

## Introduction

***“There must be a happy medium somewhere between being totally informed and blissfully unaware.”***

~Doug Larson

Planning for life after high school is one of the most important times in your life. Like any major decision you make, the more you put into it the more you will get out of it. This is a long journey, with several checkpoints along the way. The time to start this journey is now. There is no substitute for planning and being invested in your decisions. Although there will be many people to assist you along the way the single most important person in this journey is you, the student.

This guide focuses on the college application process; starting with helping you find career areas to research. There will be several forms referenced through this guide. They will be denoted by an **asterisk (\*)** and can be found in the Appendix. There are also links to these forms on the High School Guidance Webpage and they are available individually in the Counseling and Career Center (C&CC).

### Informed Decision-Making

Determining where you would like to end up is a good way to begin figuring out how to get there. That is why we begin with ways to research and explore different career options. Once you have made some general decisions regarding these choices, you will be much better prepared to start your college search and find schools that will be appropriate to meet your goals. At that point, you will be starting the college research and application process. Understanding the cost of a college education and some of the financial options that exist for you and your parents is another important step to this process.

Each step of the process requires informed decision-making. To make the best decisions possible, you need to take into consideration all aspects of how each choice will affect you. For example: Would you pursue a career that is financially rewarding, but requires you to work 80 hours a week? Would you choose a major that requires Pre-Calculus in high school and several semesters of Calculus in college? Would you attend a college if it means you will have \$100,000 in loans upon graduation? The answer to each of these questions is different for everyone.