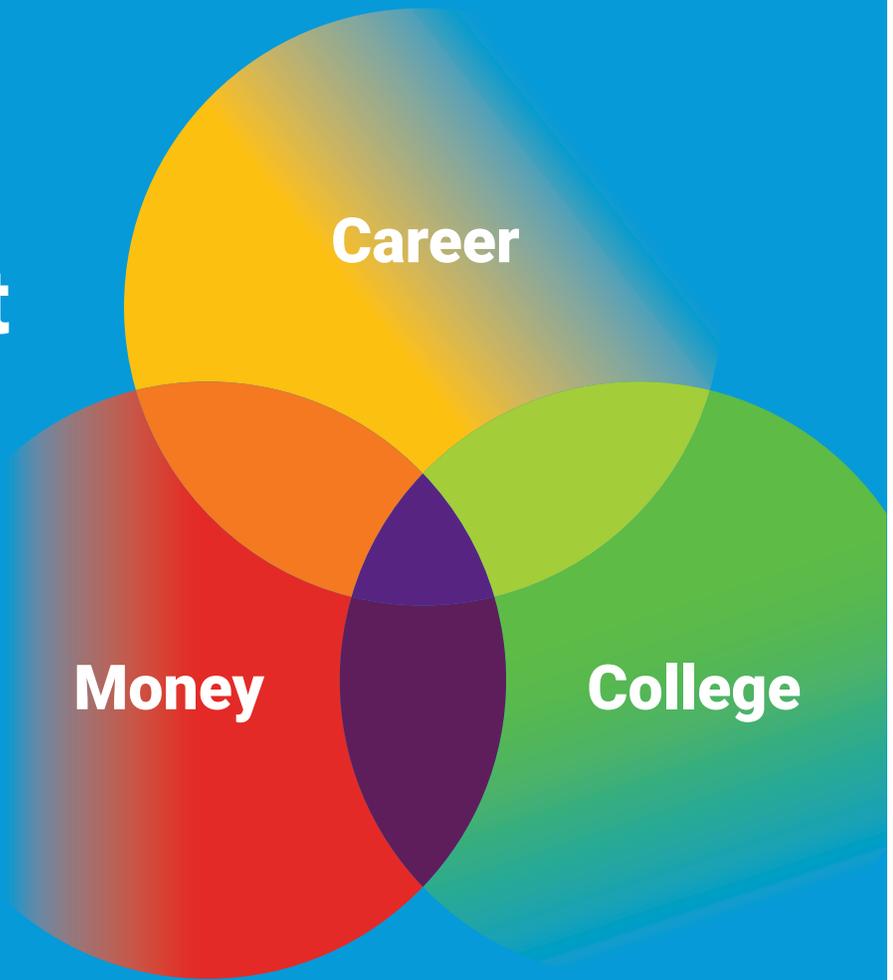




# PaCE Student Checklist

The PaCE Student Checklist is a tool to help students prepare for life after high school. Students can use this checklist at each grade level to explore activities and experiences that can help them prepare for college and career.



The checklist is organized around the same three key areas as the Illinois PaCE (Postsecondary and Career Expectations) Framework:



**Career** - Career Exploration and Development



**Money** - Financial Aid and Literacy



**College** - Postsecondary Education Exploration, Preparation, and Selection



For more information on the PaCE Framework, please see [isac.org/pace](https://isac.org/pace)



## 9TH GRADE



### Career

- Complete a career cluster survey and a career interest survey
- Explore career clusters by going to: **studentportal.isac.org > College Resources > IL WorkNet > Careers, Wages, and Trends >**
- Research one or two career(s) you might be interested in based on your survey results:
  - What education is needed?
  - What skills are needed
  - Consider talking to someone in those career(s) about their favorite and least favorite part of their job, as well as how much education is needed to have their job



### Money

- Plan to attend a presentation on college financial aid with an adult family member. You can seek one out by asking your counselor if your school offers a financial aid presentation. If not, you can find one near you: **studentportal.isac.org > Toolbox > Event Calendar >**
- Research on your own to find out how much it would cost to attend an:
  - In-state 4-year public college/university
  - In-state 4-year private college/university
  - Out-of-state 4-year public college/university
  - Out-of-state 4-year private college/university
  - Local community colleges
  - Trade, vocational, and technical colleges
- To compare colleges and degree programs by cost you can visit: **studentportal.isac.org > College Resources > College Scorecard >**



### College

- Make an appointment to meet with your counselor to talk about what classes you need to take to prepare for college
- Talk to your school counselor or teacher about how your school grades and attendance can affect your future plans for life after high school
- Attend a postsecondary options workshop, course, or presentation
- Talk to your counselor about Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit, and Dual Enrollment classes, when it will be possible to enroll in these classes, and what requirements they may have
- Talk to your school counselor or teacher about why it is important to get involved in community service and extracurricular activities and how it can affect your future/college plans
- Identify different community service and extracurricular activity opportunities related to postsecondary and career interest

# 10TH GRADE



## Career

- Get in contact with someone who works in a career you are interested in and ask if you can visit or take a tour of where they work. When you visit their workplace, think about whether you could see yourself there in the future, and ask the employers what skills they look for when considering applicants
- Explore career clusters by going to: [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org) > **College Resources** > **IL WorkNet** > **Careers, Wages, and Trends** >
- Of the careers you researched and are interested in, pick a favorite and identify what steps you can take to help you get there
- If your school offers College and Career Pathway Endorsements, ask your counselor what options the school has and enroll in a College and Career Pathway Endorsement based on your career interests
- For your top career choice, research what jobs people start out in, how much they make a year, and how much education is needed for the entry level job vs. higher level job
- Seek and participate in career days, career guest speaker presentations, workshops, activities as offered by the high school



## Money

- Plan to attend a presentation on college financial aid with an adult family member. You can seek one out by asking your counselor if your school offers a financial aid presentation. If not, you can find one near you: [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org)>**Toolbox** > **Event Calendar** >



## College

- Talk to 2-3 adults (e.g., teacher, coach, counselor/advisor, or mentor) and express that you would like to receive their support and help in preparing for college and your future career
- Figure out what your current GPA is, the GPA requirement for your college of interest, and what you need to work on to get it where it needs to be ( be sure to do this every year)
- Research the differences in programs offered in associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctorate's degrees. Also, research the differences between a community college vs. 4-year university/college vs. trade school
- Research what exams (example: SAT or ACT) you need to take to be accepted into college, when and where you can take them, how much it costs to take them, and how you can prepare for them
- Talk to your counselor about Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit, and Dual Enrollment classes, when it will be possible for you to enroll in these classes, and what requirements they may have. Ask your counselor how you can benefit in college from taking these classes

# 11TH GRADE



## Career

- Revisit and retake the career interest survey you took in 9th grade. To complete a career interest survey visit: [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org) > **College Resources > Illinois WorkNet > Skills and Interests >**
- To get a job, employers will want to interview you. To prepare for this, see if a teacher, counselor, mentor would be willing to do a mock interview with you
- Create a resume and have it reviewed by a teacher, counselors, or mentor. To get help in building a resume visit [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org) > **College Resources > Illinois Work Net Center >**
- In addition, create a personal statement for your college applications. Ask a teacher, counselor, or mentor to review and provide you with feedback on your personal statement
- Continue to seek and participate in or attend career days, career guest speaker presentations, workshops, activities as offered by the high school



## Money

- Look on the colleges websites to check what their priority deadline is for filing a FAFSA or Alternative Application
- If you are a student interested in a trade/vocational/technical program, be sure to look up application deadlines, cost, whether or not the school accepts financial aid, etc



## College

- Identify what level of math and English courses you need to take so you don't have to start college with classes that don't count as credit toward your degree. If you are in remedial courses, sign up for transitional courses senior year
- Talk to your counselor about Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit, and Dual Enrollment classes you can take during your junior or senior year
- Make arrangements to take the SAT or ACT exam. Consider taking a practice test beforehand. Fill out a waiver if applicable
- Take an in-person or virtual tour of at least three colleges you are interested in attending. See if your high school has any trips available for students to visit nearby campuses
- If there is a college fair near you or at your school, attend it
- Talk to a college recruiter from the college(s) you are interested in attending and gather information on how much it costs to attend, what scholarships they offer, what degree and/or certificate programs they offer, and any other opportunities they offer
- Research the colleges you are interested in and find out the following information: application deadline, application fee, application requirements, and program of study if you were to attend.
- Determine what colleges you will be applying to next year. You want to have one safety, three match, and one reach college. Research the terms safety match, and reach college if you haven't heard them before

# 12TH GRADE



## Career

- Talk to your counselor to see if you need to take any additional Math/ELA classes to graduate and be accepted into college.
- Take advantage of an internship/job shadow opportunity or summer job to get experience in the field you are interested in. Find an internship or summer job by visiting:  
**studentportal.isac.org > Toolbox > Internship and Summer Jobs >**
- If your school awards industry-based certifications, research the process and requirements to be awarded a certificate related to your career pathway.
- Complete a project or activity with a group of friends focused on everyone's career pathway. To explore your career pathway visit **bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers**.
- Talk to your counselor about how a dual-credit class, AP class, internship, or summer job could help you decide what program of study you'd like to pursue in college.



## Money

- Complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) of Alternative Application as soon as possible after it opens
- To help you complete one of these applications, you can attend a financial aid application completion workshop with your parent(s), guardians, or a trusted adult. See if your school is hosting a financial aid application completion workshop. If not, you can find a financial aid workshop near you, visit:  
**studentportal.isac.org > Toolbox > Event Calendar >**
- Once you start receiving your financial aid offers from schools, attend a financial aid offer letter workshop, sit down with your school counselor or ISACorps member, or use the online award comparison tool at:  
**studentportal.isac.org > Toolbox**
- Talk to your parent(s) about what school you want to attend, what your financial aid offer includes, if there are any out-of-pocket costs, and your plan for future college years
- Use the Illinois WorkNet Center and College Scorecard tool under the College Resources tab at [studentportal.isac.org](http://studentportal.isac.org) to find out the average entry-level salary and anticipated debt of different postsecondary options
- Research the difference between federal government loans and private loans. Research their terms, conditions, and repayment options. In addition, research the requirements to keep and/or renew any scholarships received



## College

- Be sure to address any remedial needs in Math or English-Language arts. Take a transitional class if available and needed
- Apply to at least 3 postsecondary institutions
- Meet with your counselor/advisor and mentor to ensure all the steps in the postsecondary process is complete. Ask for application waivers is needed and applicable