



**Students-In-Transition
Education After High School Handbook
March 2013
Second Edition**

St. Louis Public Schools

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The St. Louis Public Schools Development and Partnership Officer, Linda Riekes was involved in creating and refining the guide and brainstorming the details of the resource fair. Kate Stewart, Marketing Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Advancement served as contributing editor. We would like to acknowledge Jane Donohue, Co-Chair of Student Graduates and Maria Rebecchi of The Scholarship Foundation who provided additional materials for our the resource guide.

Under the guidance of Deidra Thomas-Murray, Derica A. Granger, Elizabeth Bauer, Bryan Evans and Pierre Moton of the Students-In-Transition Office were responsible for the development of the guide and implementation of the resource fair.

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Education after High School and the Students-In-Transition Office

Vision:

The Students-In-Transition Office believes St. Louis Public Schools is a district where...

- teachers teach with enthusiasm and confidence to cultivate academic excellence;
- students enjoy robust learning experiences with future plans in mind;
- parents are involved in their children's education; and,
- community members support academic success and college readiness all while maintaining realistic expectations of students.

Mission:

As St. Louis Public Schools' District Homeless Office, we work to eliminate barriers to enrollment and promote educational success throughout homeless situations for pre-kindergarten thru high school students and families. The Students-In-Transition Office supports the district by ensuring its most vulnerable population are provided a safe, non-bias environment conducive to learning and growing.

This school year, we are making special efforts to target resources and opportunities to our high school students. We understand many of our students are college-bound, headed toward highly specialized fields or unsure of their post-graduation plan. For all of these students, we are here to offer information and supportive resources to guide and prepare them for the next big adventure of their choosing.

The Students-In-Transition Office will be here for years to come, so please keep in touch! **Together, we hope to ease the transition for homeless high school students to ensure they are able to thrive in their educational setting after high school.**

Preparing for Education after High School: We are here for you!

The Students-In-Transition Office would like to help high school students prepare for life after graduation. Students considering attending college, university or trade school can keep in contact with the office to continue learning about services and supportive resources that assist foster care, homeless and unaccompanied youth in fulfilling their educational goals.

We offer information for students and families on financial aid, application processes, obtaining education and health records, verification of homeless or unaccompanied youth status, and much more. You don't have to postpone your dreams because of your housing or family status. It's important to start early planning to finance your educational goals. Keep in mind, you have options.

We encourage you to keep your personal goals in mind and follow your dreams. Your education after high school is up to you, but you are not alone. If you ever have the chance, contact the Students-In-Transition Office to give us an update, ask questions, utilize resources or just say hello!



Post-Secondary Guide

Yearly checklist

Use this as a guide to ensure you're on track to making your dreams come true. Please don't be discouraged if your path is imperfect!

9th Grade

- Start the school year with a four-year plan. Your counselor will help you plan your academic program for the next four years. Your counselor will also assist you to change your plan as you learn more about yourself and your options.
- If you plan to go to college, share this information with your counselor. He/she will be able to advise you on the different academic requirements of various colleges.
- Establish short term goals for this school year (i.e., the grades you are going to make; how you are going to use your spare time; the school activities you are going to select).
- Establish long term goals to be reached by the end of high school. (i.e., what your grade point average will be; what skills you will acquire in such areas as employment, technical training, college training, etc.).
- Begin to think about what you might want to do after high school.
- Consider taking any aptitude or career interest inventories.
- Maintain good attendance, grades and citizenship.
- Start your high school career with a solid performance. College admittance will be partially based on evidence of your performance from your first three years.
- Create a portfolio (a file or folder). This portfolio should be your depository for samples of excellent school work, copies of your report cards, special awards, birth certificate, social security card, certificates showing your participation in special programs and/or volunteer efforts, letters of commendation and recommendation and any other material that promotes you as a competent, unique individual. This portfolio will assist you in job and college interviews.
- Practice good note-taking skills. If your high school offers any special study skills programs, take advantage of these.
- Evaluate your academic standing at the end of the school year. Are you still on track with your grades and scheduling of challenging core courses?
- Are there special academic programs you would like to attend this summer? Plan on it.

10th Grade

- Plan on taking the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) as a sophomore or junior. This test, and other criteria, could qualify you for a National Merit Scholarship.
- Make an assessment of your personal and career goals. Determine if any changes in goals are necessary.
- Start visiting your high school career/college planning center to up-date your information.
- Evaluate your time management skills. Are you being successful at balancing school work, work for pay, school social and extracurricular activities and your personal leisure activities? Do you need to spend more time at some and less on others?
- Remind yourself that challenging courses and high grades = free money (scholarships).
- Are you still on track with your grades and scheduling of challenging academic core subjects?
- Are there any special summer programs available? Plan on it.



11th Grade

- Consider taking courses during your junior and senior years that may provide you with college credit. Your counselor will provide you with information on honors classes, advanced placement tests and programs for high school students at area colleges. **Remember:** colleges and universities vary in accepting credit for these programs.
- Those challenging courses and hard work begin to pay-off with high scores on the ACT (American College Test) and the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test). Take these college admissions tests as often as you can. Colleges in the St. Louis area prefer the ACT. Colleges on the two coasts generally prefer the SAT.
- Stay alert for special information on future academic programs, such as, ROTC scholarship applications, applications for armed services academies, engineering programs, etc.
- Evaluate what is having the most influence on you. Are these influences positive? Do they assist you in reaching your personal, academic and career goals? If not, what can you do?
- Attend college fairs. These fairs are held several times a year. Stay alert to announcements. These fairs are attended by admissions counselors from colleges around the area, the state, the region and the nation. Take advantage of this opportunity to get first-hand knowledge.
- Talk with college representatives who schedule visits to your school. Your guidance office will make announcements of these visits.
- Visit as many college campuses as you can.
- Talk with people who are employed in areas of your career interests. Where did they get their training? Were they satisfied with that choice?
- Begin looking at college applications.
- Are you still on track? How are your grades, etc.?



12th Grade

Determine why continuing education after high school is important to you:

- Achievement of a personal goal
- Career preparation
- Learning opportunities
- Influence of family and friends
- Involvement in extracurricular activities

Determine what college characteristics are important to you:

- Majors and educational programs
- Type of school and degrees offered
- Location and size
- Costs and financial aid
- College affiliation (private vs. public or religious vs. nonsectarian)
- Academic reputation

Determine which colleges you will investigate and compare:

- Prepare a college comparison checklist
- Weigh advantages and disadvantages
- The College Scorecard website from the U.S. Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency Center makes it easier for you to search for a school that is a good fit for you. You can use the College Scorecard to find out more about a college's affordability and value so you can make more informed decisions about which college or university to attend.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card>
- Contact the admissions office
- Schedule appointments for your campus visit

Use a checklist for a campus visit:

- Take a campus tour
- Talk with students and faculty
- Investigate your academic program interests
- Meet with an admissions counselor
- Verify admissions requirements
- Meet with a financial aid representative
- Determine actual college costs
- Inquire about a class visit
- Discuss your chances for success

Apply for college admission:

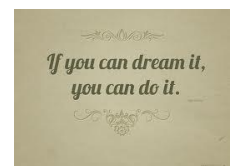
- Review your high school courses and credits
- Take appropriate college admissions tests
- Know application fees and deadlines
- Submit application materials (determine if application is written, electronic or video)
- Application for admission
- High school transcript
- Recommendations (if required)
- Essays (if required)
- Portfolio, personal video (if required)
- Admissions test results
- Application fees
- Know scholarship requirements and deadlines

Determine your financial plan for college:

- Family support
- Savings
- Summer earnings
- Financial aid: scholarships, grants, loans and work study
- Other sources
- **Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)**
 - Secure necessary forms and note deadlines. High school guidance office will have the FAFSA form. Apply for financial aid as soon as possible (January 1 of your graduating year)
 - See FAFSA section below

Make decisions:

- Show initiative and be assertive
- Talk with parents/counselors to ensure clarity and understanding
- Select a college/ trade school that meets your needs and preferences
- Continue or start meaningful peer and mentor relationships



Finally, consider taking advantage of a summer academic program at your selected college after your high school graduation. This will help you assess your basic skills and help you feel comfortable in your new academic surroundings.

12th Grade and beyond...

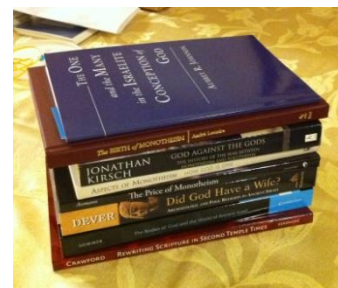
Preparing for a Career- What do you want to do?

A career is a job or occupation requiring education, training or experience, which you choose based on your interests and ultimate goals. Your career path is the road you will follow toward meeting your ultimate goal of success and self-fulfillment.

Important things to take in consideration when exploring careers:

1. What skills do you already have?
2. Can you picture yourself at this job for a long time?
3. For your career choice, what level of education is needed?
4. For your career choice, what is the minimum and maximum salary?
5. Will this career choice provide a sustainable life for you and your family?

If you are unsure about what career you are interested in, you are not alone. Stay in contact with friends, mentors and counselors to ensure support and encouragement.



Education after High School and Career Preparation

Most American high schools require students to take the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) to prepare for application to college, trade school and professional careers. These standardized tests show colleges and universities what academic level the student will be entering on. For most competitive scholarships higher ACT or SAT scores give students a better chance at receiving funding for their education.

ACT (American College Test)

ACT results are accepted by all four-year colleges and universities in the United States. The ACT includes 215 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes to complete, including a short break (or just over four hours if you are taking the ACT Plus' Writing). Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes (plus 30 minutes if you are taking the ACT Plus' Writing).

The ACT is administered on six test dates within the United States, U.S. territories, Puerto Rico, and Canada—September, October, December, February, April, and June. In other locations, the ACT is administered on all of the above dates **except** September, and the ACT Plus' Writing is not available on the February test date. The basic registration fee includes score reports for up to four college choices, if you list valid codes when you register.

SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)

The SAT is a globally recognized college admission test that lets you show colleges what you know and how well you can apply that knowledge. It tests your knowledge of reading, writing and math—subjects that are taught every day in high school classrooms.



Things You Should Know about Yourself

1. What is your GPA?
2. Where would you like to attend school? (In state or out of state)
3. What will be your area of concentration?
4. Do you meet the basic requirements for college admissions?
5. What is your SAT/ACT score?

Once you have answered these questions, you're ready to explore schools and begin applying for those whose requirements you meet and traits you admire.

Choosing the Best Learning Environment for Your Career

Where do you want to go?

There are different types of educational institutions and settings to consider when planning a career path. Consider the type of learning environment and education that best fits your learning style and goals.

Universities

Universities tend to be large schools with a wide variety of programs. They may have several undergraduate and graduate schools, colleges, departments, or faculties (School of Engineering, College of Business, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Science, etc.). Universities have undergraduate divisions that award bachelor's degrees and graduate schools that award master's degrees. Some universities offer professional schools that award doctorates. Universities tend to have research facilities and an abundance of social opportunities (fraternities, sororities, sporting events, clubs, etc.). Universities may be public or private.

Colleges

Colleges are often smaller than universities, but still have a variety of programs. Four-year colleges offer bachelor's degrees. Graduate degrees may or may not be offered. The size of classes and types of social opportunities will vary from college to college. A college may be public or private, an independent institution or part of a larger university.

Community Colleges/Junior Colleges

Community colleges and junior colleges are two-year institutions that award associate's degrees and also offer vocational and professional education. These two-year colleges usually have less strenuous admissions standards and tend to be less expensive than four-year colleges and universities. Because of this, some students choose to attend a two-year college first to earn an associate's degree, and then they transfer to a four-year school to receive a bachelor's degree. If this is done, taking courses that can be transferred is highly recommended. Community colleges are public and non-residential, while junior colleges are private with students living on campus or in the surrounding community.

Technical/Vocational/Proprietary Schools

Technical, vocational, and proprietary schools emphasize preparation for specific careers, such as accounting, cosmetology, computer technology, culinary arts, health care technology, real estate, etc. Some schools specialize in only one area, while others provide a wide variety of programs. They award diplomas, certificates, licenses, and sometimes associate's degrees and bachelor's degrees. Although receiving accreditation from these schools will usually grant employment, students may or may not be able to transfer credits to traditional academic degree programs. The entire course of study at a vocational or technical school is often two years or less, although some can be three or four years long. Some of these schools are privately owned and operated, while others are public.

Private vs. Public Schools

Private schools, including technical schools, receive funding from many sources, mainly through endowments, tuition and generous donations from friends and alumni. Public colleges, universities and trade schools receive funding directly from the state. Because public schools receive state funding, students benefit from savings, such as breaks on tuition costs. This is mainly the case for students attending a school in their own state of residence.

Another consideration to note is private colleges and universities are known for being much more expensive to attend compared to public schools. However, private educational institutions are also known for having less “red tape” than public colleges. For-profit institutions differ from private and public schools as they are operated by private, profit-seeking businesses.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

HBCUs are schools established for the primary purpose of educating African-Americans who were prohibited from attending predominantly white institutions of higher education. There are 105 HBCUs in the United States, including public and private, two-year and four-year institutions, medical schools and community colleges. Many HBCUs compete with other prestigious schools for their top-quality applicants. HBCUs provide students with a learning environment that builds on African-American cultural background and history. The application process for HBCUs is the same as applying to other colleges.

Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs)

TCUs were created in response to the higher education needs of Native American. TCUs are higher education, minority-serving institutions. The educational institutions are distinguished by being controlled and operated by Native American tribes; they have become part of American Indians' institution-building in order to pass on their own cultures. TCUs have become increasingly important to educational opportunity for Native American students and are unique institutions that combine personal attention with cultural relevance to encourage Native Americans, especially those living on reservations, to overcome the barriers they face in regards to higher education.

Faith-Based Schools

Faith-Based Schools are colleges, universities, seminary, bible schools or training centers supported by a religious body. In general, a faith-based school teaches, practices, promotes, supports and/or allows discussion of religious values as aligned with or opposed to secular instruction. In the United States, there is a broad range of religious affiliated schools within Christian denominations (Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, etc.) and other faiths such as Buddhist and Jewish. The major distinction between faith-based schools and secular schools is curricula based on religious principles or infused with religious values.

Open Admissions

Open admissions schools are schools that accept 100% of students who apply. The open admissions schools are great “safe plans” for those students who don’t have a high GPA or test scores. Open admissions schools include some historically black colleges and universities and most community colleges.

Excerpts taken from the National Association for College Admission Counseling's publication, *Colleges and Universities Serving Underprivileged Students*, <http://www.nacacnet.org/college-fairs/students-parents/Documents/CollegeServingUnderserved.pdf>, *Faith-Based Schools: Bringing Faith to the Classroom*, <http://www.faithbasedschools.org/faq/>, and *Colleges to Careers' Private vs. Public Colleges and Universities: Which Should You Attend?*, <http://www.collegetocareers.com/private-public-colleges-universities-attend/>.

Types of College Degrees

Undergraduate post-secondary education is the U.S. terminology for formal education after graduating from high school, but prior to advanced study in the research disciplines or professional fields.

Undergraduate studies in the U.S. are generally divided into two phases: a set of distributed course requirements that must be completed involving basic study in several subjects; and a concentrated program of study in one or more subjects.

Two post-secondary degrees are awarded at the undergraduate level. Students at the undergraduate levels may earn certificates or diplomas in addition to degrees or instead of them.

- **Associates Degree** and
- **Bachelor's Degree.**

Graduate Post-secondary Education

Graduate education is the term used in the United States for studies undertaken after the award of a bachelor's degree. It corresponds to what is called post-graduate or advanced education in some other systems.

Education at this level in the United States can be of two types:

- Professional studies that require the student to have already earned an undergraduate degree.
- Research studies following either a bachelor's degree or a professional degree.

Two postsecondary degrees awarded at the graduate level are the master's degree and the doctoral degree. A master's degree is granted individuals who have undergone a mastery or higher-order overview of a specific field of study or an area of professional practice. A doctoral degree qualifies the holder to teach in a specific field of their certificate or licenses the holder to practice a professional area of study.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid—FAFSA

What is the FAFSA?

All students are expected to contribute toward the cost of their college education. How much a family will be expected to contribute depends on their financial situation—and is what is referred to as their Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** or **FAFSA** is a form that can be prepared annually by current and prospective college students (both undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to determine their eligibility for student financial aid (including the Pell grants and work-study programs).

The FAFSA consists of numerous questions regarding a student's (and their family's) assets, income, and dependency. These are entered into a formula that determines the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). A number of factors are used in determining the EFC including the household size, income, number of students from household in college, and assets (not including retirement and 401(k) funds). This information is required because of the expectation that parents will contribute to their child's education, whether that is true or not.

The FAFSA does not have questions related to student or family race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or religion.

A Student Aid Report (SAR), which is a summary of the FAFSA responses, is forwarded to the student. The student should review the SAR carefully for errors and make any corrections. An electronic version of the SAR (called an ISIR) is made available for downloading by the colleges/universities the student selects on the FAFSA.



Who is eligible for FAFSA?

A student who can meet the following criteria may be eligible for aid:

- is a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, or an eligible non-citizen;
- has a valid Social Security number;
- has a high school diploma or GED or for adult students, pass an Ability-to-Benefit test;
- is registered with the U.S. Selective Service (male students age 18-25);
- completes a FAFSA promising to use any federal aid for education purposes;
- does not owe refunds on any federal student grants;
- is not in default on any student loans; and
- has not been found guilty of the sale or possession of illegal drugs while federal aid was being received.

How does a student file for FAFSA?

A student has three filing options. Think about which one is right for you or discuss with your school counselor.

1. Use a fee-based FAFSA preparation and submission service, such as Student Financial Aid Services, which features expedited FAFSA preparation, consultation, personalized review, secure electronic filing and tracking, as well as a comprehensive deadline database and assistance for late filers.
2. Complete, electronically sign and submit your FAFSA using the Department of Education free online service, FAFSA on the Web at www.FAFSA.ed.gov.
3. Complete and submit a paper FAFSA for free. A student can obtain a paper FAFSA from many sources, including at the student's high school guidance office, student's college financial aid office, and most libraries.

FAFSA Deadlines

Parents/students should file previous year's taxes as soon as possible after January 1st. Students should also check with their college of interest at the financial aid office to determine their exact FAFSA deadline.

Determining FAFSA Dependency

Regardless of how much support a student actually receives from his or her parents, he or she is still considered a DEPENDENT student for financial aid purposes UNLESS at least one of the following criteria is met:

- student is married; or
- the student has a child or children who receive more than half their support from the student; or
- the student has dependents (other than a child or spouse) who receive more than half their support from the student, and who is also with the student; or
- the student is a qualified veteran of the U.S. military, or currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training; or the student is an orphan (both parents deceased) or ward of the court or was a ward of the court until age 18; or
- the student has special and unusual extenuating circumstances that can be documented for his or her college financial aid administrators, who may then request a "dependency override" on the FAFSA application. (NOTE: Exceptions are granted very rarely and only in extreme cases. This is where the SIT office can be a resource of help.)

FAFSA professional team of Student Aid Advisors can personally assist you in completing your FAFSA, even in instances where reporting income, assets and tax information may seem complicated or confusing, such as in the case of non-traditional households, divorce, separation, self-employment or other special circumstances.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to file a FAFSA?

YES!!! You must complete and submit a FAFSA. Additionally, most states, colleges and universities use the FAFSA to award other types of student aid including state- and college sponsored financial aid, such as grants, educational loans, and work- study programs.

What if I don't think I qualify for assistance?

It's wise to complete a FAFSA application, even if you think your family earns too much to qualify for aid, or too little for the aid to make much of a difference. Students are encouraged to complete and submit a FAFSA application regardless of income. Most families are eligible for multiple types of aid, such as federal loans (Stafford and PLUS), and students are frequently surprised by the amount of aid for which they qualify. Filing is free. Unless you apply, you will never know how much assistance you may be eligible to receive.

When should I file my FAFSA?

File as early as possible, or at least before college and/or state grant agencies' financial aid deadlines or preferred filing dates. Most student financial aid is limited (there usually not enough funds for everyone that applies) and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, submitting your application early/on time ensures that you will be considered for the maximum amount of aid for which you may be eligible.

Also, when filing by paper you will need to factor in time for postal delivery of your application and 2-3 weeks for processing. When filing online using the Department of Education website, you will also need to allow time to apply for and be issued a Federal Student Aid Personal Identification Number (PIN) if you choose to sign electronically.

How long does it take to complete the FAFSA?

According to the Department of Education (DE) FAFSA website, it generally takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete using their electronic filing services.



Preparing for College Life

High school is such an exciting time. To the student pursuing education after high school, the preparation process may seem like a scary and confusing time, but we're here to tell you that it CAN be done! As you reflect back on your high school years, you'll realize how many of the choices you made then have impacted your new life adventure.

Whether you're the first in your family to continue education after high school, or one of many, preparing for the next step is a great adventure and challenge. The life change you are about to undertake is one that takes courage, planning and responsibility.

How to Stay on Track on Campus

Dorm room, roommate, eating, sleeping, studying, social life, cash-flow—you land on campus and suddenly all of these things can seriously impact your survival. Everyone talks about nurturing good habits, but what exactly does that mean?

Your college application has been accepted. You've found the financial aid you need. Now, you find yourself on campus, in a dorm room with a roommate, learning to balance studying, sleeping, social life and your cash flow. It is important to nurture good habits while at university, but what exactly does that mean?

Financial Responsibility on Campus

Before you head off to college, learn and practice basic money management. Once you understand the value of money, how to earn it and how to budget it appropriately, you will find handling your finances while away at college much easier.

Tips for campus fiscal responsibility:

- **Make a Budget** – Making a budget, and sticking to it, is essential to any successful financial plan. Your budget should cover all of your essentials, including tuition, books and supplies, food and all monthly bills. If you are working, you will want to assess how much of your income needs to go to monthly essentials. When you receive money from home, treat it as if you had earned it. A workable budget can take a lot of the stress out of your college experience. Also- Mint.com is a free and interactive service to assist with budgeting and saving for all times of life.
- **Avoid Splurges** – A sound rule of thumb for anyone on a budget, but particularly for college students. While it is tempting to buy that new iPod, or head out on the town for the weekend of the big game, you may find that those indulgences leave you short of funds at the first of the month. When you find your entertainment out-lay is exceeding your budget, it's time to rethink your spending habits. Everyone splurges a little every once in awhile, that's human nature. But making a habit of spending responsibly will keep your finances sound, and stave off those broken bank blues.
- **Pay Bills on Time** – Make a habit of opening any bills as soon as they arrive. Don't set them aside to be looked at later, only to be forgotten about until your payments are late. Make a note of due dates, and be sure to make your payments on time. Any bills you are receiving will be directly connected to your credit history and score. Protect your credit while in college, and don't end up graduating college only to start fighting an uphill financial battle.

Study Tips

Of course the prime aspect of a successful college career is maintaining good grades. The successful college student develops good study habits, sticks to a regular study routine and puts course work before playtime. Here are a few general tips for keeping up with your college studies:

- Review class notes each day after class to keep the content fresh in your mind.
- Form study groups with trusted classmates to review particularly tough material.
- Stay committed to your study schedule and don't let yourself get distracted by the campus night life.

Use Classroom Time Wisely

Nothing is more important than staying focused and at your peak in the classroom. Falling asleep, zoning out or missing class all together undercuts your college career, and negates all the hard work that got you into college in the first place. Keep to these rules of thumb to get the most out of your college classes:

- Get plenty of sleep at night.
- Concentrate on the lecture.
- Participate in class discussions whenever possible. Participation helps you retain information much more easily than simply learning by rote.
- Come prepared. Always have your essentials with you when attending class. Textbooks, notebook, laptop, etc. No one can succeed without the right tools at hand.
- Record particularly detailed and complex lectures and transcribe them later. Transcribing lectures will help to solidify the information delivered in your memory.

Writing Tips

Knowing how to write well is essential to any successful college career. Being able to clearly and concisely write about a given topic will serve you well, both in college and after you've graduated. Whatever your ultimate career goal, it will likely involve some level of writing, and being able to express yourself well will serve you in good stead in the workplace.

If you are unsure of your writing skills, and feel they may be lacking, seek out assistance on campus. You'll find you have access to many writing tutors and academic help centers that are free for enrolled students. Use these resources to your advantage. There is no shame to needing help to improve with any subject, only in refusing to take advantage of that help when it is available.

Exams

Exams are a fact of college life. They are the score-card for your college career. Many good students find taking exams difficult, not because they are unsure of the material but, because they find test-taking to be stressful. Relax and look over these helpful tips to improve your test-taking performance:

- Get plenty of sleep the night before and avoid alcohol. A well rested mind is an agile mind.
- Relax before the exam—listen to music, go for a run or walk, do some yoga or clear your head with some light pleasure reading.
- Begin studying for the exam well in advance of the testing date. Don't end up cramming at the last minute.

- Try reviewing key concepts just before you go to sleep at night: some study experts suggest that this method improves cognitive recall.
- Take all the time you need for the exam. If it's time-limited use all of the time allotted. If you finish before the time has expired, use the balance to review your work.

It is Okay to Have Fun

College life shouldn't only be about studying, exams and counting your pennies. Your stay at a university is one of the best periods in your life, and it is definitely OK to enjoy it. Be sure to allow yourself some play-time. College isn't a walk in the park, and it's good to schedule some downtime for yourself. You may find you perform better when you allow for some light diversion.

If there is one rule of thumb however, it is "Everything in moderation". It is tempting to let yourself get carried away with campus life and let your studies slip, but try to stay focused.

Dealing with Dorm Life

Living in a dorm is a new, and strange, experience. This may your first time away from home, and it may be your first experience of having a roommate. While it may seem a brave new world, it is really not too difficult a world to navigate. Some cooperation between you and your new roommates can make dorm living a lot less stressful, a lot more rewarding.

Try using these tips to make your new dorm life run smoothly:

- Develop clear lines of communication with your roommates right away.
- Create a schedule that is amenable to you and your roommates. Set aside time for studying, socializing and sleeping. You might try using a joint calendar to note each other's exam dates, important athletic competitions, crunch time for term papers and other dates that may affect the routine of the dorm.
- Be mindful of each other's personal space and possessions.
- Be respectful of one another.
- Communicate like adults, sensibly and clearly. Screaming will get you nowhere.

College can be frightening, fun, exciting and stressful all at the same time. Rule number one, 'Don't Panic'. You can get through college and retain your sanity. Establish a set of good habits and keep your eye firmly on the final goal.

Campus Counseling Services

You function well when you feel well, both physically and mentally. Sometimes, little things (and sometimes big ones) can get in the way of doing well and feeling your best. Don't hesitate to contact your campus counseling services if you have questions or concerns about your mental health and wellbeing.

Here are a few helpful tips to consider when selecting a school or program:

Research Campus Counseling Services

- Most campus websites offer an overview of services
- Be proactive by calling or visiting the campus to make sure they offer counseling or mental health services
- Ask if they have mental health professionals on staff or do they contract with a hospital or agency
- Ask whether the services are free to students or if they are available for a fee
- Make sure the school keeps your records confidential from other entities, both within the college and outside of it

Research Hospitals and Private Practices in the Community

- Most school health or counseling centers only offer short term care, then the student must find a practice in the community
- Find practices compatible with your insurance, whether private or through the school
- If you don't have a car, look up information on public transportation in order to get to the facility or practice
- Ask if they offer discounted rates or a sliding scale for students

Research Disability Resources

- Discover the range of disability resources the college offers for psychiatric disabilities, as they vary greatly from campus to campus
- Inquire as to what specific services are provided, i.e.: test rescheduling, priority registration, reduced course load, class substitution etc.
- Find out the confidentiality policies, especially ask whether professors and instructors are informed of the student's disability or just the accommodations to be made for him or her

Counseling centers on campus typically offer excellent services when dealing with typical 'college' problems, such as: relationship conflicts, adjusting to college and academic problems. They also deal with anxious and depressed moods, substance abuse, and trauma recovery. Dealing with these problems is very important, as they produce added stress which may trigger the onset of an episode, or compound on a current one.

What to Take to College:

Preparing for college, going away or commuting to campus, getting organized for the move to college can be overwhelming. Bed Bath & Beyond® has created a checklist of college necessities for dormitory and/or apartment living.

CAMPUS & BEYOND CHECKLIST

SLEEP

- ☐ BED PILLOWS/PROTECTOR
- ☐ MATTRESS PAD
- ☐ MATTRESS TOPPER
- ☐ BODY PILLOW/COVERS
- ☐ SHEET SET
- ☐ COMFORTER/QUILT
- ☐ DUVET COVER
- ☐ THROW/BLANKET
- ☐ ALARM CLOCK
- ☐ BEDSIDE CADDY
- ☐ BEDSIDE TABLE **A**
- ☐ AEROBED **A**
- ☐ BLACK-OUT PANELS **A**
- WORRIED ABOUT BED BUGS?
- ☐ MATTRESS PROTECTOR
- ☐ PILLOW PROTECTOR
- ☐ BED BUG SPRAY
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

ORGANIZE

- ☐ UNDERBED STORAGE
- ☐ STACKING DRAWERS
- ☐ BED LIFTS
- ☐ SHOE STORAGE
- ☐ HANGERS
- ☐ CLOSET ORGANIZERS
- ☐ DOUBLE CLOSET ROD
- ☐ GARMENT STORAGE
- ☐ STORAGE CART/TRUNK
- ☐ CAP/PURSE ORGANIZER
- ☐ DRAWER ORGANIZER
- ☐ HAIR CARE CADDY
- ☐ COMMAND HOOKS
- ☐ DOOR MIRROR
- ☐ HAND VACUUM
- ☐ ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER
- ☐ BATTERIES
- ☐ UMBRELLA
- ☐ FLASHLIGHT
- ☐ FIRST AID KIT
- ☐ TOOL KIT
- ☐ SEWING KIT
- ☐ DUFFLE BAG
- NO CLOSET DOOR?
- ☐ CURTAIN/PANELS
- ☐ TENSION CURTAIN ROD
- ☐ CLIP RINGS
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

WASH

- ☐ SCALE
- ☐ TOWELS/WASHCLOTHS
- ☐ MESH SPONGE
- ☐ SHOWER TOTE/CADDY
- ☐ TOOTHBRUSH/SOAP CASE
- ☐ HAIR DRYER
- ☐ ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSH
- ☐ ROBE
- ☐ SLIPPERS
- ☐ LAUNDRY BASKET
- ☐ LAUNDRY HAMPER
- ☐ LAUNDRY DETERGENT
- ☐ OVER THE DOOR TOWEL RACK
- ☐ DRYING RACK
- ☐ IRON/IRONING BOARD
- ☐ BATH STORAGE **A**
- ☐ SHOWER CURTAIN/LINER **A**
- ☐ TUB MAT/BATH RUG **A**
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

EAT

- ☐ PLATES & BOWLS
- ☐ CUPS & MUGS
- ☐ EATING UTENSILS
- ☐ TRAVEL MUG
- ☐ WATER BOTTLE
- ☐ WATER PITCHER & FILTERS
- ☐ FOOD STORAGE
- ☐ CAN/BOTTLE OPENER
- ☐ BAG/CHIP CLIPS
- ☐ COFFEE MAKER
- ☐ POTS & PANS **A**
- ☐ COOKING UTENSILS **A**
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

STUDY

- ☐ DESK LAMP
- ☐ DESK ORGANIZERS
- ☐ WASTE BASKET
- ☐ LAP DESK
- ☐ LIGHT BULBS
- ☐ BOOK LIGHT
- ☐ DRY ERASE/BULLETIN BOARD
- ☐ CALENDAR
- ☐ DESK **A**
- ☐ DESK CHAIR **A**
- ☐ BOOKCASE **A**
- NEED TO CONNECT?
- ☐ SURGE PROTECTOR
- ☐ USB FLASH DRIVE
- ☐ LAPTOP LOCK/ACCESSORIES
- ☐ _____

RELAX

- ☐ FAN
- ☐ BACKREST
- ☐ AREA RUG
- ☐ FLOOR LAMP
- ☐ FRAMES/WALL ART
- ☐ BEAN BAG CHAIR
- ☐ ROOM FRAGRANCE
- ☐ IPOD® SPEAKERS
- ☐ IPOD® ACCESSORIES
- ☐ DOOR STOPS
- ☐ FUTON COVER **A**
- ☐ FLOOR CUSHIONS
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

A = APARTMENT LIVING ITEM

Students-In-Transition Resource Library

Students and parents are welcome to learn about available resources, scholarships, grants, college requirements, etc. in the SIT Office. The Students-In-Transition Resource Library is a first step in learning about available resources. Please call the office 314-345-5750 for an appointment to explore our library!

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Profiles of American Colleges: With Website Access (Revised), <i>Barron's Educational Series</i> | The Everything College Survival Book: All You Need to Get the Most Out of College Life, <i>Fitzgerald, Susan</i> |
| The Student Athlete's Guide to Getting Recruited: How to Win Scholarships, Attract Colleges and Excel as an Athlete <i>Brown, Stewart</i> | The Best 376 Colleges (2012), <i>Franek, Robert</i> |
| Book of Majors 2013: All-New Seventh Edition, <i>College Board</i> | The College Application Essay: All-New Fifth Edition, <i>McGinty, Sarah Myers</i> |
| College Handbook (2013), <i>College Board</i> | The C" Students Guide to Scholarships", <i>Peterson's</i> |
| Get It Together for College: A Planner to Help You Get Organized and Get in (Updated), <i>College Board</i> | Four-Year Colleges 2013, <i>Peterson's</i> |
| Getting Financial Aid (2013), <i>College Board</i> | How to Get Money for College: Financing Your Future Beyond Federal Aid 2013, <i>Peterson's</i> |
| Scholarship Handbook 2013: All-New 16th Edition (2013), <i>College Board</i> | Scholarships, Grants & Prizes 2013, <i>Peterson's</i> |
| Fiske Guide to Colleges 2013, 29e, <i>Fiske, Edward</i> | Teens' Guide to College & Career Planning: Your High School Roadmap for College & Career Success, <i>Peterson's</i> |
| Fiske Guide to Getting Into the Right College, <i>Fiske, Edward B.</i> | Two-Year Colleges 2013, <i>Peterson's</i> |
| Fiske Real College Essays That Work, <i>Fiske,</i> | The Best Value Colleges: The 150 Best-Buy Schools and What It Takes to Get in |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Edward B.</i> | (2012), <i>Princeton Review</i> |
| The Complete Book of Colleges, 2013 Edition, <i>Princeton Review</i> | The Ultimate Guide to America's Best Colleges (2012), <i>Tanabe, Gen</i> |
| Kaplan Scholarships (2012), <i>Schlachter, Gail Ann</i> | The Ultimate Scholarship Book: Billions of Dollars in Scholarships, Grants and Prizes (2013), <i>Tanabe, Gen</i> |
| 1001 Ways to Pay for College: Practical Strategies to Make Any College Affordable (Fifth Edition, Fifth), <i>Tanabe, Gen</i> | The Insider's Guide to the Colleges: Students on Campus Tell You What You Really Want to Know (2013), <i>Yale Daily News</i> |
| Sallie Mae How to Pay for College: A Practical Guide for Families, <i>Tanabe, Gen</i> | The Black Girl's Guide to College Success (2007), <i>Walker, Sheryl</i> |
| The HBCU Guide (2006) <i>May, Robin M.</i> | |

Students-In-Transition Program

St. Louis Public Schools/Local Education Agency (LEA) houses the Students-In-Transition Program. The Students-In-Transition Program is a specialized office with a sole purpose of identifying homeless students and supporting them academically by appropriately meeting their educational needs from pre- kindergarten to after high school.

Staff advocate on behalf of students in the educational arena by educating school personnel on the federal mandated requirements for homeless children and youth; facilitating the enrollment process of homeless children and youth unaccompanied by a parent or guardian; and, ensuring that each child's education is minimally impacted due to their housing status.

A student who qualifies as homeless through the SIT Office remains classified as such for the entire year and are eligible for services for the entire school year. Students can be removed from the homeless list for falsifying any information obtained through the SIC Office. It is also required that families MUST complete a new Student Enrollment Intake/Questionnaire at the beginning of each school year and will be subject to the approval process set in place at that time.

Types of Supports Available to Homeless Families

- Transportation
- School supplies and backpacks
- School uniforms
- Tutoring
- Case management
- Mental health counseling
- Hygiene kits
- Community resource referrals
- Emergency food services
- Household supplies
- Holiday food basket referrals
- Annual coat drive
- Bread baskets
- Parenting educational support group
- Job readiness classes
- Mentoring programs
- Obtaining birth certificates

Meet the **Students-In-Transition Office**

Deidra C. Thomas-Murray, MSW, LMSW, FDCM,
Students-In-Transition Coordinator
Homeless and Foster Care Liaison
(314) 345- 5750

Debra Falkiner, Director, Parent and Student Engagement

Antoinette Jamison, Administrative Assistant

Derica Granger, SIT Homeless Resource Specialist

Monica Sykes, Data Specialist

Elizabeth Bauer, LMSW, Social Worker

R. Bryan Evans, LMSW, Clinical Social Worker

Fannie Rogers, LCSW, Clinical Social Worker

Robert Glaspy, Outreach Facilitator

Ervin Yarbough, Outreach Specialist

Sylnice Williams, Parental Involvement Support Specialist

Keilesa Turner-Wade. Attendance Clerk

Pierre Moton, MSW Intern

Ways the Students-In-Transition Office can assist YOU

The SIT Office assists students and families with immediate needs, such as ...

- Linking homeless families to the Housing Resource Center, shelters and/or transitional housing options
- Assisting with the immediate enrollment and access to school services
- Helping caregivers obtain immunization history and/or medical records
- Providing seasonally appropriate clothing and shoes to families
- Coordinating transportation for homeless students to/from school via school bus route, temporary taxi service or bus tickets for middle and high school students
- Arranging inter-district transportation outside the VICC (Voluntary Inter-district Choice Corporation) area

The SIT Office assists high school students prepare for college and vocational and trade schools by ...

- Linking high school students with appropriate resources and educational supports for college and vocational training programs
- Providing education verification to prospective colleges, universities and trade schools
- Providing information on obtaining financial aid

The SIT Office helps schools and community members aid homeless students by...

- Helping schools locate students, parents and guardians
- Educating students, parents, district personnel and the community members on the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness
- Collaborating with community partners to connect students with positive programs and inspiring opportunities

- Providing brochures and information on regional services regarding housing, physical and behavioral health services, utility assistance, food banks, clothing rooms, legal services, community education and many more social service providers

The McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate residence. This includes children and youth who fit one or more of the following categories:

- Temporarily "doubled up" with relatives or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, or campgrounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations
- Abandoned in buildings
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Runaways and/or youth not residing with their legal parent or guardian

Educational Rights of Families

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in homeless situations have the right to:

1. The right to stay in their school (school of origin), even if they move out of the school district. Students can remain in their school until the end of the school year even if they find permanent housing.
2. The right to immediately enroll, attend classes, and fully participate in neighborhood school in the area where they are living, without proof of residency, immunization records, or other medical records, school records, or other documents.
3. The right to access certain school services including free school meals, services for English language learners, special education, Title I services, vocational/technical education, gifted and talented services, transportation to school or origin, and before and after-school care, as needed.
4. The right to the same opportunity to meet the same high academic standards as all students.

District Policies and Guidelines Governing Homeless Students

Note: This is not the entire policy. Policy can be found on the St. Louis Public School District's website (www.slps.org)

Admission:

As a condition of receiving assistance or funds under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act, the District serves homeless children according to the children's best interests.

In determining the "best interest" of a child, the District shall:

1. To the extent feasible, keep a homeless child in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's parent or guardian;
2. Provide a written explanation to the homeless child's parent or guardian, including a statement of appeal rights, if the District sends the child to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian;
3. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, consider the views of the child and provide the notice required in the event of an enrollment dispute.

Homeless Children and Unaccompanied Youth:

"Homeless child" means a child or youth. "Unaccompanied youth" includes a child not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

School of Origin:

"School of origin" means the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.

Contact Information:

The District requires the parent or guardian of a homeless child to submit contact information.

Enrollment Rights and Services:

"Enrolling" and "enrollment" include attending classes and participating fully in school activities. According to the child's or youth's best interest, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing.

The school selected in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act shall immediately enroll a homeless child even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. The school

shall immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant academic and other records. If the child needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the child's parent or guardian to the District's homeless liaison for assistance.

Enrollment Disputes:

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the child shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of the dispute. The District shall provide the child's parent or guardian with a written explanation of the decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the right to appeal the decision. The District shall refer the child, parent, or guardian to the homeless liaison, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

School Placement:

The District shall not segregate homeless children. The District shall, according to the child's best interest:

1. Continue the child's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, if the child's family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year;
2. Continue the child's education in the school of origin for the duration of the academic year, if the child becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
3. Enroll the child in any school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend.

The District shall make the choice regarding placement without regard to whether the child lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

Comparable Services:

The District shall provide a homeless child with services that are comparable to services offered to other students in the school in which the child is enrolled, including:

1. Transportation services
2. Educational services for which the child meets the eligibility criteria
3. Programs in vocational and technical education
4. Programs for gifted and talented students and
5. School nutrition programs

Coordination:

The District shall coordinate the provision of services to homeless children with:

1. Local social services agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless children and their families,
2. Other local educational agencies, on inter-district issues such as transportation or transfer of school records; and
3. As applicable, state and local housing agencies responsible for developing the comprehensive housing affordability strategy described in the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12705), to minimize educational disruption for homeless children.

The coordination shall be designed to ensure that homeless children have access and reasonable proximity to available education and related support services and to raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness.

Barriers to Enrollment:

The District shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children. The District shall give consideration to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship. The District shall give special attention to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children who are not currently attending school.

In addition, the District shall adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.



We wish you the best in your high school career and hope for great things as you continue education after high school. You are not alone in this transition; please remember St. Louis Public Schools and the Students-In-Transition Office. We would love to hear from you. Questions, concerns or hellos, please call us at (314)345-5750.

Sincerely,

St. Louis Public Schools Foundation
and the Students-In-Transition Office