

Planning for Life After High School

A guide for parents and students



Marengo Community High School
Class of 2013

Junior Transition Timeline

August:

- Set your mind to learning and achieving as much as you can.

September:

- Register for the PSAT/NMSQT in the guidance office.

October:

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT at Marengo Community High School.
- Attend MCC College Fair, which will include over 100 colleges and universities.

November:

- Attend MCC night, which is strictly focused on programming at their school.

December:

- Register for the February ACT through www.actstudent.org . Our school code is 142-765.

January:

- Register for the February ACT through www.actstudent.org . Our school code is 142-765.
- Sign up in Guidance for the ACT prep class at MCHS.
- Prepare the list of courses you plan on taking senior year. Make sure the plan meets admission requirements for the colleges in which you are interested. Consider taking regular level electives pass/fail (one per semester) if you are a student with a GPA above a 2.0. Also, ponder taking Illinois Virtual School courses or, potentially, early graduation.

February:

- Meet with your counselor and register for senior year courses.
- Take the ACT. (If you are following the suggestions, this will be your 1st time.)

March:

- Make a list of at least five colleges in which you are interested.
- Visit colleges during our spring break. Be sure to visit when the college is in session. Ask questions while you are there from the list in this booklet.

April:

- Take the ACT through PSAE testing day 1.
(If you are following the suggestions, this will be your 2nd time.)
- Take the Workkeys test through PSAE testing day2.

May:

- Consider taking summer enrichment programs or courses at a community college.

Senior Transition Timeline

August:

- Register for October ACT through www.actstudent.org . Our school code is 142-765.
- Register with the NCCA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse, www.NCAA.org, if you are planning on participating in a sport at a Division 1 or 2 school.

September:

- Write your Personal Statement.
- Ask for Letters of Recommendation from 3 teachers.
- Have a senior meeting with your counselor.
- Start applying to at least five colleges. (Seek to do them online through the specific college websites.)
- Visit with admissions counselors that come to the high school.

October:

- Take the October ACT. (If you are following the suggestions, it will be your 3rd time.)
- Do a Job Shadow/College Visit.
- Finish completing at least five college applications. (Check individual colleges for application deadlines.)
- Register for the December ACT through www.actstudent.org. Our school code is 142-765.
- Visit with admissions counselors that come to the high school.
- Contact a recruiter and take the ASVAB if you are planning on entering the military.

November:

- Start applying for local scholarships. Our listing is posted in Guidance, the school website, and senior English classrooms.
- Start applying for national scholarships through www.fastweb.com.
- Start applying for college specific scholarships by calling the financial aid department of the colleges to which you have applied. (Most likely, you will be directed to their website.)
- Visit with admissions counselors that come to the high school.

December:

- Take the December ACT. (If you are following the suggestions, it will be your 4th time.)
- Continue applying for local, national, and college specific scholarships.

January:

- Complete the FAFSA. Follow the steps listed at the end of this packet. The websites you will be directed to are www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov , www.pin.ed.gov, and www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- Continue applying for local, national, and college specific scholarships.

February:

- Complete the FAFSA if you have not already done so.
- Continue applying for local, national, and college specific scholarships.

March:

- Continue applying for local, national, and college specific scholarships.
- Wait for your Financial Aid Award Letters from the colleges to which you have applied.

April:

- Wait for your Financial Aid Award Letters from the colleges to which you have applied.
- Continue applying for local, national, and college specific scholarships.
- Wait for local, national, and college-specific scholarship awards
- Review your college options and the costs associated. Take into account the amount of money coming from scholarships.

May:

- Wait for local, national, and college-specific scholarship awards
- Review your college options and the costs associated. Take into account the amount of money coming from scholarships.
- Make a decision on which college you will attend.
- Make a decision as to whether you will be borrowing any money to go to college. The amount of money you are eligible to borrow will be in the financial aid award letter from each school.

Websites To Bookmark Right Now

CAREER SITES:

www.careercruising.com Career Cruising has been designed with one goal in mind: to help students plan their future. With exceptional assessment tools, detailed occupation profiles and comprehensive post-secondary education information, students move seamlessly through the career exploration and planning process.

<http://www.il.kuder.com/> Illinois Career Planning System reviews your interests, skills, and work values online. Use your assessment results, build your personal career plan and explore a variety of college and career options in Illinois.

http://www.illinoisworknet.com/vos_portal/Industry/en/Home/ This site is maintained by the Illinois WorkNet Center. Student may select a career area to discover career pathways, training programs, and potential job market (for Illinois).

COLLEGE SEARCH:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/> Hosted by College Board (SAT) this site has a great college “match maker” site to help you find the best college for you! **\$\$Scholarships too\$**

<https://schoolforms.commonapp.org/CommonApp/Default.aspx> The Common Application is a one-stop-application site for many private schools. Fill out one application online and send it to multiple colleges.

www.collegezone.com The College Zone is a site created by the Illinois Student Assistance Committee to assist students and parents with the college process. There is information on college selection, application, career choices, and financial aid.

TRANSFER FROM MCC TO 4 YEAR COLLEGE

<http://www.itransfer.org/> iTransfer supports the Illinois Articulation Initiative's (IAI) mission to facilitate student transfer from one participating Illinois college/university to another in order to complete a degree.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH A MAJOR IN????

<http://www.uncwil.edu/stuaff/career/Majors/> Great site with a lot of information about career paths based on college programs of study.

SCHOLARSHIP SITES

<http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/> An estimate resource to determine the amount of financial aid a student may receive. Also many tips on filing the FAFSA form.

www.fastweb.com Complete a short profile to have scholarships emailed directly to your email account.

zinch.com A site for students to complete a profile so that colleges can look beyond the number. Also links to scholarships, blogs, and college “shout outs.”

Work and Learn through an Apprenticeship

<http://www.actstudent.org/planning/apprent.html>

If you like to work with your hands and your mind, you might want to consider an apprenticeship after high school. More than 850 occupations can be learned on the job through an apprenticeship.

An apprenticeship prepares you for a career through a structured program of on-the-job learning with classroom instruction, while you work and earn a salary. The programs can last from one to six years and you can choose careers in areas such as telecommunications, health care, computing, business support and the arts. The most common apprenticeships are in construction and manufacturing.

Most apprenticeships are registered through the U.S. Department of Labor, ensuring the program meets government standards for fairness, safety and training. If you complete a registered program, you will receive a certificate from the U.S. Department of Labor, which proves your qualifications for the career. Also, classroom instruction often can be used to earn a license, certification or degree.

For more information on apprenticeships, visit with your counselor. You also can call America's Workforce Network toll-free at (877) US2-JOBS. (872-5672) Operators can help you find career counselors and apprenticeship programs in your area.

General Military Opportunities Defined

<http://www.usmilitary.com/militaryopportunities.html>

Enlisted Personnel

Enlisted personnel begin at the lowest rank in the military and serve as the main workforce. The military prefers candidates with a high school education.

Officers

Officers begin at a supervisory rank. They must have a four-year college degree from an accredited institution before being commissioned; however, the military has several programs that lead to becoming a commissioned officer.

Regular Service

In the regular service, personnel serve on a full-time basis. After enlisting in the service, members are sent to basic training. After graduation, they are sent to specialty job training schools. Upon completion, they are assigned to a station or unit for duty. After 20 years of regular service, members qualify for a military retirement.

Reserve Service

The reserves are part-time military soldiers. Personnel serve an initial period on active duty after attending basic training and job training. After the training period, which usually lasts several months, reservists are free to return to civilian life, but for the remainder of the service obligation they attend training sessions and perform work in the job specialty one or two days a month with their local unit. Once a year, reservists participate in an active-duty training session for 14 days. When reservists have completed 20 years of service and have reached age 60, they are entitled to retirement, based on reserve pay.

Certificate Programs at McHenry County College

- Accounting Certificate
- Tax Practitioner Certificate
- Administrative Office Management Certificate
- Administrative Office Skills Certificate
- Medical Administration Certificate
- Legal Administration Certificate
- Advanced Automotive Technician Certificate
- Automotive Maintenance Technician Certificate
- Business Management Principles Certificate
- Entrepreneurship Certificate
- International Business Studies Certificate
- Organizational Leadership Certificate
- Advanced Computer Skills Certificate
- Computer Programmer Certificate
- Computer Skills Certificate
- Computer User Certificate
- Cyber Security Certificate
- Geek Technology Certificate
- Help Desk Certificate
- Networking Specialist Certificate
- PC Support Specialist Certificate
- Webmaster Certificate
- Construction Codes Certificate
- Design Technology Certificate
- Early Childhood Education 32 hour Certificate
- Early Childhood Education 12 hour Certificate
- EMT – Ambulance Certificate
- EMT – Paramedic Certificate
- Fire Fighter II Certificate
- Fire Officer I Certificate
- Fitness Instructor Training Certificate
- Floral Design Certificate
- Gardening Certificate
- Greenhouse Certificate
- Landscape Management Certificate
- Turf and Golf Course Management Certificate
- Manufacturing Processes Certificate
- Manufacturing Supervision Certificate
- Manufacturing Design Technology Certificate
- Marketing Certificate
- Marketing Management Certificate
- Professional Selling Certificate
- Basic Nurse Assistant Certificate
- Warehousing and Distribution Certificate

<http://www.mchenry.edu/atc/DegreePlanningSheets.asp>

What do Admission Officers Consider?

When looking at college applicants, admission officers consider:

- **Courses taken in high school**—Admission officers consider students who take challenging courses better prepared for college than students who take the easier route through high school.
 - **Grades**—Your grade point average and class standing are also important.
 - **College entrance exam score**—Colleges use entrance exam scores to determine whether you are ready for college academics and which courses you are prepared to take during your first year.
 - **Extracurricular activities**—Are you involved in high school activities, and will you be involved on campus? Students who are involved in campus activities are more likely to remain in college and thrive on campus.
 - **College essay**—Some colleges require essays and use them to judge writing skills and to learn more about prospective students as individuals.
 - **Interview**—Some colleges conduct interviews. You should present yourself as someone who is bright, articulate, and interested in being involved in the school.
 - **Whether the college is the right fit**—Will you like the lifestyle of the particular campus, fit in with fellow classmates, and find activities on campus interesting?
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Questions to Ask on a Campus Visit

- What activities and services are available to help students get settled (academically and socially) during their first year?
- How big are the classes?
- (Ask students) How easy is it to meet with faculty?
- (Ask students) Are you able to register for the classes you want?
- What is the total cost of attending the college?
- What types of financial aid does the college offer and how do I apply?
- Are all freshmen assigned to an academic advisor?
- Where do most freshmen live?
- Can I take a tour?
- What activities are available for students?
- Who teaches the courses for first-year students?
- How successful are the college's graduates in finding jobs?
- **Visit the Career Center to find out what employers interview on site for positions in your field of study.**
- What services (such as transportation and shopping) are available locally?
- What is there to do on weekends? Do most students stay or leave campus on weekends?

<http://www.actstudent.org/planning/visit.html>

**** Don't forget to ask about campus safety (on-campus violence and crime) ****

Completing Applications / Getting Recommendations

Two letters of recommendation are usually required for your college admissions application. **Request recommendations from people who know your strengths.** Teachers and counselors are usually the best choices. Ask for recommendations early so there is enough time to get them in comfortably before the deadline. It's considerate on your part.

Letter of Recommendation Information Sheet

Student Name _____

Letter of recommendation Due date _____

Scholarship/College _____

(Attach criteria for what needs to be included in the letter for the scholarship)

What is your current GPA? _____ What is your class rank? _____

What organizations do you belong to?

What offices have you held in those organizations?

What academic awards have you received?

What athletic programs have you participated in?

What athletic awards or recognition have you received?

What recognition have you received for talent in different areas? (e.g. music, band, forensics, etc.)

What community service have you participated in (include dates and brief explanation)?

What jobs have you held and for how long?

Any additional information you would like the person writing the letter of recommendation to know.

College Facts

An **associate degree** is a college degree awarded after the completion of about 20 classes. It either prepares students for a career following graduation or allows them to transfer into a bachelor's degree program.

A **bachelor's degree** is a four-year degree. It typically takes four years of full-time study to earn a bachelor's degree. In these four years, you will complete 120 semester credits or about 40 college courses. In most cases, more than half of a bachelor's degree consists of general education or liberal arts courses in areas such as English, critical thinking, psychology, history and mathematics.

If you start college at a 2 year school (example: MCC), you can transfer to another school if you have a MCC gpa of 2.0 or higher. Students must work with the MCC Advisor to have a smooth transition.

McHenry County College is a participant in the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI). This statewide agreement between many Illinois colleges and universities establishes a "package" of lower-division general education coursework accepted at all participating schools and is called the Illinois Articulation Initiative General Education Core Curriculum (IAI GECC).

There are 795 colleges in Illinois alone!

- 4 year State Schools for a Bachelor Degree (Northern Illinois University, Eastern Illinois University, University of Illinois-Champaign/Urbana)
- 4 year Private Schools for a Bachelor Degree (Rockford College, Bradley, Augustana)
- 2 year Public Schools for an Associates Degree or a Program Certificate (McHenry Community College, Rock Valley College)
- 2 year Private Schools for an Associates Degree (Rockford Career College)