



9TH GRADE COLLEGE PREP CHECKLIST

As you enter your first year of high school, now is the perfect time to start the process towards launching your Dakota Dream — if you haven't already. The earlier you start, the better prepared you will be for education after high school and turning your dreams into reality.

Use this checklist to help get prepared. As you cross off tasks on your list, Our Dakota Dreams will be by your side every step of the way.

- ❑ Talk about your possible life goals and plans with family members and your school representative. You don't have to have all the answers, but these discussions can help you begin to envision the possibilities.
- ❑ Engage in **career exploration**.
- ❑ Take an interest and skills assessment test to help you explore different career options — free tests are available online.
 - ❑ **SDMylife**
 - ❑ **Mapping Your Future**
 - ❑ **My Next Move**
 - ❑ **South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation**
- ❑ Consider the type of college degree you would need to prepare you for your career interests.
- ❑ Explore colleges of interest in-person or virtually.
- ❑ Talk it out with your school representative — School representatives support you as you navigate these confusing times and help to get you on the right path.
- ❑ Review your high school course plan — Take challenging courses that will keep you engaged and on top of your schoolwork.
 - ❑ Set a goal to take the high school courses required to qualify for the **South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship**. With the right coursework and ACT score, you can receive up to \$6,500 for college!
- ❑ Explore different extracurricular activities to see what you like and don't like.
- ❑ Participate in **South Dakota's Week of Work** to explore, experience, and engage in work-based learning opportunities!
- ❑ Take advantage of SD Department of Labor and Regulation services such as mock interviews, application assistance, and soft skills development for your first job, **careerlaunchsd.com**.
- ❑ Start thinking about how you might pay for college – saving money, learning about amazing **scholarship options** available in South Dakota, and understanding what "**financial aid**" means can help you prepare.
- ❑ Watch the **Paying for College SD** video series and invite your parents to do the same.
- ❑ Check out **career camps** that are offered, and enroll in a summer enrichment program.