



College Planning

Preparing for college can be a stressful time for parents and students. Mrs. Maggie Todd, Faith Christian School's guidance counselor, gives several ideas that may help reduce the stress and make the process easier.

Discussion

When should a student or family start planning for college?

- Parents - It's never too early to start planning. There are several savings programs available that parents can participate in. Future Scholar is one in particular for South Carolina residents. Attending college financial planning workshops like the one we held in January with the College Funding Coach are also very helpful.
- Students - 9th grade (or 8th if taking high school credit courses) is the time to start focusing on your post high school goals. All high school credit courses will count toward your final GPA. Your gpa will play a large role in determining the college you will get accepted to.

What are some of the things a family needs to do to prepare for college or picking a college?

- Preparing for college
 - 9th grade - work hard and focus on getting good grades
 - 10th grade - continuing getting those good grades, plan to take the SAT or ACT in the spring, and thinking about your future career path
 - 11th grade - grades, take the SAT and/or ACT at least once this year, get serious about the college search and visiting schools
 - 12th grade - Time to apply to colleges and for scholarships. Last chance to raise SAT and ACT scores.
 - Community service - Important for scholarships. Keep track of your community involvement as early as middle school.

- Picking a college -
 - Things to consider when looking - choices of degrees, cost, and location, location, location
 - Make sure to visit any schools you are interested in attending. I can't stress this enough. A school may look perfect on the web but may not be the right fit once you arrive. I suggest visiting schools anytime after the sophomore (10th) grade year and definitely 11th and early 12th grade.
 - Don't let the initial sticker price be the determining factor in picking a college. Many private colleges offer scholarships and grants that make them as affordable as public colleges.

What are some of the most helpful resources that you have found to help families plan for college?

- One resource that I use with all 9-12 grade students is Naviance. It is a guidance tool available to students where they can keep track of community involvement and achievements, do college searches, add schools they are interested in attending, create resumes, request transcripts be sent to colleges they are applying to and track college acceptances.
- College Board is another great resource as well.
- The Guidance tab on our website also has a variety of resources posted such as summer learning opportunities, test prep, and scholarships.

What tips do you have for students and families looking for scholarships to help pay for college?

- No scholarship is too small. Every little bit eventually adds up.
- The Scholarship Opportunities page under the Guidance tab on our website is a great resource for local scholarships. All scholarship opportunities that come to my office are posted here. Some other great scholarship apps or sites include Scholly and RaiseMe. Many of our students have registered with RaiseMe and are already earning scholarship money.
- Although many scholarships are only available to seniors, there is money out there for underclassmen, so it is a good idea to continually be watching for opportunities.
- Check with parent employers and community organizations.
- Make sure that you take the SAT and ACT tests seriously to help get into college and get a scholarship.

Resources

- Our website is faithchristiansc.com. You can also find our other podcasts on our website by clicking the Parent Resources button on the homepage.

- If you are interesting in finding out more about our school, you can also check out our website or call 843-873-8464 and ask for Cindy Feagin.
- You can follow us on **Facebook** at Faith Christian School and **Instagram** at @faithknights.

Websites

- <https://myscholly.com/>
- <https://www.raise.me/>
- <https://www.reviews.com/best-scholarship-search-platforms/>
- <https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/>

Others

- <http://www.faithchristiansc.com/editoruploads/files/ApplerouthCollegeAdmissionsGuide.pdf>