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Important Dates to Remember

October 21: Late registration for November 5 **SAT**

November 4: Registration deadline for December 10 **ACT**

November 8: Registration deadline for December 3 **SAT**

College Freshmen

- Now that you've had a chance to settle into college life, be sure to keep your focus and maintain your priorities.
- While you may have more freedom in deciding whether or not you attend class, don't fall into bad habits. You've paid for these classes, so get the most out of them. Plus, future employers may just take special notice of your first semester grades.
- Remember to "live like a college student now, so you don't have to later." Stick to your **budget and spending plan** to make sure spontaneous events and activities don't throw a wrench in your financial plan. Use **credit cards** with discretion. What's quick and easy today can come back and haunt you down the road with accumulated interest charges and other fees.

High School Seniors

- Take advantage of opportunities to meet with college representatives visiting your high school. Attend financial aid nights and college fair events in your community, and don't be afraid to ask questions. For your convenience, the **Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel** has created a college preparation events calendar to help you locate college fairs in your neck of the woods. The MDHE is planning to exhibit at a large number of fairs listed on the **Show-Me to College** website, and we encourage you to stop by our booth to obtain information that will better assist you and your parents in planning and paying for college.

Remember, you should go to college fairs prepared with a list of questions about cost, financial aid, admissions, student population, academics, social life, surrounding community, housing, dining, recreational facilities, student services, security, etc.

If you're still undecided, schedule school visits for your top choices. Consider characteristics such as the size of each school and its classes, cost, location, campus environment, housing social activities, facilities, job availability, and financial assistance. Our **Institution, Program, and Degree Search** can also help determine the schools that have programs in fields that interest you.

- Explore the wide variety of financial aid opportunities available to students. The MDHE administers several **grant and scholarship programs**, and many private and community organizations also provide scholarship funds.

- Have you created a schedule or master calendar so you don't overlook important admission or financial aid deadlines? If not, it's not too late.
- Complete college applications and work on any required admissions essays.
- Request letters of recommendation to submit with your application for admission.
- Interested in obtaining the **Bright Flight Scholarship**? Make plans to take the ACT or SAT again if you aren't satisfied with your score. As a reminder, the students in the class of 2012 will need to achieve an ACT score of at least 31 to qualify in the top 3 percent or 30 to qualify in the top fourth and fifth percentiles on or before the June 2012 national test date. A qualifying score achieved as a sophomore or junior on a national test date will also be accepted. The MDHE is in the process of verifying the qualifying SAT scores with The College Board and will announce them as soon as possible.

Award amounts may be reduced based on the amount of funds appropriated to the program. Students in the top 3 percent must receive the \$3,000 maximum award before students in the top fourth and fifth percentiles will be awarded. Currently, award amounts are \$1,750 and \$0, respectively, for the 2011-12 academic year. For more information about the Bright Flight Scholarship, visit the [MDHE's website](#) or contact us at 800-473-6757, option 4.

High School Juniors

- The ACT or SAT test score you will need to achieve in order to qualify for the **Bright Flight Scholarship** have yet to be determined. Scores will be announced in September of your senior year in high school.
- Make plans to spring to register for any college entrance exams.
- If you haven't done so, visit with your guidance counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and that you'll have all the credits you need to get into the school of your choice. You may want to talk about Advanced Placement (AP) courses to beef up your transcripts.
- Learn about the different types of colleges and universities available to Missouri, and check our **Institution, Program, and Degree Search** to help match up your interests and goals with the schools that are best for you.
- If you're trying to narrow career possibilities, visit sites such as [MissouriConnections.org](#) and ask your counselor if there are courses at your school that might help you better explore a career path.

High School Students

- If you're attending a **designated A+ high school**, touch base with your high school's A+ coordinator to make sure you're on track to meet the high school eligibility requirements for the **A+ Scholarship** before graduation. If you have questions about the scholarship or your eligibility for it, visit the **MDHE's website** or contact us toll free at 800-473-6757, option 4.
- Discuss college finances with your family. When performing your college search, you need to know how much your family will be able to contribute towards your college education. Always remember, just because a college may seem expensive and out of your reach, never assume anything. There are several types of financial aid that may enable you to attend a college that may seem too expensive.
- Interested in obtaining the **Bright Flight Scholarship**? Make plans to take the ACT or SAT again if you aren't satisfied with your score. As a reminder, the students in the class of 2012 will need to achieve an ACT score of at least 31 to qualify in the top 3 percent or 30 to qualify in the top fourth and fifth percentiles on or before the June 2012 national test date. A qualifying score achieved as a sophomore or junior on a national test date will also be accepted. The MDHE is in the process of verifying the qualifying SAT scores with The College Board and will announce them as soon as possible.

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Middle School Students

- Continue to look toward the future. Talk to your parents about college plans and work together to keep the lines of communication open. Discuss potential school choices, career options, and possibilities for paying for your education. The more you talk now, the smoother the process will be when you're ready to start making definite plans for college.
- Consider signing up for ACT or SAT preparatory courses. Be sure to check out free ACT practice test questions, test tips, and test descriptions for useful pointers.

Parents

If your child is...

A high school student:

- First, show your support for your student's desire to gain knowledge, experience, and expertise beyond high school.
- Participate in campus visits and financial aid nights, and then openly discuss the options with your student.
- Attend local and regional college fairs with your high school junior or senior. For your convenience, the [Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel](#) has created a college preparation events calendar to help you locate college fairs in your neck of the woods. The MDHE is planning to exhibit at a large number of fairs listed on the [Show-Me to College website](#), and we encourage you to stop by our booth to obtain information that will better assist you in planning and paying for your child's education.
- Provide encouragement for meeting deadlines and maintaining good grades. Encourage them to build their resume by taking college prep classes, participating in extracurricular activities, and volunteering at programs outside of school.
- Research financing options for your child's education. Explore local and organizational scholarships and learn more about programs administered by the MDHE ([Grants and Scholarships section](#)).

A middle school student:

- Consider opening a 529 college savings plan. The Missouri plan is called the [MOST program](#), and it provides significant federal and state tax benefits, including a state income tax deduction of up to \$8,000 per year (\$16,000 if married, filing jointly) for Missouri taxpayers.
- Stay involved. Take the opportunity to attend parent/teacher conferences and visit with your child's counselor for extra guidance.
- Start laying the groundwork for preparing for college. Invite your child to consider a variety of career options and discuss the possible coursework associated with different careers. Start asking what kind of college they might like to attend and provide encouragement for efforts made toward maintaining good grades.

Scholarship Opportunity

- As one of the nation's largest college financial aid programs in the country, the Horatio Alger National Scholarship Program is the only major scholarship effort that specifically assists high school students who have faced and overcome great obstacles in their young lives. While many aid programs are directed primarily to recognizing academic achievement or leadership potential, the Horatio Alger program also seeks students who have a commitment to use their college degrees in service to others.

The National Scholarship Program is awarded to eligible students in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. National Scholars receive an all expenses paid trip to Washington D.C. during the spring of their senior year to participate in the National Scholars Conference. The Horatio Alger Association is pleased to be accepting applications from high school seniors of the class of 2012. For more information about eligibility requirements, visit <https://www.horatioalger.org/scholarships/apply.cfm>. To apply for the Horatio Alger Scholarship program, complete the **online application** by **Oct. 30, 2011**.