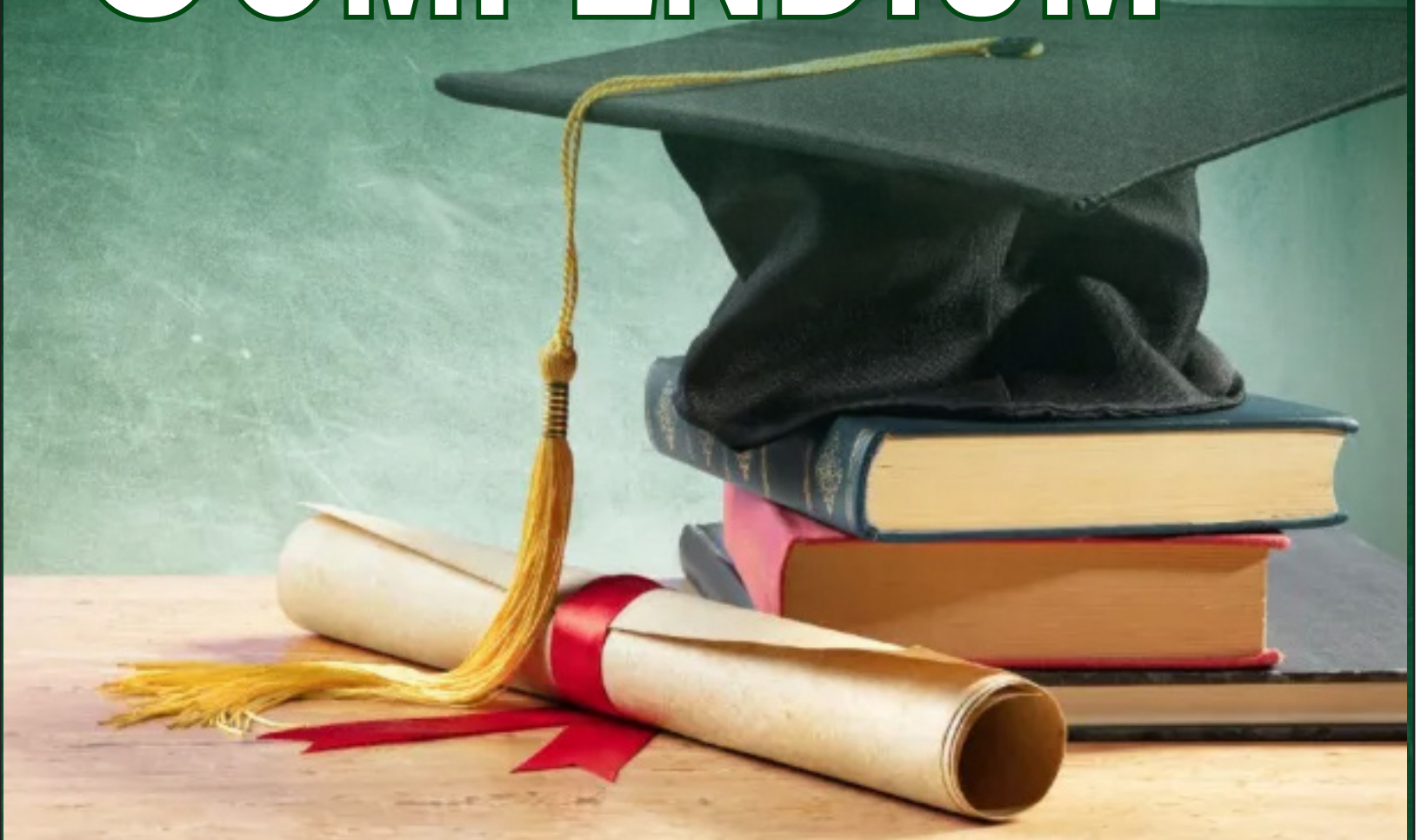


A Guide For Your Future

Senior Year COMPENDIUM



Understanding
Your Options
After High School

2024

Specialized Program May Leave Students With Little Debt, More Freedom

Graduating from Norfolk Senior High School last year, Dillon Santee had a goal and enrolling in the welding program at Northeast Community College has him confidently on the path to that goal.



His goal is to not have a lot of debt getting out of school, have a good paying job and the freedom to pursue other possible interests in the future.

After trying his hand at welding with some friends, Santee took two years of welding in high school.

"I kind of really liked it so I searched for a place nearby that offers a program like that and I found Northeast," Santee said.

Other factors in the decision to go to Northeast for welding included the location, in his hometown, and the cost. The program is for one year and he figures within a few years, he will not have a lot of student loan debt.

This will allow Santee to go straight to the workforce, paying off debt, earning a nest egg to purchase a home or pursue a different degree.

An avid weight lifter and fitness fanatic, Santee said he may eventually pursue a career as a fitness trainer.

"I am pretty sure I am going to go straight to the workforce and go into the field and do pipe welding," Santee said, noting he doesn't mind traveling and looks forward to the adventure the future holds. "I just really like the welding community and I just think welding is really fun. It's something fun you can do to make a lot of money. And you going to be outside. So that's great."

While at Northeast, Santee said his fellow students have made up a team mentality, which he is used to since he played football while in high school.



"I would describe it kind of like a football team, everybody's friendly with each other. I mean, there is like a little banter here and there, but, you know, that's always fun," he said, noting that the fellow students look out for each other and the instructor and school officials are always looking to help students find jobs.

The welding program has 14 people in it, according to Santee, and he said finding what program you want to be in and applying early is a key, in case it is a competitive process or there are only so many slots available per program.

According to Indeed.com, the average per hour wage for a welder in Nebraska is \$22.32 to start, equaling over \$46,000 per year. Santee called the profession a 'sleeper job' and looked up top paying jobs while researching a career, and he said welding was highly ranked. He explained some pipe welders get at least \$50 per hour, depending on the situation,

and can make over \$100,000 a year.

For students looking to enter a program like welding, Santee recommended taking an OSHA class, getting certified in any applicable OSHA programs and take practical communications courses.

"I would take practical communications, which just helps with like resumes, stuff like that. And then technical mathematics, which is like work field math," Santee explained.

No matter the path taken in life, Santee said the old adage of 'do something you love and you'll never work a day in your life' is applicable.

"I think, just find something that makes you happy. Just do something that makes you happy. And if you can figure out a way to make money doing it, then that's perfect because you don't want to live the rest of your life. Working doing something you hate. Just to get money when you could do something you love and make money as well," he concluded.

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Maximize Your ACT Test

ACT tips and strategies

1. Work questions out of order.

Spending too much time on the hardest problems means you may rush through the easiest. Instead of working questions in order, ask yourself whether a question is a Do Now, Later, or Never.

No need to agonize—this decision can be made very quickly:

NOW: Does a question look okay? Do you know how to do it? Do it now.

LATER: Will this question take a long time to work? Leave it and come back to it later. Circle the question number for easy reference.

NEVER: Know the topics that are your worst, and learn the signs that flash danger. Don't waste time on questions you should never do. Instead, use more time to answer the Now and Later questions accurately.

Choose a "Letter of the Day."

Just because you don't work a question doesn't mean you don't answer it. There is no penalty for wrong answers on the ACT, so you should never leave any blanks on your answer sheet.

When you guess on Never questions, pick your favorite two-letter combo of answers and stick with it. For example, always choose A/F or C/H. If you're consistent, you're more likely to pick up points.

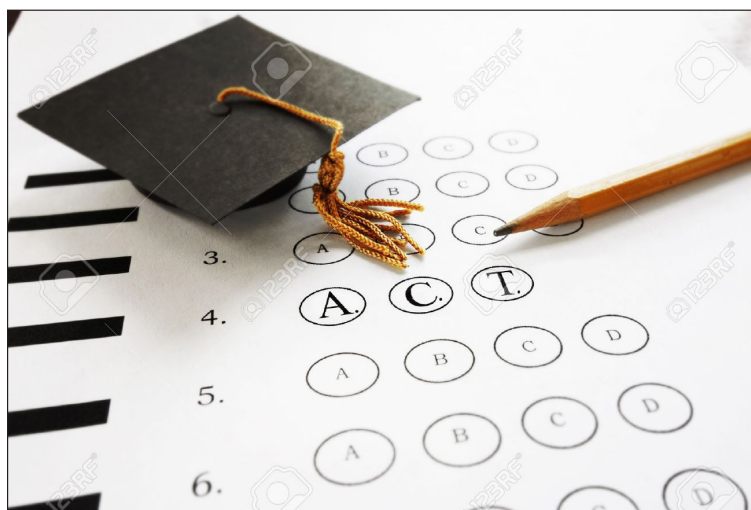
Don't waste time on ACT questions you should NEVER do.

3. Forget the right answer—find the wrong ones.

Multiple-choice tests offer one great advantage: They provide the correct answer right there on the page. ACT hides the correct answer behind wrong ones, but when you cross off just one or two wrong answers, the correct answer can become more obvious.

4. Know the best way to bubble in.

If you're worried about accidentally filling in the wrong bubble on your



answer sheet, this tip will save your score.

Work a page at a time on English and Math and a passage at a time on Reading and Science. Circle your answers right on the booklet. Then, transfer a page's worth of answers to the answer sheet at one time. It's better to stay focused on working questions rather than disrupt your concentration to find where you left off on the scantron.

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Strategies To Prepare Teens For Life After School

For some time, heading to college or joining the workforce have been the standard choices for teens upon high school graduation. Today, in part due to technology and social media, students have access to myriad career paths that are all but traditional.

With an increasingly dynamic career landscape creating an awareness of jobs that didn't exist even 10 years ago and a shortage in the workforce, there's a willingness for both potential employees and employers to look at careers and young talent from a whole new perspective.

"There isn't a 'typical' career anymore," said Dr. Lorna Bryant, Gen Z career expert and head of career education for Pearson Virtual Schools. "With the perfect storm in the workforce of boomers retiring, many people still not returning to work in the wake of the pandemic and a population that has declined for the last 50 years, this generation (ages 11-26) is positioned extremely well. Employers want and need them. In short, the scales have flipped to the supply side and demand is causing many employers to remove barriers to work entry. Whether high school grads go to college or work, developing in-demand skills early will help them secure and succeed in the jobs of the future."

Consider these tips from Bryant to help students explore the many options in front of them and prepare for the possibilities that await after high school.

Help Kids Cultivate Durable Skills

While technology has transformed the world of work, an increasing number of careers prioritize durable skills over technical or hard skills. Durable skills (also known as "soft" or "human" skills) include collaboration, leadership, communication and attention to detail, along with traits like empathy, grit and resilience. According to Pearson's Power Skills report, these are some of the most in-demand skills for employers. In addition, research from America Succeeds found employers seek durable skills 3.8 times more frequently than the top five technical or hard skills in every location, industry sector and educational attainment level. Pos-



sessing these skills is not only attractive to employers but colleges and universities, too. One of the best ways to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow, which don't exist today, is to focus on timeless durable skills.

Many students already possess or are actively developing these skills in high school. The key is to raise awareness of their importance, seek ways to boost them and showcase them on college and job applications or resumes. For example, teens can display their leadership skills by captaining sports teams or starting a club at school. They can showcase collaboration and communication abilities by holding and thriving in student government positions, volunteering or working part-time jobs.

Bridge Passions and Hobbies to Careers

Beginning conversations with children as early as middle school that expose students to job roles, responsibilities and salaries connected to areas of interest is important for setting them up for long-term success. Nurturing interests - rather than dismissing them as flights of fancy - and finding paths to explore that align with those hobbies or interests in real-world applications can open doors to potential careers that may not have previously been considered.

To help students align their values and interests with potential careers,

ask questions such as:

- What is it, specifically, you enjoy about your interests? What jobs rely on related skills (working with your hands, serving others, being creative, etc.)?
- Do you have the skills to do those jobs? If not, what research and training do you need to acquire the necessary skillset?
- Are there related jobs available in the geographic location you want to live?
- Can you make enough money to live the lifestyle you want doing this job?
- Can you envision enjoying this type of work for 8 (or more) hours per day?

Get a Head Start on Credentials or College Credit

As earning college credits, career-ready credentials and specialized training for future careers is becoming more accessible for high school and middle school students, it's important to research available options. From online resources, workshops, career counselors and accelerated career readiness programs that allow students to enter college or the workforce "job-ready," there are more options available now than ever before.

For more information on online schools and career readiness programs for teens, visit ConnectionsAcademy.com.



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How To Prep The Night Before For The SAT Or ACT Exam

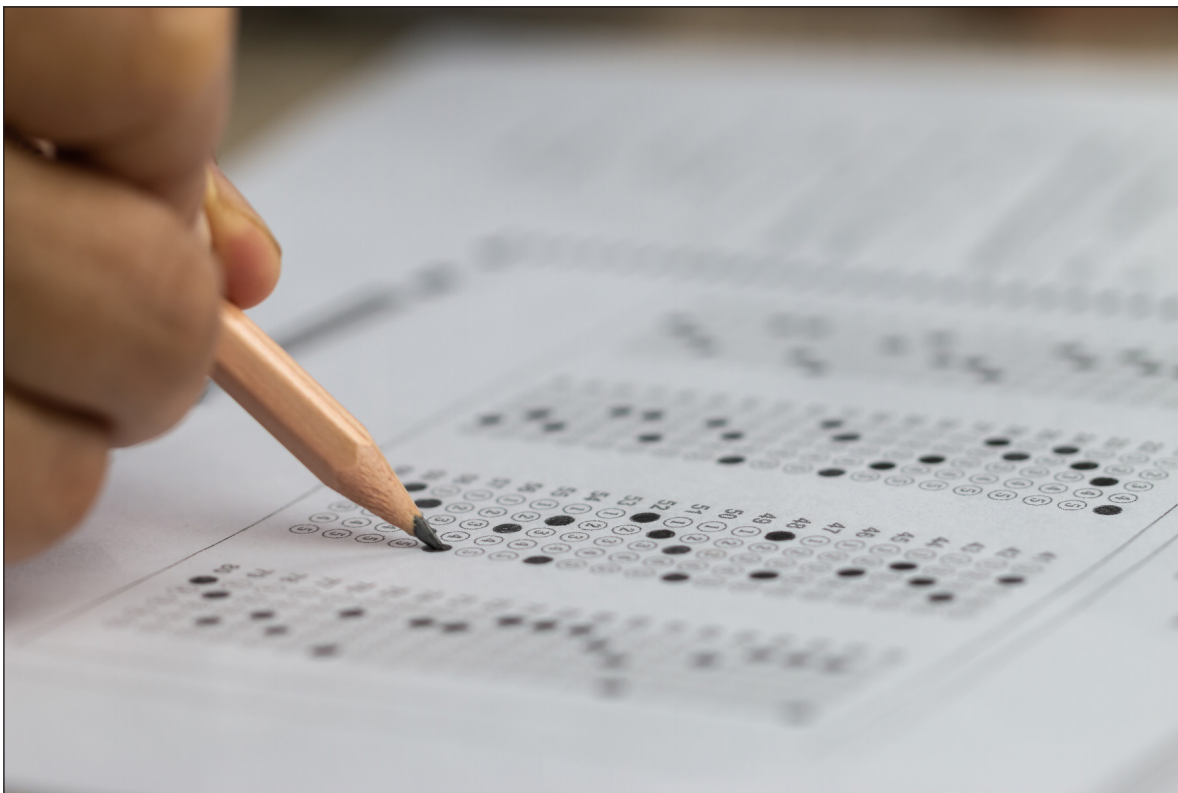
Taking the SAT or ACT exam is the culmination of months of test-specific preparation, and in truth, years of schooling. While knowing that can feel like a lot of pressure, there are steps you can take the night before the exam to calm your nerves and enter the testing site with confidence:

1. Pack your essentials:

Going to bed knowing you've packed everything you need to succeed during the test will help you sleep soundly and make the morning less frenzied. Your packing list should include an official, currently valid photo identification, your admission ticket to the test, No. 2 pencils (be sure they have erasers), a snack and water bottle (staying fueled is essential), a

sweater (testing sites are often chilly and being uncomfortable can throw you off your game), and of course, a calculator. The best exam day calculator is one that's easy to use and has an intuitive icon menu, such as the fx-9750GIII graphing calculator. While you won't need all of its 2,900 functions during your test, or its programming capabilities, this Casio calculator is a great companion for high school juniors and seniors as it can support high-level STEM learning in the classroom, as well as go into exam mode for use during the PSAT, SAT, ACT, and other major standardized exams, like AP and SAT subject tests. To familiarize yourself with the calculator and its interface, be sure to use the same calculator for test prep as well.

2. Eat right: Proper nutrition and cognition go hand-in-hand. The night before your exam, fuel yourself with brain foods containing a mix of antioxidants, protein and Omega-3s. Fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, nuts, beans, whole grains, tofu and lean meats are all great choices. Try



to avoid food unfamiliar to you, as you don't know how it will settle and it could cause a stomachache. You should also forgo overly sugary or processed treats, which can lead to an energy crash. Being thirsty during your test is not only distracting, dehydration can actually impair cognition and brain health. Be sure to drink plenty of water the night before your test to keep the mental juices flowing.

3. Sleep tight: It can be difficult to settle in for a night of sound sleep before an important event. Reduce the chances of tossing and turning by putting down your devices at least an hour before bed, as blue light can

suppress melatonin secretion and impact sleep. Instead, read, journal or do another quiet, enjoyable activity. On that note, avoid a last-minute study session or practice exam. The night before the test is not the time to cram. It's a time to relax so your mind is fresh when it counts. If you do have trouble falling asleep, don't panic. Resting quietly with your eyes closed can be beneficial too, and may help you doze off eventually.

By checking a few pre-test tasks off your to-do list the night before, you can be fueled, rested and geared up for your college entrance exams.

Did You Know?

Fun Facts about College

- 'College' is derived from the Latin word 'collegium' which means community.
- 'Alumni' comes from the Latin 'Alumnus' for 'foster son.'
- Alpha Delta Pi was the first Greek sorority, dating back to 1851.

Finding The Right College For You Can Be Stressful, Follow These Tips

Ah, the college search. One of the most exciting and confusing times of your life so far, this is your chance to decide what route you want to take after graduation.



Start early:

The best thing you can do to kick off your college search is to start now! Figuring out what you're looking for in schools and creating a list of colleges you're interested in early on will help you save time, money, and stress in the future.



Don't make your college choices based on your friends or parents:

As fun as it can be to experience college with your friends, don't choose your school simply because it's where your friends are going. Part of the fun of college is meeting new people and growing into yourself, so make the experience your own!



Just like you shouldn't go to a college because your friend is going, you shouldn't attend a school just because your parents want you to. After all, it's your college education and future, and it's an opportunity for you to grow and be independent. Granted, depending on your situation, you will probably need to discuss your college reasoning with your parents and hear their points of view. If they're paying for it, you all need to be on the same page (or at least a

similar page). But don't give up on a school you're interested in just because it's not your parents' first choice!

Trust yourself:

You might be drawn to some schools—schools that just feel right to you—and that is something to think about in your college search. Those schools will speak to you for a reason, so trust your gut and look into them further. Also trust your gut if you're really not into a college or university. There is nothing wrong with going directly into the military, workforce or learning a trade.



Make a list of what you're looking for in a college:

Think about what is really important to you. Sit down and make a list of things you want in a college (size, distance from home, athletics, and academics are all things that you should be considering) and use that list to narrow down your college options. Be honest with yourself, and keep your list handy whenever you're looking at a school to decide whether or not it is really for you!



Start applying for scholarships:

Most private scholarships don't require you to know exactly where you're going to college. Start searching for and applying for scholarships as early as you can, so you'll have a better chance of winning some money before it's time to go to college.



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Reasons To Consider Nursing As A Career

As time and technology reshape the workforce, most professionals are not in the position to stick with one career until retirement. Nursing offers relevant, future-focused opportunities for people of all ages and experience levels, from those re-entering the workforce or making a career change, to registered nurses pursuing further education.

1. Satisfaction

If you are interested in making a direct impact on the lives of individuals and communities, consider nursing. It's a rewarding career, according to nurses themselves. Nurses provide personal contact and engagement with patients, which has only become more important in today's often- hectic healthcare environment. At the same time, nursing is an exciting and expanding field with new areas of focus. You have more options than ever to pursue your interests and work at the cutting edge of healthcare.

2. Wide-ranging opportunities

Nursing often is associated with foundational healthcare settings such as primary care practices, hospitals or nursing homes. However, nursing offers many

paths to develop the track that's right for you. Specialties include areas relevant to our aging population, such as gerontology (focused on elderly patients) and genetics (patients with or at risk of hereditary diseases). You also can specialize in public health, working in nonprofit organizations, community health centers or governmental agencies. And you can build on your experience caring for patients and transition into other areas, serving as an administrator or educator, for example.

Nursing as an option

3. Flexibility

The opportunities available within nursing let you pick what best fits your needs and preferences. For example, if family responsibilities mean you need to keep a 9-to-5, Monday-Friday schedule, some primary care or specialty practices can accommodate that. Through telehealth, you can provide patient care and education remotely, potentially creating opportunities across geographic areas and time zones. If you're open to moving around, you might find work as a traveling nurse to be an interesting - and usually well paid



- choice. This flexibility means you can adapt and shift your focus as you move through stages and phases of life.

4. Demand and compensation

Nurses are in high demand nationwide, a trend that shows no sign of slowing. That means you can expect competitive salaries and benefits.

Make it happen

Once you decide to pursue your licensure or earn a nursing degree, you have a variety of options. It starts with finding a program that offers a realistic path for your existing schedule and responsibilities.

Online programs typically are designed for flexibility.

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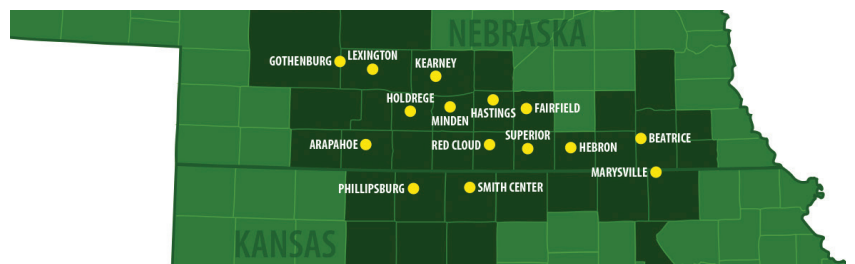
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Factors To Consider/College Costs You May Not See

The last year of high school is a whirl of activity, and it's no different when it comes to the final leg of college selection. Once the acceptance notifications arrive, it will soon be time to sit down with a different stack of mail: financial aid letters.

It is critical to look at other factors and opportunities around higher education costs.

- Deciphering free aid vs. other options: Take a close look at each line in the aid column. Key words, such as scholarships, grants and fellowships, signal no-strings money for school. Work-study and student loan packages are options that will need students to find a job or pay the money back.

- Cost-of-living expenses: Think about those extra costs that come up over the weeks and months of any college year, such as meals, phone, transportation and laundry. Don't forget entertainment. After all, they're not going to spend all their time

studying in their dorm room. Does the campus and community offer plenty of low-cost and no-cost attractions and entertainment so they can have fun with their friends without breaking the bank?

- Local economy: One thing worth considering is the local economy of the first-choice school, especially if your student may want to pick up a part-time job along the way. Even better, look for local employers that are compatible with your child's career goals.

- Student achievement: Do a little digging on the success rate for students and graduates, so you have an idea on whether the school has a high job placement rate after graduation. Know the school's graduation rate, along with the average first-year salary for graduates.

- Ongoing costs: The financial aid letter describes the student's first year. As much as you can, do some forecasting for the next three to four years. It's especial-



ly important to understand whether awards are renewable, or if they're available only to first-year students.

- Negotiation: If the college isn't coming through with enough aid to make college affordable for your student and family, don't give up. You might be able to negotiate more aid. Submit a letter and ask for a follow-up appointment.

Be specific about what you are requesting, and be sure to explain if you have specific circumstances such as medical costs or a job loss that may have affected your ability to meet the expected family contribution.

How To Plan For Future College Costs

Financial setbacks like job loss have caused many families to seek alternatives to help pay for college costs. Paying for college is not just about tuition, so it's a good idea to be prepared for additional expenses - and know your options for reducing those costs or covering them.

- 1) Room and board: Paying for a dorm room and meal plan is a big part of student expenses. For freshman year, some schools don't allow students to live off-campus. Make sure to find out the rules for schools your son or daughter is applying to and discuss your family's preferences.

If room and board or off-campus housing isn't covered by financial aid, those costs can be covered with student loan funds. And some students save money their first year or two by enrolling in a local college or university and living at home.

- 2) Textbooks and supplies: Research ways to save on books. Most schools offer used textbooks as an option in their college bookstores, or you can often find used textbooks online. In some cases, you can rent expensive textbooks. In many cases, e-books are much more affordable than actual textbooks.

- 3) Transportation: Consider the costs to commute to school every day - parking, gas or public transportation. Don't forget to factor in any trips home throughout the year that might require a train or airfare.

It's essential to know the full cost of attending college when your family is making plans together. Adding these further costs to tuition, you may find that the grants or scholarships your child is offered, on top of federal student loans or work-study options they may be eligible for, will not cover everything for the school year. Unexpected expenses can also come up, such as unanticipated fees or supplies, or a roommate bailing on a shared apartment.



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Battling Dreaded Senioritis

If you feel senioritis setting in, there are a few things you can do to get yourself back on track.

Set goals to get you motivated. Abby Tinchler, academic advisor at SNHU, said the first step in overcoming senioritis is knowing what your goals are. She recommends having at least one tangible goal, and if you're a visual person, put something near you to remind you of your goal. It could be as simple as a photo or some motivational words to remind you of what you're working for or toward. Smith agrees. "Set short and long-term goals to stay motivated. Crushing those short-term goals will make you feel good and allow you to celebrate smaller victories," Hillary Smith, an academic advisor at SNHU, said. "There is nothing more gratifying than crossing something off your to-do list."

Reward yourself. If you need additional motivation, plan an incentive for when you reach set milestones. "Create a reward system if you find you are motivated by certain outcomes," Tinchler said. Plan for a night out for dinner and a movie, attending an event you want to attend or going on a well-deserved vacation on the condition you reach the goals you set for yourself.

Get yourself organized and on schedule. "Stay organized," Smith said. "Falling behind or procrastinating will only make your senioritis worse! Breaking up your work into smaller pieces will make it feel more manageable."

Smith suggested using a planner or time management app on your phone or computer to help schedule when you'll be able to work on assignments. Be sure to pencil in time in for relaxing with friends and family as well.

Surround yourself with support. Smith advises students to surround themselves with people who are positive and are there to motivate, not distract. "Keep positive people around you who support you and your goals," she said. "Friends and family can be really helpful to push you through."

Change things up. Smith said changing up your environment by working on your coursework in a new place can help jumpstart your motivation.

She suggested taking your work to the library, reading outside or catching up on assignments at a coffee shop "to get a change of scenery and to eliminate distractions at home."

Take a break. "Most of all, if you feel like you're crashing, take a step back," Tinchler said. "You do actually need

breaks and your mind or body crashing is a sign that you may be overdoing it." While breaks are important, don't let them lead to slacking off. "It's okay to step back, just set a limit so you get back to work and don't fall off completely."

Remember what you're working toward.

Smith said the student's personal journey is an important motivator. "Remind yourself why you started this journey in the first place and hang onto that," she said.

Look at all the work you've done and recognize what you've accomplished.

"Be proud of yourself and use that as motivation to carry yourself through graduation," Smith said.



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Changes To 2024-2025 FAFSA

There are many changes to FAFSA (Free Application For Student Aid) for the 2024-2025 year. Here are some highlights:

- There will be fewer questions on the FAFSA form, only 18, depending on certain circumstances. Previously, there were over 100 questions. Students don't have to register with Selective Service to complete the form and questions relating to drug-related convictions have been omitted.

- The sibling discount has been removed. Parents will no longer get a financial break for having multiple children in college simultaneously. Some colleges, however, may factor this in when determining aid through that particular institution, however it will not be factored into federal financial aid.

- Pell grants will be awarded on family size, adjusted gross income and poverty guidelines. The maximum Pell award is \$7,395.

- Students can list more colleges in the 2024-2025 application, up from 10. All schools listed on the application will receive a copy of the FAFSA.

- The FAFSA forms will be available in 11 languages, not two (Spanish, English).

- Everyone contributing to the paying of the education



of the student must directly import their tax information to the IRS. There are also new rules for divorced parents. The parent that contributed the most financial support to the student throughout the year will be the FAFSA contributor.

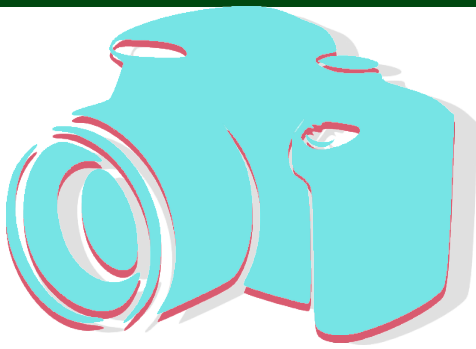
- The Education Department will now send student FAFSA information to colleges in mid-March due to delays at the start of the year.

 A photograph showing two healthcare students, a young man and a young woman, both wearing blue scrubs, leaning over a patient lying in a hospital bed. The patient is wearing glasses and has an oxygen mask on. The students appear to be in a clinical setting, possibly a hospital or clinic.

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Also...when talking with your photographer, ask about the quality of the paper used for prints.

- Ask about a print release. Copyright releases are actually property of the creator (photographer).

Know the lingo, ask for a print release.

- Ask a lot of questions, if the photographer and you 'click' on a personal level and they 'get you' then they will take time to get a quality shot.

- Ask when photos will be ready

Considerations For Senior Portraits:

- Close-Up in a nice suit or dress, a formal shot
- Hobby/Sport shot with your favorite sports team, hobby
- Personality photo with an outfit that is 'totally you'
- Bring a friend for a BFF picture, even your pet
- Unique locations in your area
- A beloved family member (IE grandma or grandpa)

to be viewed. If the photographer is a pro, they will know how long it will take to get photos for you to see.

Once they give you a date, be patient and wait until that date to ask where the photos are, the photographer knows you are super excited and will try to get you something as soon as they can get them to you.

- Check into their portfolio and experience. Professional photographers have training, education, and experience to know what poses, backgrounds, and expressions will flatter you best. A photographer will check lighting at specific times of day, how certain outfits

play with your skin tone and understand the principles of photo composition.

- Communicate with your parents and the photographer on what photos you want and what is required to be in the yearbook.

Did you Know?

Most students should apply to somewhere between five to seven colleges. There are no guarantees that you will be accepted to the school you desire, but you should have a good idea about your chances of admission to each school.

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If you are looking for a career opportunity - right out of high school or at any level - consider Jefferson Community Health & Life. Check out our job opportunities and apply on line at: JCHHealthandLife.org/careers

JUST A FEW EXAMPLES:



*Become a CNA, and you can work as a CNA as you pursue your LPN or RN degree. Once you are an LPN or RN, you can work as you earn your RN or BSN degree.



*Many hospitals employ phlebotomists (who need minimal training to draw blood samples.) While working as a phlebotomist, you can see many health care careers first hand - and continue your education in any health care field.



*Working as an aide in nutrition services gives you a front row view of all types of health care nutritional needs. It's a great background and college job if you are interested in becoming a food service professional or nutritionist.

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