

SENIOR INFORMATION

2006-2007

MOUNT VERNON HIGH SCHOOL

THE ANSWER: “FIVE GATEWAYS”

High school graduation is just around the corner! Most students don't realize that there are only 5 options to consider after high school. These options are called “gateways” and are listed below:

1. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

*4 year Colleges and Universities
2 year Colleges and Community Colleges
Technical and Professional schools and colleges*

2. MILITARY

*Army
Navy
Air Force
Marine Corps
Coast Guard*

3. WORKFORCE

*Full-time permanent jobs
Combination of two or more part-time jobs
Contract services on short-term basis*

4. APPRENTICESHIP AND INTERNSHIPS

Carefully monitored work experiences with intentional learning goals

5. SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*Start a business
Buy a business
Take on a franchise
Consult or freelance*

The gateway model is taken from the “Real Game”
Facilitator’s Guide.

COLLEGE PLANNING CALENDAR SENIOR YEAR

SEPTEMBER

Finalize list of colleges
Check online or write for college applications
Register by mail or online for Fall: SAT I/SAT II, ACT, TOEFL
Complete ROTC and service academy applications
Complete NCAA Clearinghouse forms
File CSS Profile if needed

OCTOBER

Note application deadlines
Search for scholarships
Submit early decision applications
Begin working on regular admissions applications
Finalize teacher recommendations
Attend College Fair and College Night programs
Take the SAT I, ACT or TOEFL; if applicable

NOVEMBER

Continue with college applications and essays
Submit requests for recommendations and transcripts
Take SAT I/SAT II or ACT Take TOEFL
Schedule interviews or auditions if necessary.

DECEMBER

Look for early decision notification
Attend financial aid workshop
Pick up financial aid forms in the career center
Take the SAT I/SAT II or ACT

JANUARY

Submit FAFSA financial aid forms as soon after January 1 as possible – use online application
Take SAT I/SAT II or TOEFL

FEBRUARY

Semester grades mailed to all colleges where applications were sent
Avoid senior slump –final grades matter!

MARCH

Be aware of scholarship deadlines

Consult summer opportunities database

APRIL

Respond to college acceptances and submit required fees

Follow up on applications

Attend spring college fairs and apply to additional colleges, if necessary

MAY

Take International Baccalaureate, or certification exams

Notify all colleges by May 1 of your decisions and notify your counselor

JUNE

GRADUATION!

CONGRATULATIONS

ONGOING

- Consult: **www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/CareerConnections**
- Meet with college representatives in the Career Center,
- check Scholarship Bulletins and FCPS Scholarship Resource web site: **<http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/DSSSE/Scholarships/index.htm>**
- Revisit colleges: Do I see myself here?
- Complete applications accurately and on time.
- Participate in career experiences to further explore interests, abilities, and course of study.

COLLEGE ADMISSION PROGRAMS

Regular Admission

Students are required to apply by a fixed date. Decision letters are mailed to students in the spring.

Rolling Admission

The college considers each student's application as soon as all the required credentials, such as application, school record, and test scores, have been received. The college usually notifies applicants of its decision in 4-6 weeks.

Early Decision

Students who have a definite first choice of schools and a strong academic profile might consider applying for early decision. Applications are submitted in the fall, usually by November 1; students are notified of the decision early in December. At that time students agree, by contract, to enter that college and withdraw all other applications. If not accepted early decision, students are either denied or reconsidered for admission in the spring.

Early Action

Early action is similar to early decision except that students, if accepted, are not required to accept admission or withdraw other applications. They have until the May 1 Candidate Reply Date to respond.

Open Admission

Colleges grant acceptance to all high school graduates without regard to additional qualifications such as test scores or specific high school courses.

Deferred Enrollment

Students have an opportunity to delay enrollment for a semester or year.

Delayed/Provisional Admission

Students are accepted for admission but not necessarily for the fall semester of the upcoming school year. They may begin after either successful completion of a summer program on campus or a fall semester at another college.

Early Admission

Students are allowed to complete their high school requirements at college. This program is for the exceptional student and usually requires approval of the parents and the high school, as well as selective screening by the college.

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR

It is the responsibility of the college admissions committee to assemble a freshman class that meets the requirements of its institution. As colleges and universities get more competitive for admission every year and colleges have more applicants than available space, certain criteria are established for admission. Admission's considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Strength of program (rigorous course schedule)
- Academic record (GPA)
- Standardized test scores
- School organizations and activities
- Community and volunteer activities
- Letters of recommendation
- Special interests and talents
- Diversity
- Internships and jobs
- College interview
- Technical certifications
- Portfolio
- Resume
- Learning differences

No single factor will determine acceptance or rejection. A school desires to see the student has selected challenging courses in high school that will help the student grow academically. They want to know about interests, accomplishments, and future goals. Most importantly, a college looks at an interest in learning and a connection between what the college has to offer and what the student wants out of his education. Colleges look for students who demonstrate initiative and will be life long learners. Colleges are looking for diversity and rigor in the high school academic record. If a student hopes to be admitted to a selective college, a demanding high school course load should be pursued. Listed below is a typical college-prep course load. Keep in mind the more competitive colleges will expect that students will take advantage of the most competitive curricula in their schools.

- English (4 units)**
- Mathematics (3-4 units)**
- Social Studies (4 units)**
- Science (3-4 units)**
- Foreign Language (2-4 units)**
- Fine/Practical Arts**
- Electives**

Students should take courses that are appropriate for them. It is better to do well in demanding college prep classes than to do excellent in lower level courses that do not challenge the student. Many colleges review a student's record to determine if the college works best for an individual's interests and abilities. Often, the smaller the school, the more likely the school looks at the "whole" student.

SELECTING YOUR COLLEGE

Think about what criteria are most important to you when selecting a college. They might include:

- Cost
- Size
- Academic competitiveness
- Location - region/state(s)
- Setting - urban, suburban, rural
- Academic programs
- Special programs - e.g. Learning Disabilities Program, ROTC, Study Abroad, ESL
- Type of school - college, university, fine arts, military, single sex, historically black
- Athletics
- Campus facilities - housing, parking, accommodations for the disabled
- Comfort level - social life, ethnic/religious composition

Identify Priorities - Ask yourself the following questions as you try to decide where to apply.

- Location - region/state(s)**
 - How close to home do you want to stay?
 - Is a four-hour drive too much?
 - How well do you adapt to new situations?
 - Would you be lonely if you moved far away from family and friends?
 - Is there an area of the country where you always wanted to go to school?

- Setting - urban, suburban, rural**
 - Are you looking for the excitement of a big city?
 - Would you like to live on a picturesque campus with easy access to the activities of a big city?
 - Would you prefer a school on a wooded campus with many opportunities for outdoor activities?

- Size**
 - Have you always thought you would attend a big football school?
 - Do you like the idea of a small school where it is easy to get to know everyone including the professors?
 - Do you learn better in a small class environment or a larger classroom?
 - Will a small school offer you the variety of courses and majors you need?
 - Have you thought you would like to start at a small school and later transfer to a larger school?
 - Are you looking for a college about the size of your high school?

Type of School

- Would you prefer a liberal arts college or a major university?
- Would you be interested in a more specialized school such as an art school or a service academy?
- Have you considered a single sex school?
- Would you be interested in a historically black college or a religiously affiliated school?

Majors

- Are you looking for a school with a particular major?
- Do you need a school that offers pre-professional programs such as pre-medicine, pre-law, pre-veterinarian?
- Would you like the option to self-design a major?

Academic Reputation

- Are you looking for a school that has a reputation for being academically challenging?
- Do you think you will need a school that offers strong academic support?

Cost

- Have you and your family discussed how much you can afford to spend on college?
- Are you thinking of going to a community college the first two years to save money?
- Will you be living at home?
- Would you be willing to take a job on campus to help pay for college expenses?
- Should you explore colleges that because of your strong academic record would offer you a scholarship?

Housing

- Do you want a college where housing is guaranteed all four years?
- Do you want a college where freshman are required to live on campus?
- Are you interested in a specialized dorm (i.e. single sex, substance free, quiet).
- Are there apartment facilities located conveniently to the college?

Athletics

- Do you intend to play a sport in college?
- Are you competitive for Division I sports?
- If playing for a Division I team meant sitting on the bench all season, would you rather play at a Division III school where you will play every game?
- Are you looking for an intramural or club team where you could play a sport just for fun?

Campus Facilities

- Are you looking for a school where most students live on campus or will you be commuting?
- As a freshman, will you want to have a car on campus?
- How important is the quality of the food?
- Will you require something special such as vegetarian or kosher meals?
- Do you require handicapped accessibility?

Special Programs

- Do you need a school with services or programs for the learning disabled?
- Are you interested in ROTC?
- Have you thought you would like to study abroad?
- Do you plan to continue your ESL studies in college?
- Are you looking for an honors program?

Campus Life

- Do you plan to join a fraternity or sorority?
- Do you participate in activities in high school that you would like to continue in college?
- Does the school offer opportunities for community service?

Gather Information - Research colleges using the sources listed below.

College Search Programs - Generate a list of colleges meeting your individual criteria using college search software in the Career Center or from Internet based software.

Reference Materials - Gather more in-depth information from catalogs, videos, view books, and guides available in the Career Center or on the Internet.

Admissions Offices - Contact colleges for more detailed information and applications. Most colleges have the information available on their Web sites.

College Representatives - Meet with college representatives when they visit the Career Center.

College Fairs - Local fairs include: the Fairfax County Public Schools College Fair and Night in October, the Northern Virginia Regional College Fair in April, and the Washington Scholars Program in October. Dates and locations are advertised in the Career Center.

Guidance Department/Career Center - Discuss individual colleges with your counselor and career center specialist.

College Visits - Use this opportunity to gather information from admissions offices, academic departments, financial aid offices, athletic departments, residence halls, and dining facilities.

Evaluate Your Choices

- Evaluate colleges using criteria that are most important to you.
- List the advantages and disadvantages of each college.
- Do the pluses outweigh the minuses?

Decide Where You Want To Apply

○ Most students make application to at least three colleges; five or six would give you all the options you need. As you narrow your choices your selections may fall into three categories:

Possible schools - those that are a reach for you either academically or financially.

Probable schools - those that will meet all your needs and will likely accept you.

Safe schools - those that will make you happy and will be sure to accept you.

Develop Your College Application Plan and Establish Deadlines or Timelines for:

- Getting applications
- Taking college entrance exams
- Requesting transcripts
- Requesting recommendations
- Writing essays
- Completing applications
- Scheduling interviews or auditions
- Applying for scholarships
- Attending a financial aid workshop
- Applying for financial aid
- Completing NCAA Clearinghouse forms
- Visiting colleges
- Notify colleges when you have made a decision

Meet all deadlines!

For seniors, the college application process falls into three stages:

1. **Applying** – This will take most, if not all, of the first semester. The application process involves visiting colleges, making decisions, taking tests, filling out applications, and meeting deadlines.

2. **Waiting** – Once all the applications have been sent, the replies will come in either on a rolling basis, or by an early April date, depending on the policy of individual colleges. Remember, there is a college for you.

3. **Deciding** – This is the time for discussing, revisiting schools, and comparing financial aid packages. Most schools want to be notified of your decision by May 1st. NACAC (www.nacac.com) lists colleges that are still taking applications after May 1st.

SERVICE ACADEMIES

The United States maintains five service academies: the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York; the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland; the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado; the United States Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut; and the United States Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York. The mission of the service academies is to provide the instruction and experience necessary to produce graduates with the knowledge, character, and leadership abilities to become career military officers.

Service Academy Admissions Process:

1. Determine if you meet the requirements and qualifications. Each candidate must:
 - be a U.S. citizen at the time of enrollment
 - be unmarried with no dependents
 - have an above average high school record
 - have strong scores on the SAT I or ACT
 - be in good physical health
 - have above average strength, endurance and agility
 - be 17 but not yet 22
2. Apply for a nomination. As a minimum you should apply to your two United States senators, your congressional representative, and the Vice President. Some members of Congress will not accept application for nomination after a specific date. You should request a nomination as soon as possible. In addition to the letter, the nomination process may include a questionnaire and interview.
3. Start a file at the academy. Send a letter to the admissions office requesting a pre-candidate questionnaire. The academy will open a file for you upon receipt of the completed questionnaire.
4. Fill out the academy forms. These forms will be sent to you after an evaluation of your pre-candidate questionnaire.
5. Take the SAT and/or ACT. Send your scores to the academies to which you are applying.
6. Pass the medical exam from the department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DOD MERB) and the Physical Aptitude Exam (PAE).
7. Receive notification of the evaluation and status of your application. This may arrive as early as November for outstanding candidates; final decisions are made in April.

Academy Web sites:

www.usafa.edu - U.S. Air Force Academy
www.cga.edu - U.S. Coast Guard Academy
www.usmma.edu - U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
www.usma.edu - U.S. Military Academy
www.usna.edu - U.S. Naval Academy

RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (ROTC)

The ROTC program provides you the opportunity to attend a civilian college while studying military leadership as part of a total undergraduate program. ROTC is a college elective, which requires about four hours a week. It is offered at hundreds of campuses. Applications are available upon request from college ROTC units or on the websites.

www.armyrotc.com - Army ROTC

www.afrotc.com - Air Force ROTC

www.nrotc.navy.mil - Navy ROTC

The program is divided into two parts, the basic course and the advanced course. Students attend the basic program during the first two years of college with no military commitment. After completing this course, students may enroll in the advanced course. At this time, they will incur a military obligation. For information about the ROTC Scholarship Program, see the Paying For College section at the ROTC web sites.

POST-SECONDARY PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL PLANNING CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

Set your goals
Research Occupations
Investigate Military services
Visit Career Center

OCTOBER

Seek job shadowing opportunities
Discuss education options with your counselor
Attend College Fair

NOVEMBER

Investigate:

- Apprenticeships
- On-the-Job Training
- Professional/technical programs

DECEMBER

Attend Resume Writing and Interviewing Workshop
Write resume
Attend financial aid workshop

JANUARY

Review status for graduation
Obtain job applications
Begin working on financial aid forms

FEBRUARY

Apply to NVCC
Apply to Professional/Tech Schools

MARCH

Check application deadlines for summer jobs
Sign-up and take ASVAB

APRIL

Revise resume
Interview for jobs

MAY

Visit Job Center-South County Government Building
Attend Job Fairs

JUNE

GRADUATION! CONGRATULATIONS

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Attend career speakers' presentations.
- Meet with professional/technical school representatives in the career center.
- Research military and technical training options.
- Conduct job research in the career center. Continue to explore interests, abilities, values and goals.
- Investigate scholarships.
- Plan meaningful career experiences to include job shadowing, mentorship, and internship.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeship is an employer's training program. It is a time-honored program combining on-the-job training with related instruction. The result is a skilled craftsperson. When you complete both on-the-job training and the related instruction, you become a registered apprentice. Registered apprentices completing a full program receive a State Apprenticeship Certificate upon completion. This certificate is nationally recognized.

Over 300 employers sponsor more than 1,200 apprentices in Northern Virginia each year.

Examples of Apprenticeship Programs:

Barbering
Carpentry
Cosmetology
Electricity
Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning
Machinist
Nail Technician
Office Administrative Support Specialist
Optician
Plumbing
Surveying

Apprenticeship Terms/Definitions

Apprentice

Person 16 years or older, learning a trade with on the job training (OJT) and related instruction (RI) in accordance with state and federal apprenticeship standards.

Apprenticeship

A certified, structured, well defined program of training that combines supervised on the job training skills with related instruction training in the classroom.

Apprenticeship Agreement

Voluntary signed document between employer (sponsor) and the apprentice that establishes their commitment and responsibilities.

Certification Card

Wallet-size identification card issued by Virginia Department of Labor & Industry (VADOLI), certifying that you are a registered apprentice.

Licensing

Upon completion of apprenticeships the apprentice will receive an application at graduation or in the mail to take the exam.

Program Sponsor/Sponsor

A "registered program sponsor" is an individual employer, association, or joint apprenticeship committee with a VA address who has adopted VA Apprenticeship Standards with VADOLI. Also, there must be a structured, registered, OJT training

program, including specific work assignments, wage scales and the requirement to attend related instruction classes.

Registered Apprentice

□ A person is a registered apprentice only if he/she has signed an apprenticeship agreement with a registered program sponsor who is his/her employer and has been certified by VADOLI.

Virginia Department of Labor & Industry (VADOLI)

□ Agency responsible for supervising and certificating of OJT, registering apprentices, certifying and registering employers and issuing state certificates.

Apprenticeship Information in the Washington D.C. Area:
Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training
609 H Street N.E. Room 401
Washington, DC 20002
PHONE: 202-698-5099

Virginia Community College System
www.so.cc.va.us/workforce/ari

Construction Workforce Development Coalition
www.futureforcenow.com

FCPS Apprenticeship Information:
www.fcps.k12.va.us/DIS/OACE/AP/_test/appren-geninfo.html

FINANCIAL AID

Visit www.fastweb.com for a free search over \$1 billion in scholarships!

Basic FAFSA Facts

What is it?

FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The federal government uses this form to determine your eligibility for financial aid, which includes: grants, work-study, scholarships and loans.

Why fill it out?

The FAFSA is used to determine how much aid you will receive. Think of it this way:

FAFSA: Step By Step

Step 1: Get the FAFSA

You can get a copy of the FAFSA one of three ways:

1. Get a paper version from your guidance counselor's office or local library
2. Complete FAFSA on the Web: www.fafsa.ed.gov
3. Call **1-800-4-FED-AID** to ask for a copy

Step 2: Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)

The SAR is proof that your FAFSA was received. Review it carefully. If you filed electronically, you should receive your SAR in 2-3 weeks (4-5 weeks if you filed a paper FAFSA).

Questions? Concerns? Contact your school's financial aid office and/or call 1-800-4-FED-AID!

Step 3: Fill out the FAFSA

Keep a completed copy for your records. For the 2006-2007 school year, use info from 2005. You'll need the following to fill out the form:

- Social security number
 - 2004 W2 and/or tax return (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, etc.)
 - Driver's license (if any)
 - 2005 federal income tax return
 - Parents' 2005 income tax return (if a dependent)
 - 2005 untaxed income records (if any)
 - Current bank statements
 - Current mortgage and investment records (if any)
 - Alien registration card (if not a U.S. citizen)
- Fill out the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1. Early submission maximizes your chances of receiving aid.
 - Do not leave any fields blank. If a question doesn't apply, enter "0."

- List your information accurately. Do not enter false information as a way to qualify for more aid. Doing so is a federal crime and can be punishable with fines or prison.
- Take your time and follow the instructions. If you need assistance, ask your guidance counselor or call 1-800-4-FED-AID.
- Sign the application. If you are filing as a dependent, make sure your parents sign too.
- Report ALL required sources of untaxed income (e.g., Social Security or child support).
- Fill out the FAFSA every year, even if you don't think you will qualify for aid. It may be a prerequisite for scholarships.

FAFSA Tips

EFC is Expected Family Contribution, which is the amount of money your family can be expected to contribute each year to your college costs.

What type of aid can I expect to receive?

Your prospective college will try to meet your financial need through federal, state, school and private sources, as well as loans, grants and student employment.

Remember that the FAFSA is FREE! If you need help, ask your guidance counselor or call the FAFSA Help Desk at: 1-800-4-FED-AID.

What if I find errors on my SAR?

Report them immediately to the FAFSA Help Desk and ask how you should make corrections. Unresolved errors could delay your aid.

What if I don't receive my SAR?

Call 1-800-433-3243 (1-800-4-FED-AID) if you do not receive your SAR in 4-5 weeks. Provide your name, Social Security number and date of birth for verification.

Why is there an asterisk after my EFC?

It means your SAR has been selected for verification (happens to about 1 in 3 SARs). It means your prospective college will compare your SAR with other documents to verify your financial status. If asked for verification, submit the information requested to your prospective college's financial aid office ASAP.

Scams

10 Tips

- 1. Fees:** You shouldn't have to pay to search for or apply for scholarships. Check out the *free* scholarship search at www.fastweb.com.
- 2. Credit card or bank account information needed:** You should never have to give credit card or bank account information to award providers.
- 3. Scholarship guarantee:** No one can guarantee that you'll win a scholarship because no one can control scholarship judges' decisions. Also, be wary of "high success rates" - they usually do not refer to actual award winners.
- 4. No work involved:** Legitimate scholarship applications require time and energy.
- 5. No contact information:** Legitimate sponsors should provide contact information upon request. If the sponsor does not supply a valid e-mail address, phone number and mailing address (not a PO box) upon request, that could be the sign of a scam.
- 6. Unsolicited scholarships:** If you are called to receive an award for which you never applied, be alert - it's most likely a scam.
- 7. Pressure tactics:** Don't allow yourself to be pressured into applying for a scholarship, especially if the sponsor is asking you to pay up front.
- 8. Claims of "exclusive" scholarships:** Legitimate sponsors won't restrict knowledge about their award to a single search service.
- 9. An official-sounding name or endorsement doesn't automatically mean legitimacy:** A sponsor may use words like "national," "education" or "federal" or have an official-looking seal, but might still be a scammer. Also, the federal government and the U.S. Dept. of Education do not endorse private businesses.
- 10. Your questions aren't answered directly:** If you can't get a straight answer from a sponsor regarding their application, what will be done with your information (e.g., if it will be sent to a third party) or other questions, proceed with caution.

If you are not sure call:
National Fraud Information Center (NFIC)
Ph: 1-800-876-7060 Web: www.fraud.org

FastTip: Applying for financial aid should never cost more than a postage stamp!

Knowing the warning signs can keep you from being a scholarship scam victim.

1. Save all forms you receive from the suspect company. Keep copies of written details about the offer and any correspondence, e-mails or other paperwork. Make sure all materials are dated.
2. Take notes during any seminar or phone conversations. Record the date, time, phone number and the person's name with whom you spoke. Also include a detailed account of your conversation.
3. Report the suspected scammer to any of the following organizations:

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

Fill out an online complaint form or call toll-free:

Ph: 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)

Web: www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams

Better Business Bureau (BBB)

Be sure to have the address of the company about whom you are filing the complaint.

Ph: 1-703-276-0100

Web: www.bbb.org

United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)

Ph: 1-800-654-8896

Web: www.usps.com/postalinspectors/fraud

Bonus Tip: An upfront fee is not needed for scholarship or loan applications!

Creative Scams: Seminars and Consultants

Seminars and consultants sometimes charge fees for services or information you can obtain for free.

Claim: “We can help you complete complicated forms.”

Reality: Everyone needs the same basic information to complete financial aid forms, so even if you pay for help, it is still up to you to do the work of assembling the information.

Help with the FAFSA is available for free at www.fafsa.ed.gov or by phone at: **1-800-4-FED-AID**.

You can also notify these other agencies:

Claim: “We’ll help you complete complicated forms.”

Reality: You *still* have to fill out the same basic information for a fee-based service that you would for the FAFSA; how else would they get your information?

Claim: “We’ll find different ways to report your assets and obtain more aid.”

Reality: a) This information is available for free at FinAid: www.finaid.org/fafsa/maximize.phtml.

b) While these services can be legitimate, remember that colleges can request additional documentation about your finances.

c) Not reporting information accurately is against the law (punishable up to a \$20,000 fine, prison or both).

Claim: “We’ll find loopholes to help you save money.”

Reality: The company may be encouraging you to commit fraud by entering inaccurate info to make it seem like you earn less money. These practices are dishonest and illegal!

Protect Yourself!

Claim: “Our presentation is completely free.”

Reality: While the presentation is free, they may use high pressure tactics to try to get you signed up for their service. They may also claim that the price will increase if you don’t sign up now, or that they can answer questions after payment.

Never use anyone who encourages you to do something unethical. If you falsify financial aid forms, you can end up paying a big fine, going to jail or both.

Don’t let anyone take a percentage of your aid as a fee.

The aid that you win is yours and shouldn’t be shared.

If you use a consultant, consider qualifications carefully.

Find a consultant who has worked as a financial aid administrator, CPA or CFP.

Talk to your guidance counselor’s office. They can tell you if they’ve had trouble with any consultant in particular.

Where Can I Go For Help?

Financial aid should not cost you anything. Consider getting help from these **free sources**:

- *HS counselors*
 - *Online sources such as FastWeb.com and FinAid.org*
 - *Libraries • Any financial aid office*
 - *US Dept. of Education*
- Phone: 1-800-4-FED-AID, Web: <http://studentaid.ed.gov>*

FastTip: Because it’s held at a local school doesn’t mean a seminar is legitimate. Be sure to check with your school or counselor if you think the seminar might be a scam.

CAREER CONNECTIONS: THE WEB SITE

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) career guidance initiative, known as Career Connections, is designed for grades K - 12. Its success depends on the cooperative effort of students, parents, teachers, counselors, and the community. This web site is an information source designed to connect these groups.

STUDENTS

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

[Six Steps to Life Planning](#)

DECISION-MAKING RESOURCES

Academic Preparation

[Diploma Types](#)

[Standards of Learning \(SOL\) Requirements](#)

[Advanced Programs](#)

[FCPS Academy Programs](#)

Know Yourself

[Self Assessments](#)

[FCPS Software Programs](#)

Research Occupations

[General Occupational Research](#)

[Specific Occupational Research](#)

[Job Outlook](#)

Plan a Career

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Getting a Job

[Job Skills](#)

[Resume Writing](#)

[Job Search](#)

[Interview Skills](#)

Internships

Apprenticeships

Volunteer Opportunities

Summer Opportunities

Job Shadowing

Mentoring

POST HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS

Two Year Colleges

Four Year Colleges

Professional Technical Schools

Apprenticeships

Entrepreneurial Opportunities

Military Options

Graduate and Professional Schools

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

Selecting and Applying

Admissions Assessments

The Essay

Selecting a Major

Paying for College

Multicultural Interests

Special Interests

WEB RESOURCES

CURRENT

CURRENT HAPPENINGS OF INTEREST

GOOD NEWS!

FCPS SERVICES

SCHOOL COUNSELING SERVICES

Elementary School Counseling Services

Secondary School Counseling Services

SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

Scholarship Search

Financial Aid Resources

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

JUNIOR-SENIOR HANDBOOK

WEB RESOURCES

PARENTS

POST HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING

LEARNING DIFFERENCES

MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS

FCPS RESOURCES

WEB RESOURCES

COMMUNITY

ASSISTING STUDENTS

Internships

Job Opportunities

Volunteer Opportunities

MentorWorks

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

WEB RESOURCES

PROFESSIONAL

WEB RESOURCES FOR COUNSELORS

WEB RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

FCPS DEPT. OF STUDENT SERVICES WEB SITES

FCPS CAREER CENTER WEB SITES

FCPS SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

FCPS SCHOLARSHIP WEBSITE

Fairfax County Public Schools offers a searchable online database that allows you to sort scholarships based on their requirements, view just the currently available applications, view the entire list, and more! There are also links to more scholarship and financial aid websites.

Once you find a scholarship you are interested in, you can access the application either as a PDF file or on the sponsoring organization's website!

<http://www.fcps.edu/ssseapps/scholarshipdb/>

Once you log on to the website, you will see a display like this. Please register and click "submit".



The screenshot shows the registration page for the Fairfax County Public Schools Scholarship Database. At the top, there is a header with the text "Fairfax County Public Schools" and "Scholarship Database". Below this, a section titled "Please Register to Use Scholarship Database" contains a note: "(All fields must be completed to access this free database.)". The registration form includes the following fields and options:

- High School: A dropdown menu with "School Outside Fairfax County Public Schools" selected.
- Grade: A dropdown menu with "Grade 12" selected.
- Zip: An empty text input field.
- Registration type: Radio buttons for "Student", "Parent", "School Staff", and "Other".
- Buttons: "Submit" and "Clear".

The main page will appear, and you can access scholarship information from there.

**** HINT:** You may want to start at "Currently Active Scholarships."

If the "Send To" column says "Career Center," that means you should see Mrs. Ferguson ASAP to get details about how a winner will be selected for that award. Sometimes, organizations will only allow us to have one school nominee, so we will have to run a school contest.