



9TH GRADE COLLEGE PREP CHECKLIST

The beginning of high school is a great time to start thinking about the possibilities for your future. Discover the types of careers that fit your interests and consider the high school coursework you can take to strategically align with graduation requirements, college preparation and scholarship opportunities.

Use this checklist to get a head start.

- Use Your Resources — Talk about the ideas, plans and goals you have for your future with family members and your school counselor. You don't have to have all the answers, but these discussions can help you envision the possibilities.
- Understand Your Career Interests
 - Take an interest and skills assessment to understand how your interests and skills align with the world of work — free tests are available online.
 - **SDMyLife** (Students can log in with their school email (K12) credentials or request their username from an educator or school counselor at their school.)
 - **Mapping Your Future**
 - **My Next Move**
 - Research career fields and the education needed to prepare for various careers.
 - Explore different extracurricular activities offered at your high school. Not only can these foster new friendships, but they also help you explore your passions and career interests.
- Explore College Options
 - Familiarize yourself with the many colleges in South Dakota. Browse their academic program offerings and learn about the support and activities each can offer their students.
 - Start thinking about how you might pay for college – saving money, learning about **financial aid**, and understanding **scholarship options** available in South Dakota is a great start.
- Set Strategic Coursework Goals
 - 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 \$7,500 for college!)
 - Familiarize yourself with the **math pathways advising tools** on ourdakotadreams.com. These tools will help you understand the types of math courses you should consider taking in high school based on your career interests.
- Find Other Opportunities
 - Participate in **South Dakota's Week of Work** to explore, experience, and engage in work-based learning opportunities!
 - Check out **Career Ready SD** for how work-based learning can help you learn about potential careers by connecting with local businesses to explore, engage, and experience as you grow toward your future career goals.
 - Check out **career camps** that are offered and enroll in a summer enrichment program.