

HOW TO USE EDUCATIONPLANNER.orgSM



A Guide Book for Counselors



EducationPlanner.org is a “hands on” website. The more you explore and use the site, the more familiar you will become with the sections and exercises in this Guide Book.

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HOMEPAGE



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STUDENTS PARENTS COUNSELORS

Start Thinking About Life After High School

- Explore careers that interest you.
- Search for your perfect school.
- Learn about student aid.
- Find grants or scholarships.
- Plan a campus visit.

What is Your Learning Style?

You're just a few questions away from finding out.

[TAKE THE QUIZ](#)

for Students



Making decisions about colleges and careers can seem overwhelming, especially when you are young. If you are feeling unprepared, know that you are not alone. We're here to help.

[LEARN MORE](#)

for Parents



We make it easy for you to understand college costs, the admissions process, and student aid as your child transitions from high school, to college, to the "real" world.

[LEARN MORE](#)

for Counselors



EducationPlanner is a great tool to get your middle school and high school students ready for life beyond high school. Encourage them to discover their interests and explore their options.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Check Out Our Calculators

Plug in the numbers to see how you can make the most of your savings and limit your borrowing.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Learn How to Master Standardized Tests

Sharpen your skills with our practice tests and get ready to ace the real thing!

[LEARN MORE](#)

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SERVICING

Homepage

In the Upper Left

Start Thinking About Life After High School

- ▶ **Explore careers that interest you.**—Links to Career Planning
- ▶ **Search for your perfect school.**—Links to Preparing for School
- ▶ **Learn about student aid.**—Links to Paying for School
- ▶ **Find grants and scholarships.**—Links to Find Grants and Scholarships under Paying for School
- ▶ **Plan a campus visit.**—Links to Visiting Campus under Preparing for School

Across the Top and in the Middle

Students

- ▶ Career Planning
- ▶ Preparing for School
- ▶ Paying for School
- ▶ Self-Assessments
- ▶ Ask a Counselor

Parents

- ▶ Your Child and Money
- ▶ ACT/SAT Scores
- ▶ Why Save?
- ▶ The Costs of College
- ▶ You and the FAFSA
- ▶ The Scholarship Search
- ▶ Ask a Counselor

Counselors

- ▶ ASCA National Standards for Students
- ▶ EducationPlanner as a Computer Lab Activity
- ▶ Setting up a Job Shadowing Program
- ▶ Hosting a Student Aid Event
- ▶ Ask a Counselor

STUDENTS

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EDUCATION PLANNER by Ed

STUDENTS PARENTS COUNSELORS

Enter Search Term

- Career Planning
- Preparing for School
- Paying for School
- Self-Assessments
- Ask a Counselor



Take time now to plan for tomorrow.

Planning for your future can seem overwhelming, especially when you are young. If you are feeling unprepared, know that you are not alone. Help is available.

EducationPlanner provides practical advice so you can find the career and educational path that's right for you. Take a look:

- ▶ **Career Planning**
Don't worry if you don't yet know what your future career is. Let us help you find out.
- ▶ **Preparing for School**
Applying to college can be a daunting task. Get tips on preparing yourself for admissions success.
- ▶ **Paying for School**
Worried about the costs of school but don't know where to begin? You've come to the right place.
- ▶ **Self-Assessments**
Use our interactive self-assessments to find out more about yourself and discover what you're good at.
- ▶ **Ask a Counselor**
Take a look at some common questions counselors get from students.

Popular Pages

- ▶ [Find Grants and Scholarships](#)
- ▶ [Career Search](#)
- ▶ [Schools From A to Z](#)

MyPlanner

Use this worksheet to record your achievements and aspirations.

- ▶ [Download Worksheet](#)

Self-Assessments

- ▶ [What Kind of Student Are You?](#)
- ▶ [What's Your Learning Style?](#)
- ▶ [Which Study Habits Can You Improve?](#)
- ▶ [How Strong Is Your Character?](#)
- ▶ [Which Careers Match Your Skills](#)
- ▶ [Career Clusters Activity](#)

Career Planning

Career Planning Checklists

We provide career planning checklists for middle school and high school. You may find it especially helpful to reference this content when working with middle school students during a computer lab session. It takes only a few minutes to cover, but it gets students to think.

Find Careers

Give this section heavy use during computer lab sessions with students.

▶ Career Cluster Activity

This computer lab activity is for any grade from 6 to 12. Guide students to this activity and have them complete all four pages. Results appear at the end of the activity.

Students can click on a career cluster on the results page to go to O*NET OnLine. Here, students can explore occupations and learn about:

- Tasks
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities
- Education
- Wages & Employment Trends
- And more...

▶ Which Careers Match Your Skills?

This activity is very quick and easy and gives instant results. Students check the boxes next to skills they like to do and select “Show Me the Results!”

▶ Career Search

The Career Search takes students to Find Occupations on O*NET OnLine. There are many ways to search, including:

- **Keyword**—Search by word, phrase, or title.
- **Career Cluster**—Search occupations that are similar or in the same field.
- **Industry**—Search jobs within a specific industry.
- **Job Zone**—Search by levels of education, experience, and training.
- **Bright Outlook**—Search occupations that are rapidly growing or new and emerging.
- **Green Economy Sector**—Search for green/earth-friendly jobs.
- **Job Family**—Search occupations based on work performed, skills, education, training, and credentials.
- **STEM Discipline**—Search occupations in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

Consider using a SMART Board or a projector and computer to show students how to navigate to O*NET OnLine.

Have students write down the top three to five jobs they find, along with the educational requirements and salary. At the end of class, ask students to share with the group as a time filler and for group interaction.

Encourage students to look at the job titles they are NOT familiar with to learn more. Many students go to what is familiar and may miss out on a unique and interesting job!

Students of all ages care about where the money is!! Look at Wages & Employment Trends first to keep their interest. Some students will not even look at a job if it doesn't pay enough, while others may change their minds about their choice of career and college degree.

This activity is good for middle school students to do before they do the Career Cluster Activity.

Have middle school students record two or more careers to research further on EducationPlanner.org using the Career Search. They can also check if the other self-assessments give the same results as this one.

When working with middle school students, refer them to the Keyword, Career Cluster, Bright Outlook, and Green Economy Sector searches. The other searches may be too confusing for students younger than 9th grade.

When working with high school students, point out the Job Zone, Bright Outlook, Green Economy Sector, and STEM Discipline searches. Students may find “other” jobs that they may not even know about.

Use a class session to have students explore only the Career Cluster search. Students can also use the Career Videos link on EducationPlanner to search by clusters to watch videos.

▶ **Career Videos**
The Career Videos link takes students to CareerOneStop. Here, students can watch:

- Cluster & Careers Videos
- Career Videos in Spanish
- Skill & Ability Videos
- Industry Videos
- Work Option Videos

▶ **Hot Jobs for the Future**
Hot Jobs for the Future takes students to Browse Bright Outlook Occupations on O*NET OnLine. These occupations are predicted to grow much faster than average, with more than 100,000 job openings by 2018, and they are considered to be new and emerging within high-growth industries.

▶ **It's Not All About Money**
This content is good for students to explore, but it may work better with high school students than with middle school students.

▶ **Schools for Your Career**
This content takes students to the College Board website, where they can search for schools via their career and major. Many students have a hard time finding schools using their major, as majors have different names at different schools.

Check with your IT department to make sure students can watch the videos. It is helpful if your school has Windows Media Player already installed.

When working with middle school students, use a SMART Board or a projector and computer to show them how to access the Career Videos and walk them through some examples. Explain why viewing the videos is a good way to end a career search.

Do your homework! Before you get started, find two to three unique jobs and ask students what the jobs could be. Then use O*NET OnLine to show students what each job is, including the education level and salary. This helps to make the class more interactive and gets students interested.

This exercise may be especially helpful to do in the classroom with 11th grade students.

Get Experience

This section covers Internships and Job Shadowing. Students can explore and read this content on their own. Not all schools have job shadowing activities, so this content may or may not be useful at your school.

Explore Salary and Pay

- ▶ **The More You Learn, the More You Earn**
All grade levels can and should use this interactive tool. You may want to explain this tool in a group setting rather than individually to better show how an increase in education affects a student's salary potential.
- ▶ **Does College Pay Off?**
Students can explore and read this content on their own.
- ▶ **What to Expect in the Real World**
Students can explore and read this content on their own.

Preparing for School

Preparing for School Checklists

We provide checklists on how to prepare for college in middle school and high school.

Standardized Tests

Get information on a wide variety of standardized tests, including links to websites where students are able to take practice tests.

- ▶ **GED¹ Tests** —Useful for students in the Youth Program at CareerLink locations or for incarcerated youth
- ▶ **PSAT/NMSQT² Test** —A practice test for the SAT test and a qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship
- ▶ **ACT³ Test** —An alternative to the SAT test for college admissions
- ▶ **SAT⁴ Test** —A test for college admissions
- ▶ **SAT Subject⁴ Tests** —Optional; can really help students with admissions into college if their scores are good
- ▶ **GRE⁵ Test** —For graduate students
- ▶ **GMAT⁶** —For graduate students
- ▶ **MCAT⁷** —For graduate students
- ▶ **LSAT⁸** —For graduate students

Find Schools

On the main page, we have organized content under two main subject areas: Let the college search begin and Narrow down your list of favorites.

- ▶ **What to Look for in a School**
 - This interactive checklist lets students fill in their preferences. Students can fill it in online and print it from the screen, or they can download the worksheet, fill in the worksheet and print.
- ▶ **College Match Maker**
 - This content takes students to the College Board website where they can answer questions specific to their interests and schooling to find colleges that meet their needs. Included are:
 - Type of School
 - Location
 - Majors
 - Cost & Financial Aid
 - Admissions
 - Sports & Activities
 - Housing & Programs
 - Specialized Options

Use this activity with 11th grade students before they start searching for a school. It will help them to know what to look for in a school.

As students answer questions and specify their preferences, the number of colleges that meet their selected criteria decreases. This number appears at the top of each College MatchMaker page.

On the results page, have students select “How do I Stack Up?” and compare their grades, activities, and test scores to what the colleges they matched up with require. This can be a real “eye opener” for students who think they can get in anywhere and for students who don’t think they are good enough for college.

¹GED is a registered trademark of the American Council on Education.

²PSAT/NMSQT is a registered trademark of the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation, which were not involved in the production of, and do not endorse, this product.

³ACT is a registered trademark of ACT, Inc.

⁴SAT and SAT Subject Tests are registered trademarks of the College Board, which was not involved in the production of, and does not endorse, this product.

⁵GRE is a registered trademark of Educational Testing Service (ETS).

⁶GMAT is a registered trademark of the Graduate Management Admission.

⁷MCAT is a registered trademark of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

⁸LSAT is a registered trademark of the Law School Admission Council.

- ▶ Schools From A to Z
Students can do a quick search to find a school in this alphabetical listing. Additional links include:
 - **See Profile**—Provides a snapshot of the school
 - **Am I on Track?**—Lets students see if they meet the school's admissions requirements
 - **How do I Stack Up?**—Lets students compare themselves to students who are enrolled
 - **Find Similar**—Shows schools that are similar to the one chosen
- ▶ Comparing Schools
This content takes students to the College Board website where they are able to compare up to three colleges.
- ▶ Visiting Campus
This content gives students a list of things to think about when visiting a school. This content provides a nice ending for a college search workshop with students.
- ▶ Campus Life
These lists of questions get students thinking about living away from home on a college campus.

This would be good to mention to 11th grade students at the end of the presentation.

Apply

This easy-to-read content explains the application process.

- ▶ Completing Your College Applications: 10 Tips
- ▶ Admissions Decision Letters
- ▶ On the Wait List? Don't Give Up

Recommend that English teachers cover this section in a classroom setting.

College Prep for Different Types of Students

This section provides an overview, considerations, and college outlook for specific types of students:

- ▶ Home-Schooled Students
- ▶ Cyber School Students
- ▶ Athletes
- ▶ Students With Disabilities
- ▶ Nontraditional Students

Paying for School

Student Aid Checklists

We provide student aid checklists for middle school and high school.

Dollars and Sense

- ▶ Tips to Get Started
This easy-to-read content talks about budgets and savings.
- ▶ YouCanDealWithIt.com
This PHEAA-owned website helps students with free money tools, tips, and resources.

Student Aid 101

- ▶ **Student Aid Basics: 10 Tips**
This content is good for students to read in their senior year of high school. Print out a bunch of copies to have handy for students and parents.
- ▶ **The Importance of the FAFSA**
Find an overview of the FAFSA, information on eligibility, and instructions on how to apply. Links from our websites to the federal websites let students apply for an electronic PIN and apply directly at FAFSA on the Web.
- ▶ **Are You Dependent or Independent?**
Students need to understand the difference between being dependent and independent for the purpose of student aid and why they must provide parent data.
- ▶ **The Role of the Financial Aid Office**
Mention this content at the end of a student aid event to refer parents to our website.

Mention this section at the end of a student aid event to refer parents to our website!

Ways to Pay

- ▶ **10 Ways to Reduce College Costs**
Find tips to reduce college costs for students. These tips are good for parents too.
- ▶ **Grants**
Find an overview of grants, information on eligibility, and instructions on how to apply.
- ▶ **Scholarships**
Find an overview of scholarships, information on eligibility, and instructions on how to apply. Students can link directly to fastweb.com.
- ▶ **Loans**
Learn about the different types of loans available to students and parents, including:
 - Direct Stafford Loans
 - Direct PLUS Loans for Parents
 - Direct PLUS Loans for Graduate and Professional Degree Students
 - Perkins Loans
 - Private Education Loans
- ▶ **Work-Study Employment**
Find an overview on work-study employment, information on eligibility, and instructions on how to apply.
- ▶ **Military Service**
Find an overview of the educational benefits associated with military service, information on eligibility, and instructions on how to apply.

Refer students to this content during their scholarship search.

Find Grants and Scholarships

Students can link directly to grant and scholarship resources.

Student Aid Packages

Consider providing this tool to parents and students at student aid events and FAFSA completion sessions.

- ▶ **What Is a Student Aid Package?**
It helps students/families to see in numbers how much aid does not need to be paid back and how much a student has to pay out of pocket.
- ▶ **Compare Your Student Aid Packages**
Students can link directly to the College Board website to compare student aid packages.

Paying for School Q&A

This interactive quiz provides instant answers.

Calculators

- ▶ **Reach Your Savings Goals**
For saving money
- ▶ **Watch Your Savings Grow**
For saving money
- ▶ **Estimate Your Expected Family Contribution**
Links students to the expected family contribution calculator on the College Board website; good to refer to at student aid events
- ▶ **Estimate Your Monthly Loan Payments**
Shows students what their monthly loan payment is going to be; a real eye opener for the student who says "I will worry later about how much I owe."

Use these calculators to help students decide on a college based on how much they are going to have to pay back.

Be sure to multiply the final monthly payment amount by 4 or 5 years for a grand total.

Self-Assessments

What Kind of Student Are You?

This quiz is quick and interactive.

What's Your Learning Style?

This interactive 20 question quiz gives instant results.

Which Study Habits Can You Improve?

This interactive quiz helps students see where they need to improve their study habits.

How Strong Is Your Character?

This interactive quiz provides results about character traits.

These interactive self-assessments are good for middle school students.

Combine with other self-assessments during a computer lab session.

Ask a Counselor

This question and answer section provides a few examples. We also allow users to "Submit a Question." Selected staff in PA School Services review submitted questions and provide an email response back to the student, parent, or counselor.

PARENTS

- Your Child and Money
- ACT/SAT Scores
- Why Save?
- The Costs of College
- You and the FAFSA
- The Scholarship Search
- Ask a Counselor



Stay "in the know" as your child gets ready for the future.

As your child gets older, he or she will face educational and career decisions that can seem overwhelming. Do what you can to help ease your child's transition from high school, to college, to the "real" world.

To prepare for your role in this family event, educate yourself about educational costs, the college admissions process, and student aid.

- ▶ **Your Child and Money**
Learn how to get your son or daughter off to a solid financial start.
- ▶ **Making Sense of ACT/SAT Scores**
Understand the ACT¹ and SAT² tests so your child knows what to expect.
- ▶ **Why Save for Your Child's Future?**
Avoid some of the common reasons why parents don't save for college.
- ▶ **The Skyrocketing Costs of College**
Find out why college costs have been increasing and will continue to do so.
- ▶ **You and the FAFSA**
Ensure your child has access to as much student aid as possible.
- ▶ **The Scholarship Search: Tips for Parents and Students**
Make the scholarship search your college-bound child's number one priority.
- ▶ **Ask a Counselor**
Take a look at some common questions counselors get from parents.

Popular Pages

- ▶ [Find Grants and Scholarships](#)
- ▶ [Schools From A to Z](#)

Parents

Tips

Refer parents to this section during student aid events.

- ▶ **Your Child and Money**
Find tips for parents on children and finances.
- ▶ **Making Sense of ACT/SAT Scores**
Get an explanation of the ACT and SAT tests, as well as links to the test websites.
- ▶ **Why Save for Your Child's Future?**
Find out why saving for college is important.
- ▶ **The Skyrocketing Costs of College**
Understand why college costs are increasing and learn how to prepare.
- ▶ **You and the FAFSA**
Learn why the FAFSA is needed and get links to the FAFSA on the Web.
- ▶ **The Scholarship Search: Tips for Parents and Students.**
Find links to fastweb.com and, for unusual scholarships, to finaid.org.
- ▶ **Ask a Counselor**
This question and answer section provides a few examples. We also allow users to "Submit a Question." Selected staff in PA School Services review submitted questions and provide an email response back to the student, parent, or counselor.

COUNSELORS



EDUCATION PLANNER for

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STUDENTS PARENTS **COUNSELORS**

- ASCA National Standards for Students
- EducationPlanner as a Computer Lab Activity
- Setting up a Job Shadowing Program
- Hosting a Student Aid Event
- Ask a Counselor



Get your students ready for life beyond high school.

EducationPlanner is a great tool to get your middle school and high school students thinking about careers and education. Help your students discover their interests and explore their options.

We offer solutions that can help you overcome some common barriers to student success.

- ▶ **ASCA National Standards for Students**
Understand why the ASCA National Standards for Students are so important. The ASCA National Standards were developed by the American School Counselor Association.
- ▶ **EducationPlanner as a Computer Lab Activity**
Use this computer lab activity to introduce EducationPlanner to your students.
- ▶ **Setting up a Job Shadowing Program**
Want to start a job shadowing program at your school? We can help.
- ▶ **Hosting a Student Aid Event**
Schedule a student aid event to explain the student aid process to parents and students.
- ▶ **Ask a Counselor**
Take a look at some common questions counselors get from counselors.

Popular Pages

- ▶ [Career Clusters Activity](#)
- ▶ [Preparing for School Checklists](#)

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PHeaa **aes** **fedloan** SERVICING

Counselors

- ▶ **ASCA National Standards for Students**
Get a brief explanation of the ASCA standards and the ways that EducationPlanner.org can help counselors achieve these standards. Introduce counselors to this information before showing them the website.
- ▶ **EducationPlanner as a Computer Lab Activity**
Find out how to plan and conduct the activity in a computer lab. Share this with counselors during an initial meeting and before going into the classroom for an activity.
- ▶ **Setting up a Job Shadowing Program**
This guide for counselors discusses planning a job shadowing program, implementation, and follow up.
- ▶ **Hosting a Student Aid Event**
Get tips for setting up a student aid event.
- ▶ **Ask a Counselor**
This question and answer section provides a few examples. We also allow users to “Submit a Question.” Selected staff in PA School Services review submitted questions and provide an email response back to the student, parent, or counselor.

EducationPlanner.org is your one-stop career and college planning website. EducationPlanner.org provides practical and easy-to-understand advice to help prepare students for the important decisions they will face in the future. In addition to being a resource for students, this website also provides information and tools for parents and counselors to help them motivate and prepare today's youth for a successful tomorrow.

EducationPlanner.org was developed as a public service by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA). Created in 1963 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, PHEAA has evolved into one of the nation's leading student aid organizations. Today, PHEAA is a national provider of student financial aid services, serving millions of students and thousands of schools through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, financial aid processing, outreach, and other student aid programs. PHEAA's earnings are used to support its public service mission and to pay its operating costs without any taxpayer support. PHEAA continues to devote its energy, resources and imagination to developing innovative ways to ease the financial burden of higher education for students, families, schools, and taxpayers.

PHEAA conducts its student loan servicing activities nationally as American Education Services (AES) and FedLoan Servicing. For more information, visit PHEAA.org.

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