

COLLEGE TIMELINE

Transition within this document refers to options/guidelines starting at the age of 14 for students with a disability. This document is a framework for discussion, as every student's situation is different. Be sure to involve your family, school counselor, case manager, and Transition Specialist in your planning process.

*** The following Transition Resource provides links to helpful websites for training opportunities: ***

<https://pwcs.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=340225&pageId=5282301>

Middle School Tasks

- ✓ Plan to graduate with a Standard or Advanced Diploma and plan your course of study accordingly.
- ✓ Take challenging classes in English, math, science, history, geography, foreign language, and the fine and practical arts.
- ✓ Develop study skills and strategies that work for you.
- ✓ Remediate basic skill deficits in reading, mathematics, and oral and written language.
- ✓ Investigate your options among schools and programs of study and choose those that will promote your academic and career interests.
- ✓ Your IEP should include the courses of study needed for you to transition smoothly to higher education.
- ✓ Begin a transition portfolio of important documents and work samples that may be helpful in college planning.
- ✓ Attend the Prince William County Schools' Annual Transition Fair
- ✓ Attend Future Quest, a FREE college and career event for middle school and high school students with disabilities, held biannually at George Mason University

Freshman Year Tasks

- ✓ Learn about the specific nature of your disability and how to explain it to others to help them understand your needs (for academic as well as social experiences).
- ✓ Learn how to participate actively and advocate for yourself at your IEP meeting, especially your transition plan.

- ✓ Work with your guidance counselor to discuss diploma options and to be sure that you will have the standard and verified credits needed to obtain the desired diploma.
- ✓ Prepare for and pass the end-of-course SOL tests required for verified credits.
- ✓ Develop your academic independence by learning how to use the academic adjustments, accommodations, and learning strategies that you will need in college – LEARN HOW TO LEARN!
- ✓ Become involved in school or community-based activities that interest you and that might lead to a career.
- ✓ Explore career options through classes, online information, and by talking to people in various professions to find out what they like and dislike about their jobs, and what kind of education is required.
- ✓ Continue to remediate skill deficits.
- ✓ Continue to add to your transition portfolio.
- ✓ Begin working on independent living skills.
- ✓ Consider attending the annual Prince William County Schools' Transition Fair and the biannual Future Quest (a free college and career event for students with disabilities) held at George Mason University.

Sophomore Year Tasks

- ✓ Continue to advocate for yourself. Not everyone will understand your disability or be sensitive to your needs. Actively participate in your IEP transition planning with your case manager and IEP team.
- ✓ Continue taking courses to prepare you for college or training and remediate basic skill deficits.
- ✓ Continue working on improving and increasing your independent skills.
- ✓ Add to your understanding and use of learning strategies to help you access the same course work as your peers.
- ✓ Participate in extracurricular activities, hobbies, and work experiences.
- ✓ Identify interests, aptitudes, values, and opportunities related to occupations in which you are interested.
- ✓ Meet with your career/guidance counselor or transition specialist to discuss colleges/training programs and their entrance requirements.
- ✓ Apply early for accommodations for the PSAT as well as SAT/ACT.
- ✓ Register and take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) in the fall.
- ✓ Speak with college/training representatives who visit your high school and are at college fairs. See guidance counselor office for list.

- ✓ Visit college campuses/training schools and talk to the students about their experiences.
- ✓ Continue to save for college/training and investigate funding sources.
- ✓ Continue to add to your transition portfolio.
- ✓ Consider attending the annual Prince William County Schools' Transition Fair and the biannual Future Quest (a free college and career event for students with disabilities) held at George Mason University.

Junior Year Tasks

- ✓ Continue your involvement in school- or community-based extracurricular activities.
- ✓ Continue working on improving and increasing your independent skills.
- ✓ Continue to participate in your IEP transition planning with your case manager, transition specialist, and IEP team. Advocate for yourself. Not everyone will understand your disability or be sensitive to your needs.
- ✓ Identify the appropriate academic adjustments, accommodations, and services that you will need in the postsecondary setting and learn how to use them efficiently. (Be sure to include assistive technologies such as electronic devices and specialized computer software.)
- ✓ Focus on matching your interests and abilities to the appropriate college choice.
- ✓ Look for college campuses that have majors in which you might be interested and the kind of campus community in which you would like to live. Check registration requirements to make sure you can meet them.
- ✓ Gather information about college programs that offer the disability services you need. You may want to add these to your transition portfolio.
- ✓ Consider taking a course to prepare for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Test or for the ACT Assessment (ACT).
- ✓ Apply early for accommodations for the SAT/ACT.
- ✓ Take the SAT or ACT in the spring. Consider taking them more than once—once with testing adjustments and once without them.
- ✓ If you plan on going to a Virginia Community College, practice for the Virginia Placement Tests (VPT).
- ✓ If appropriate, apply for disability services at the Virginia Community College to get accommodations for taking the Virginia Placement Test.
- ✓ Learn time management, study skills, assertiveness training, stress management, and exam preparation strategies.
- ✓ Speak with college representatives who visit your high school and at college fairs.
- ✓ Visit campuses and especially service providers to verify the available services and how to access them. (Can be under disability or support services)

- ✓ Consider people to ask for recommendations—teachers, counselors, employers, coaches, etc.
- ✓ Investigate the availability of financial aid from Federal, State, local, and private sources.
- ✓ Investigate the availability of scholarships provided by organizations, such as corporations, labor unions, professional associations, religious organizations, and credit unions.
- ✓ Continue saving for college and opening a bank account.
- ✓ Work with the transition specialist to contact the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Counselor who serves your school to determine your eligibility for DARS services.
- ✓ Make sure that the documentation of your disability is current. Colleges usually want current testing, usually less than three years old when you begin college.
- ✓ Student athletes wishing to play NCAA sports at an NCAA Division I or Division II school must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Please work with your school counselor.
- ✓ Consider attending the annual Prince William County Schools' Transition Fair and the biannual Future Quest (a free college and career event for students with disabilities) held at George Mason University.

Senior Year Tasks

- ✓ Remember senior year grades and attendance matter!
- ✓ Continue to develop your advocacy skills and to polish study skills
- ✓ Continue working on improving and increasing your independent skills.
- ✓ Plan to visit campuses/programs early in the year or at least do a virtual tour. Compare the various colleges/programs and think about living in the community (e.g., housing, social activities, classrooms, leisure activities, athletic activities, comfort level with support service).
- ✓ Visit with college representatives at your school

For College visits:

- ✓ Write letters to college admissions officers and service providers requesting a visit
- ✓ Be prepared when you visit colleges to write or talk about your experiences and to take placement tests.
- ✓ Admissions officers will provide information about admissions procedures and financial aid opportunities.
- ✓ Take your transition portfolio with you to share with disability service providers, if appropriate.
- ✓ Visit and evaluate the disability services, service provider, and staff. No accommodations will be provided without applying for services.
- ✓ Talk with college students receiving disability support services about their experiences.

- ✓ Role-play college/training interviews with counselors, family members, and teachers.

September

- ✓ See your school counselor to discuss plans. Are you on track and meeting graduation requirements?
- ✓ Check your transcript for errors.
- ✓ Learn the college application process for your school.
- ✓ Register for the fall SAT/ACT tests. Apply early for accommodations if appropriate.
- ✓ Prepare your applications carefully, paying close attention to the instructions and deadlines. Be neat. Be accurate. Use a list to track and meet deadlines.
- ✓ Ask about available scholarships.
- ✓ If you are a DARS client contact your DARS counselor to see if there are applicable services for college.

October-December:

- ✓ Take the SAT/ACT again if desired.
- ✓ Request recommendations from teachers, employers, and/or counselors (give them at least three weeks' notice).
- ✓ Meet early decision and early application deadlines and start all other college applications.
- ✓ Use writing classes and draw on experiences to help with college essays.
- ✓ In December, early decisions will be mailed out; notification must be done by a letter of commitment and submission of a deposit check by mid-January.

January-March:

- ✓ Complete and file FAFSA with parents. NVCC and high school often have workshops on how to complete the forms.
- ✓ Complete scholarship applications
- ✓ Mid-year transcripts should be mailed to colleges.
- ✓ Explore college majors/degrees that match your career goal.
- ✓ If you plan on going to a Virginia Community College, practice for the Virginia Placement Tests (VPT).
- ✓ Apply for disability services at the Virginia Community College to get accommodations when taking the Placement Tests if appropriate.

April:

- ✓ Review college acceptance decisions and make the decision before May 1st

- ✓ Find out the required deposits to ensure placement in the freshman class
- ✓ Notify selected college by letter of commitment and submission of deposit check
- ✓ If placed on a waiting list, make a decision to wait or not. If decided to wait, contact that college and let them know.
- ✓ Review financial aid packages with parents

May:

- ✓ Send thank you notes to people who wrote letters of recommendation on your behalf
- ✓ Apply for disability/support services at your chosen college if you have not done so already
- ✓ Student athletes wishing to play NCAA sports at an NCAA Division I or Division II school must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Please work with your school counselor.

June:

- ✓ Make sure final transcript will be mailed to selected college(s)
- ✓ Register for college courses and required Orientation as soon as possible.
- ✓ Finalize your transition portfolio so that it contains at least the following:
 - ✓ Copies of your psychological and educational evaluations
 - ✓ Transcripts
 - ✓ ACT, SAT, or VPT scores
 - ✓ Current or latest IEP
 - ✓ Medical records (if appropriate)
 - ✓ A writing sample or other work samples related to your choice of a major
 - ✓ Letters of recommendation from teachers and employers
 - ✓ The current list of academic accommodations and auxiliary aids and services you may need in college. Be sure to include assistive technologies.

July-August:

- ✓ Participate in required summer orientation program for incoming freshmen.
- ✓ Notify the financial aid office of any scholarships offered.
- ✓ Make any necessary arrangements for any medical exams or health insurance coverage.

Some information in this guide has been modified from “Virginia’s College Guide for Students With Disabilities; You Know You Can Do it! Here’s How!” (2003)