

2023 Naviance Student Survey Report

Student Perspectives on College, Career,
and Life Readiness



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Introduction

Today's students see a **shifting landscape** when they consider the future.

In response to that uncertainty, students are more open to exploring a full range of possibilities when they consider their postsecondary lives. Many are open to paths other than a four-year college, and not all are convinced they need a post-high school education to be successful in their chosen careers. In fact, **55% of recent college graduates** feel they lack the practical skills that would make them competitive job candidates and are doubting the cost of a bachelor's degree when it often requires taking on large amounts of debt, no longer guarantees job security, and doesn't always help students develop in-demand workforce skills.

Despite being open to a variety of postsecondary paths, many students feel pressured to pursue a four-year degree and want more information on the range of options available to them. Connecting their education to a career they enjoy and that aligns with their strengths is of high interest and reinforces both the pressure students feel to succeed and the ambiguous economy waiting for them.¹

Significantly, students are thinking about their postsecondary plans earlier than ever before. Nearly a third of Naviance CCLR survey respondents began planning in their sophomore year, and a quarter did so in their freshman year. For students as young as middle schoolers, there is a growing interest in thinking about their futures and a desire to connect their schooling with their postgraduate lives.

In disinvested communities, the need for preparation is even higher, with only 8% of students from these areas feeling fully prepared to decide what to do after high school. These students spend a considerable amount of time thinking about their postsecondary plans and note that the cost of tuition is a primary consideration for them when considering pursuing continued formal learning.²

While these students are looking for more support, schools are largely not able to provide the hands-on attention and resources that would help them feel more prepared for the future. The America School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends a ratio of 250 students per 1 school counselor. However, the national average was closer to 408 to 1 during the 2021-2022 school year.³

Without access to resources that can provide students with the information they need and guidance to understand the range of options available to them, student uncertainty is likely compounded while inequity persists.

Methodology

Naviance CCLR administered a voluntary online survey to all middle and high school students using the platform in May and June 2023. The survey enables the analysis of students' postsecondary interests and plans, the perceived importance of Naviance CCLR, and a variety of other helpful metrics. 2,664 students responded. The survey should be seen as providing glimpses into the current state of preparation for college, careers, and life, rather than conclusive evidence of any particular trend.

SA Market Insights conducted analyses of the data. The "data" consists of aggregated information on the number and type of applications submitted as well as survey responses captured within the Naviance

CCLR platform. None of the data collected or processed included any personally identified information. The data is neither shared, sold, or disclosed to any third party aside from SA Market Insights and will be deleted upon the release of the updated report.

Profile of Respondents

Annually, middle and high school students in the US who use Naviance CCLR are given the opportunity to participate in a survey. This survey focuses on student actions, behaviors, and strategies for planning for their postsecondary life. The answers from this survey provide insight for school leadership on how to address the present and future needs of their students. Naviance CCLR also uses this research to ensure that its solution keeps pace with the ever-evolving needs of students.

High school students, particularly those in twelfth grade, make up the bulk of the responses. Figure 1 shows the trend and respondent breakdown by grade level. 94% of respondents were enrolled in public school at the time of the survey.

The number of applications to both two- and four-year colleges from the Class of 2023 indicates a decrease compared to last year's data. However, the acceptance rate remained the same. This means that, though fewer students are electing to pursue another degree, the acceptance rate is stable.

Class of 2023 by the Numbers

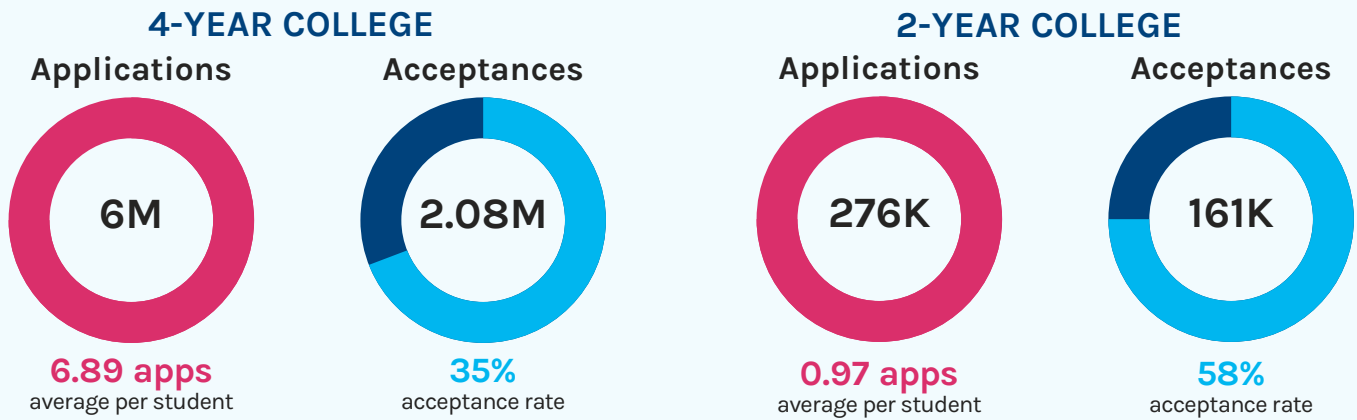


Figure 1

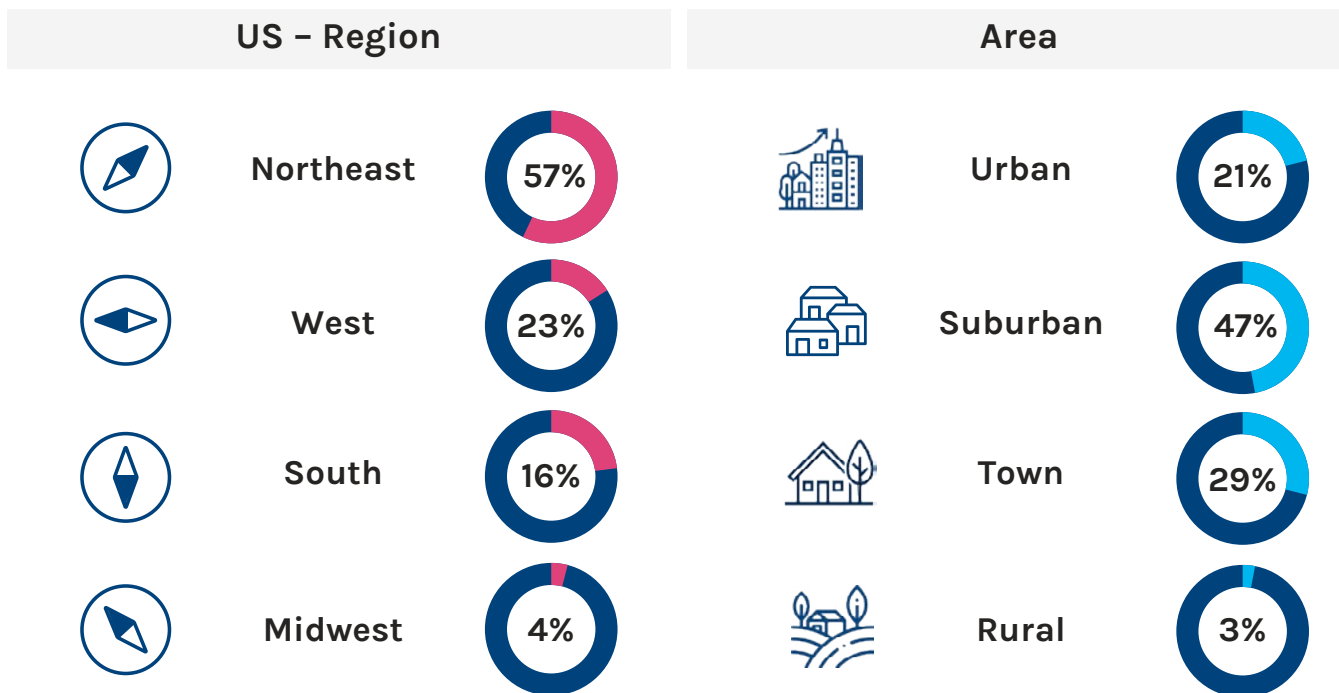
2023 Naviance CCLR Student Surveys Completed by Grade

Grade	Count	Percent of Completed Surveys
6	97	4%
7	154	6%
8	90	3%
9	142	5%
10	97	4%
11	319	12%
12	1687	63%
No grade indicated	78	3%
Total	2664	100%

Breakdown of Respondents

FIGURE 2

Percent of Respondents by Region and Urbanicity



By Region

Respondents from the Northeast made up over half (57%) of respondents in this year's survey. The West represents 23%, the South 16%, and the Midwest 4%.

By Urbanicity

Suburban respondents made up almost half (47%) of respondents. Those living in towns made up 29% of the responses, urban areas accounted for 21%, and 3% lived in rural locations.

Middle School Students Are Already Thinking About Their Postsecondary Life

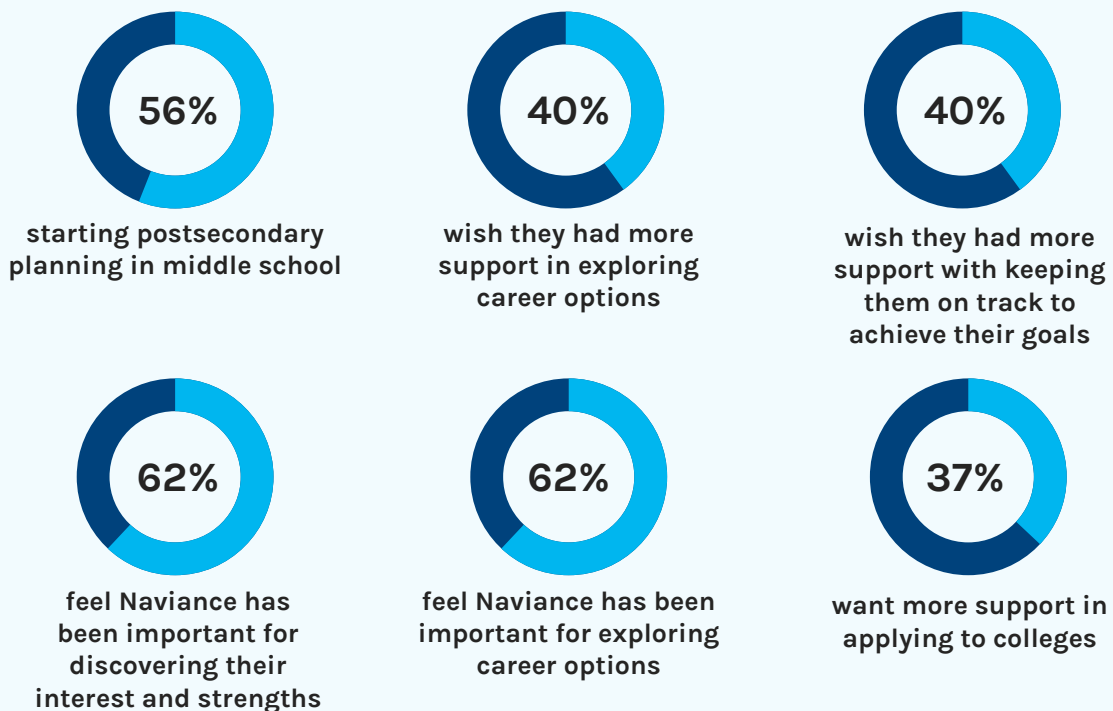
More than half (56%) of survey respondents said that they started planning for their post-high school life during middle school. This future-forward attitude is further reflected in a strong interest (40%) from current middle schoolers to have more support in both exploring career options and keeping on track to achieve their goals.

Over half of middle school students (62%) feel that Naviance CCLR has been most important in helping them discover their interests and strengths and exploring career options.

While applying to college is years away for these students, more than a third (37%) are interested in learning what the process entails. Over half of these students are planning to attend either a four-year college (37%) or a two-year college (14%); roughly 1 in 5 (22%) are undecided.

Figure 3

Middle School Student Points of Interest



Ninth Grade Students Focusing on Bigger Picture

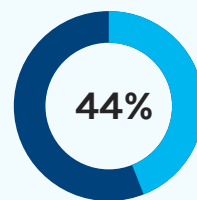
The vast majority (78%) of ninth graders said that they plan to choose career options that align with their interests. More than half (54%) said that exploring career options was the most important part of their interaction with Naviance CCLR. This data suggests that ninth grade is the ideal time to make sure students are being exposed to the many various career paths they can pursue before their idea of postsecondary narrows to college only.

Additionally, ninth graders are using backwards design to create their postsecondary plans. They seem to be more focused on their future careers and considering what they would like to achieve in the long term, then working backwards to design a path to achieve that end goal.

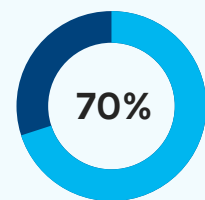
These ninth graders place high importance on finding a career that aligns with their interests (78%). However, less than half (46%) feel they have mapped out a plan to reach their goals.

Figure 4

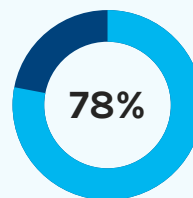
Ninth Grade Students Points of Interest



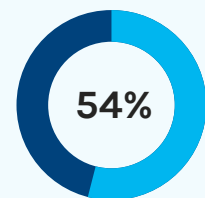
wish they had more support in creating their resume



do not currently have a part-time job



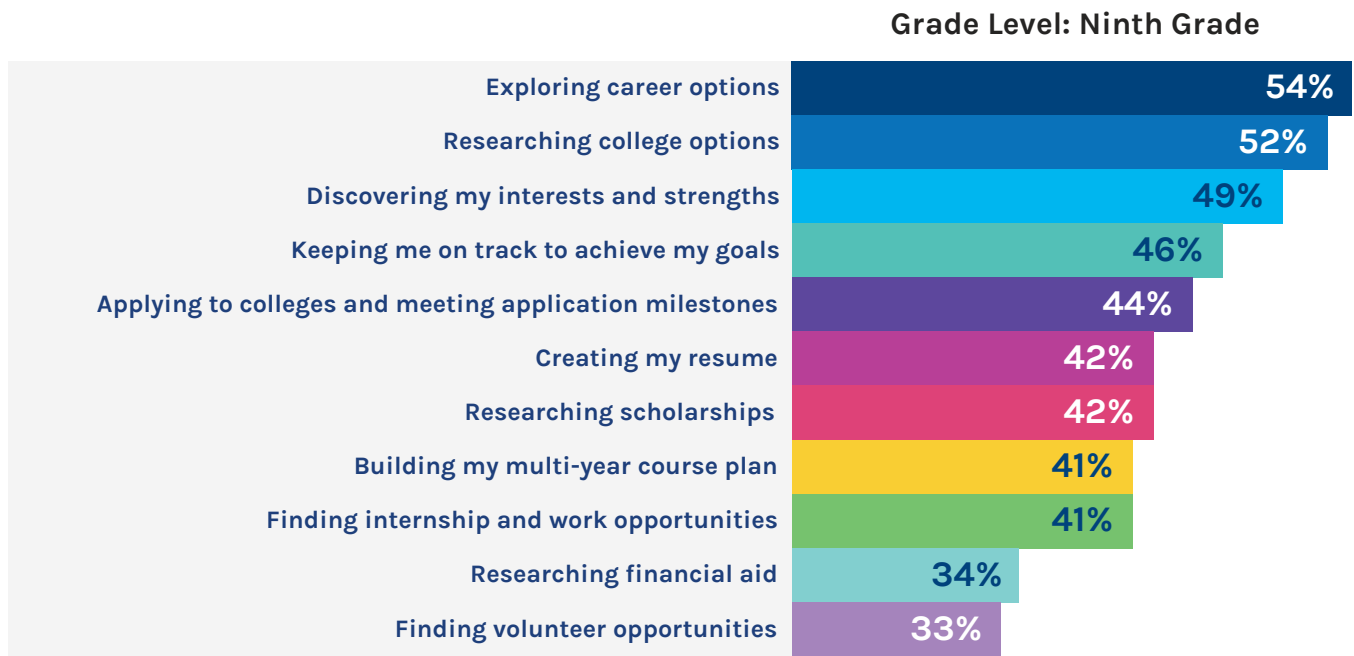
said they are choosing career options that align with their interests



said exploring career options is what they found most important in Naviance

Figure 5

Importance of Naviance CCLR for Ninth Graders



Tenth Graders Feel Empowered, Want Concrete Resources to Guide Their Decisions

Tenth graders share some views with their freshman counterparts, with most (78%) wanting a career that aligns with their interests. In equal measure, most (78%) of these students also believe that it is critical to have a career that has meaning and purpose.

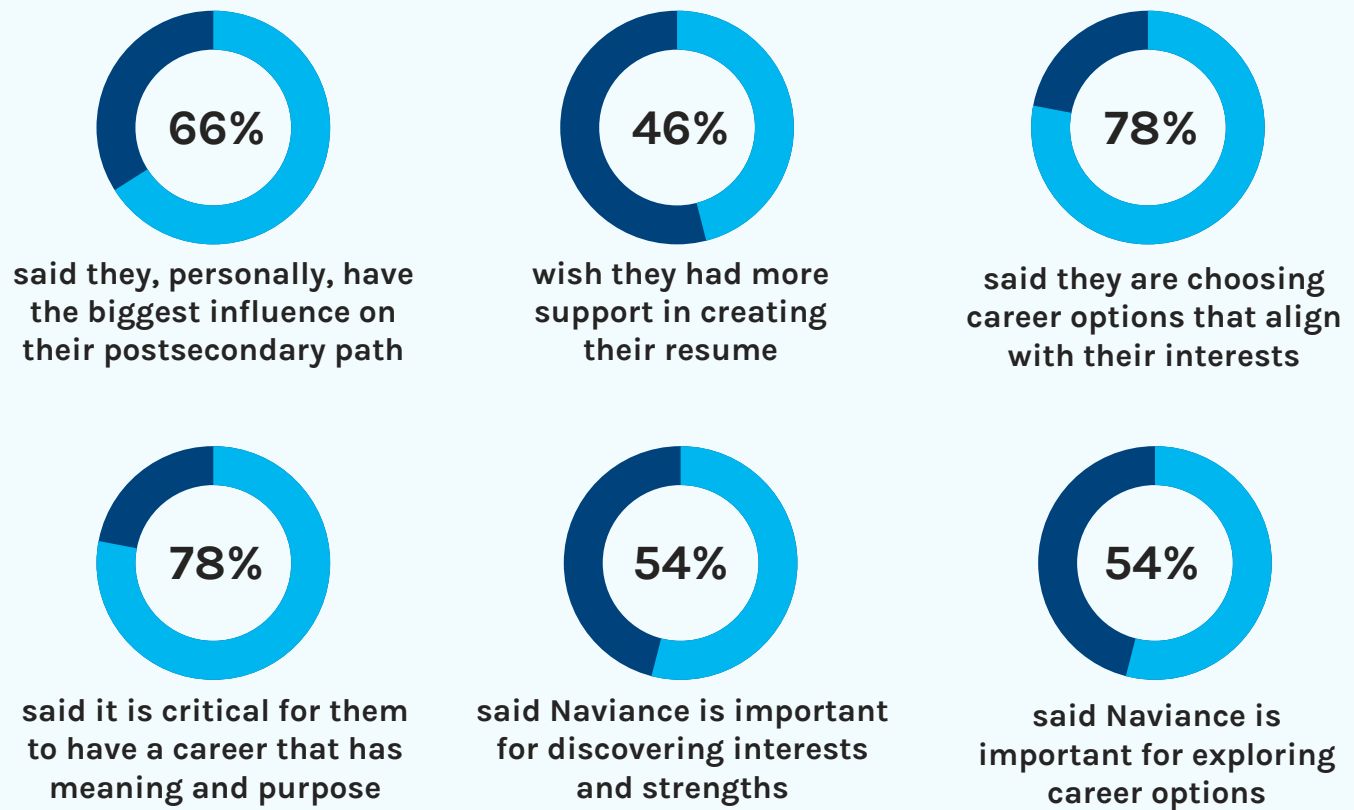
When asked who has the most influence over their post-graduation plan, most (66%) tenth graders say "myself." This feeling of self-agency peaks with tenth graders and begins to decline in the last two years of high school.

Almost half (46%) of respondents said they wish they had more support from their current school around creating a resume. However, they also find it valuable to spend time discovering their strengths and interests (54%) and exploring career options (54%).



Figure 6

Tenth Grade Students Points of Interest

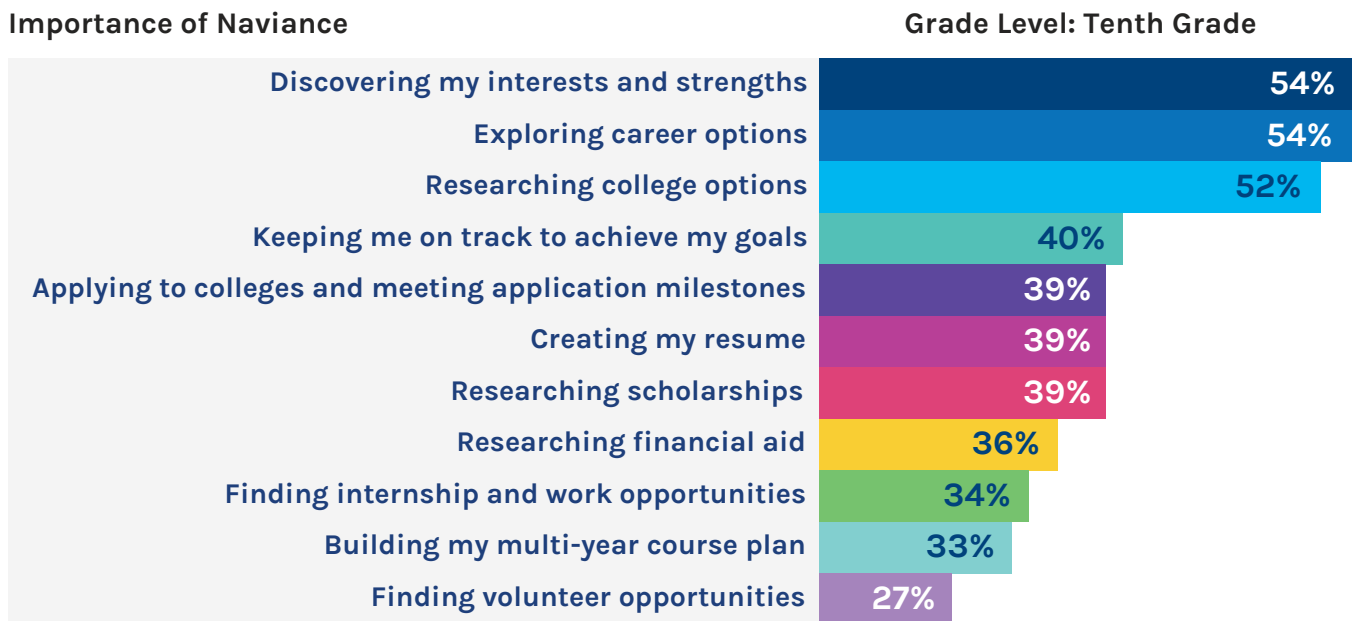


Given their strong desire (78%) to have a career that is aligned with their interests and has meaning and purpose, tenth graders need support in exploring their options and establishing a plan to meet their goals.

The majority (54%) of tenth graders see Naviance CCLR as important for finding their strengths, interests, and career options, which aligns with their focus on understanding postsecondary options that are right for them. The areas in which Naviance CCLR is most important for them also parallel the tenth grade peak (66%) of seeing themselves as the most important influence when choosing their postsecondary path. These students are prioritizing their own opinions and are not as heavily impacted by outside influences as their older counterparts, making it an ideal time to encourage authentic self-reflection and articulate hopes for the future.

Figure 7

Importance of Naviance CCLR for Tenth Graders



In Eleventh Grade, Practicalities Become the Focus

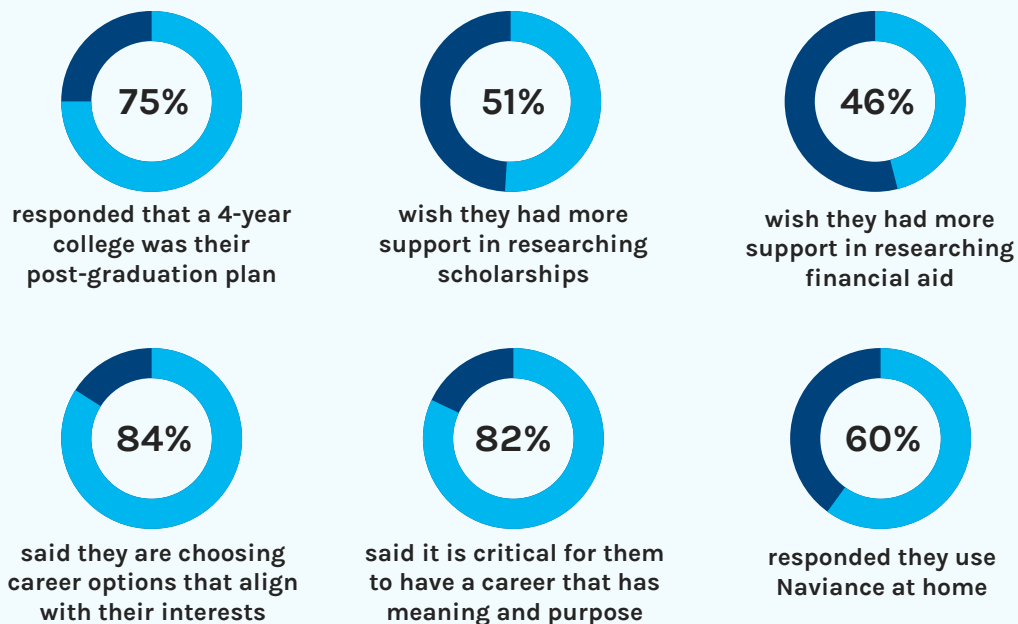
The vast majority (75%) of eleventh grade students responded that a four-year college was their post-graduation plan, and they remain very interested in finding a career that both aligns with their interests (84%) and that has meaning and purpose (82%). Eleventh grade represents a peak for each of these metrics, reflecting shifts between grades as the end of high school approaches.

As they get closer to making these decisions, eleventh graders seem to turn their attention toward more practical, particularly financial, considerations. They show the most interest in financial support with roughly half saying they wished their school provided more support around researching scholarships (51%) and financial aid (46%).

This shift toward more concrete elements of their postsecondary planning makes sense as most (55%) report taking their first SAT or ACT during the spring of their junior year. There is also a significant increase in actively searching for colleges with 39% responding that they started during eleventh grade (an increase of 29 percentage points) from tenth grade.

Figure 8

Eleventh Grade Students Points of Interest



Significant Shifts in Expectations from Junior to Senior Year

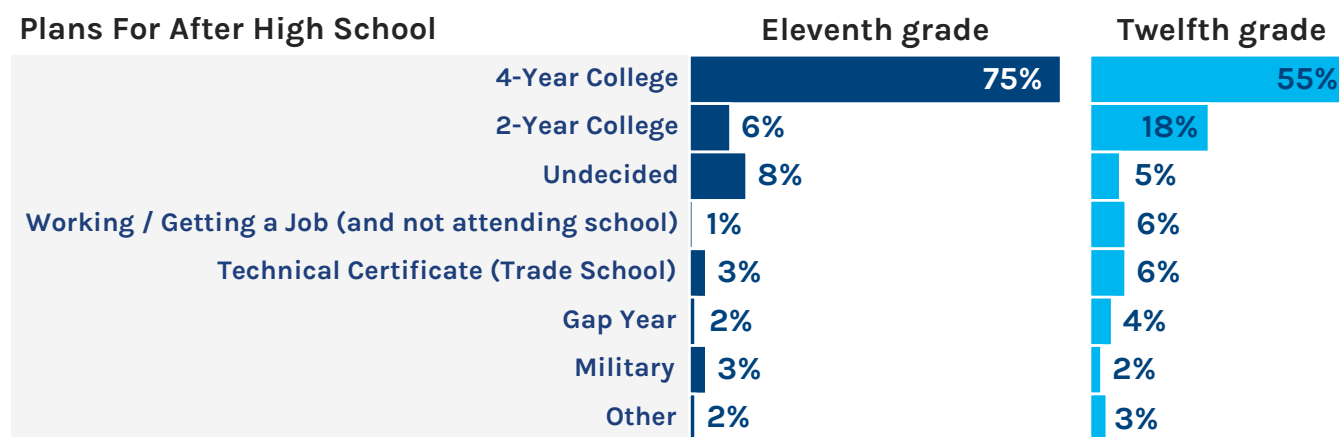


Just over half of twelfth graders say they plan to attend a four-year college as part of their post-graduation plan. This is a drop of 20 percentage points from the expectations of eleventh graders. Almost 1 in 5 seniors (18%) plan to attend a two-year college, an increase of 12 percentage points from juniors.

These shifts may reflect students becoming more aware of the reality of their situation, such as the relative strength of their transcript and their financial ability to pay for continued education, in their last year of high school.

Figure 9

Changing Plans between Eleventh and Twelfth Graders



Twelfth Grade Brings a Positive Shift in Self-Awareness and a Slight Adjustment in Career Outlook

Twelfth graders are the most likely to say that they are well aware of their strengths and weaknesses (71%), that they have a good understanding of in-demand industries, occupations, and careers (56%), and that they have mapped out a plan to reach their future goals (55%). The increase in these metrics reflects some of the solidity of their plan for the future.

Compared to the peak in eleventh grade, there is a downtick (6 percentage points) among twelfth graders in expectations for choosing a career that both aligns with their interests and has meaning and purpose. While most seniors still expect to pursue careers that are interesting to them (78%) and that are meaningful (76%), obstacles to college access may lead them to deprioritize areas that were very important to them in previous years.

Figure 10

Shifting Awareness between Eleventh and Twelfth Graders

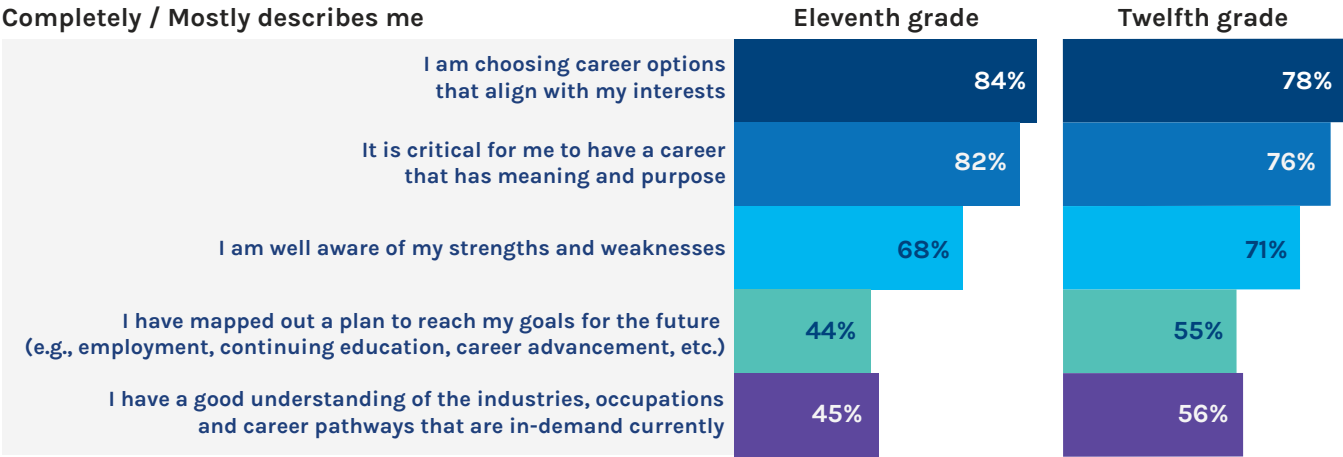
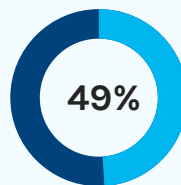


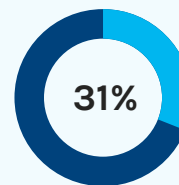


Figure 11

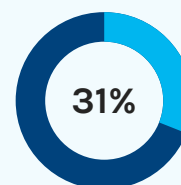
Twelfth Grade Students Points of Interest



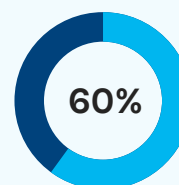
responded they had a job in high school



wish they had more support in researching financial aid



wish they had more support in creating their resume



responded "don't know" when asked how they're paying for college

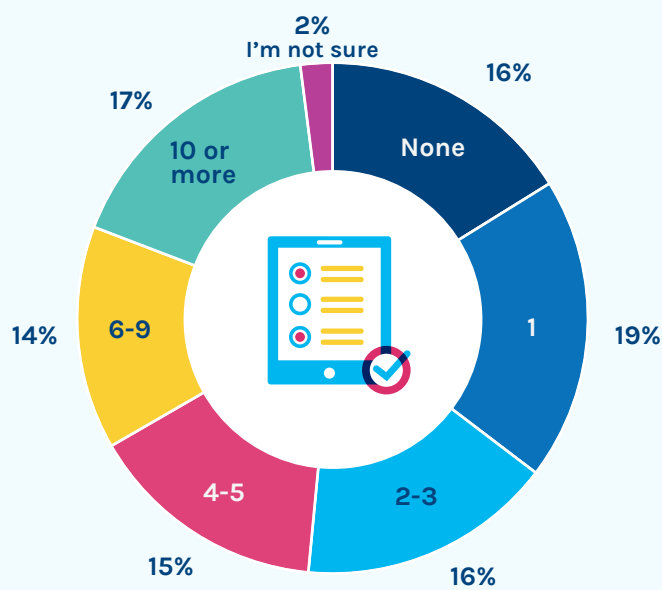
Almost half (49%) of seniors report they have (or have had) a job during high school. That number increases steadily with time and is 40 percentage points higher than ninth graders (9%).

About a third (31%) of these students report a continued need for support from their current school in researching financial aid and creating their resumes.

Despite their growing confidence in awareness of their own strengths and their belief that they understand their goals and the job market, over half (60%) are unsure how they will pay for college.

The number of colleges they have applied to, or plan to apply to, is widely mixed. 1 in 5 said they only applied to one college, which is a significant change (up 15 percentage points) from expectations in eleventh grade.

Number of College Applications



Senior Year Involves Exploring Options and Finalizing Decisions



In the first half of their senior year, students are searching for colleges (36%), meeting with counselors (33%), visiting colleges (28%), searching for scholarships (36%), and finalizing college application lists (50%). While some engage in these activities earlier, they occur less frequently before the final year of high school, reflecting the urgency and sharpening focus for seniors.

The second half of senior year is when most are deciding which college to attend (43%).

Figure 12
Twelfth Grade Students Points of Interest

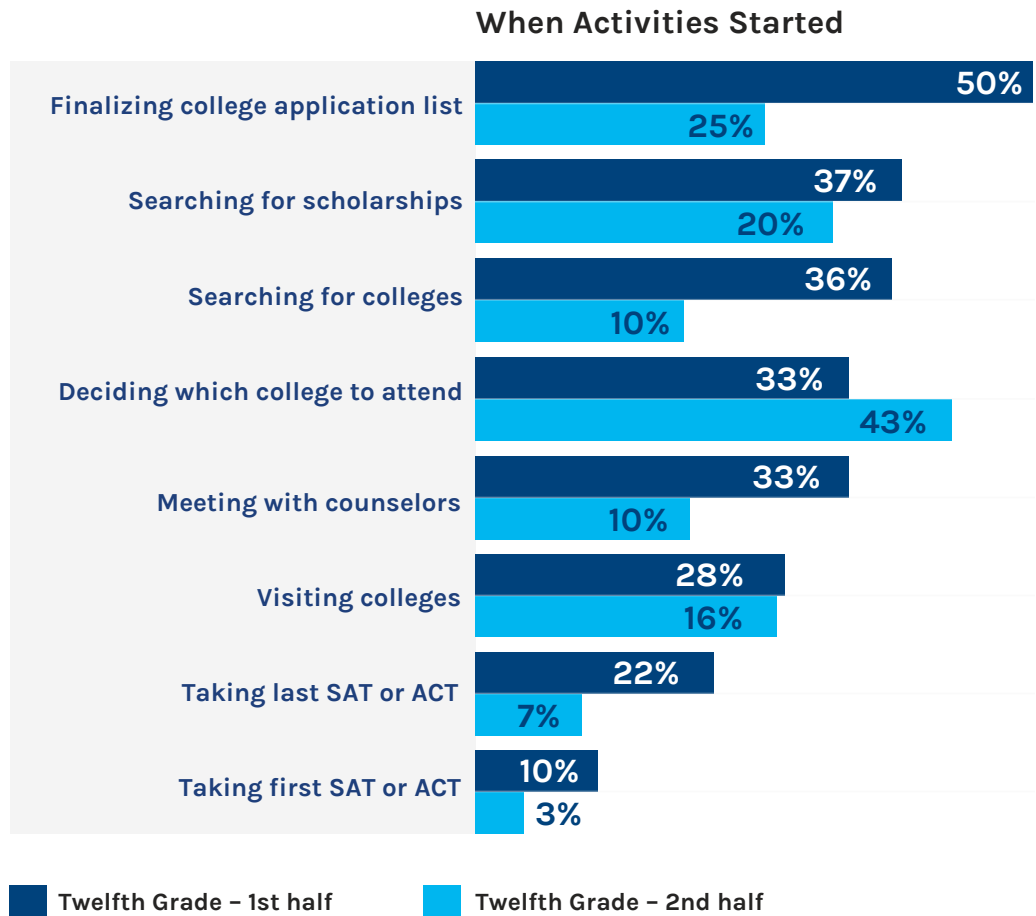


Figure 13

Importance of Naviance CCLR for Twelfth Graders

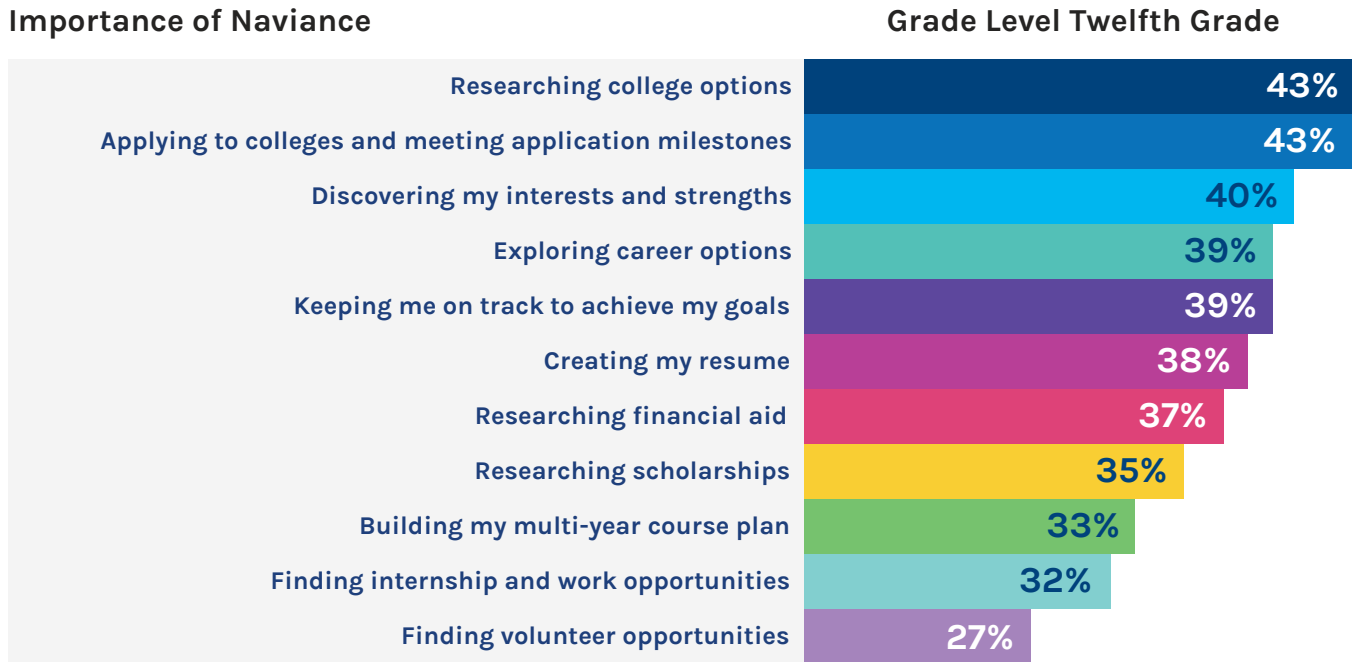
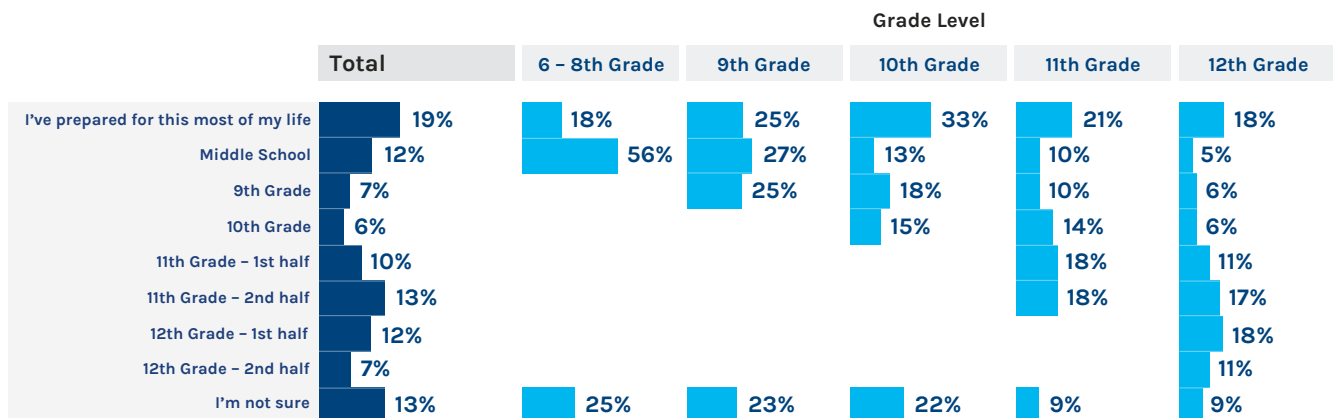


Figure 14

When They Started Preparing for Their Post High School Plan



Evolving Influences on Students' Postsecondary Plans

Most students (56%) report that they themselves have the most influence over their post-high school plans, with parents/guardians most influential for a third (30%).

Regardless of age, students tend to put their own priorities first. How much impact their parents or guardians have changes over time. While still ranking themselves first, over a third of middle schoolers (35%) and ninth graders (37%) say that their parents have the most influence on their post-high school plans.

In tenth grade, students rate their own influence most highly, with well over half (66%) saying that they have the most influence while only a quarter (25%) rate parent/guardian influence as most impactful. The role of parents begins to creep back up in the eleventh (28%) and twelfth (29%) grades, perhaps reflecting the role of families in financing postsecondary plans.

Figure 15

Influence on Post-High School Decisions

	Total	Grade Level				
		6 – 8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Myself	56%	49%	54%	66%	62%	57%
Parents/guardians	30%	35%	37%	25%	28%	29%
Friends	5%	6%	6%	4%	2%	5%
School counselors/teachers	5%	5%	2%	3%	5%	6%
Other family members (not parents/guardians)	4%	5%	2%	2%	3%	4%



Students Would Like More School Support

Across grade levels, students are looking for the most support in the areas of "job" and "college," specifically in creating a resume (33%), researching scholarships (33%), and exploring career options (33%). Across grade levels, there are some differences in the areas students feel are lacking support.



Middle school students are forward-looking and predominantly want more help exploring their **career options (40%)** and guidance to keep them on track to achieve their **goals (40%)**.



Once in high school, **ninth graders express an interest in more support for creating their resume (44%)**, a sentiment that persists among tenth graders with almost half (**46%**) wanting more help in that area.



While ninth graders want more support discovering their interests and strengths (39%), **tenth graders want more assistance in finding internship and work opportunities (39%) and researching scholarships (38%)**.



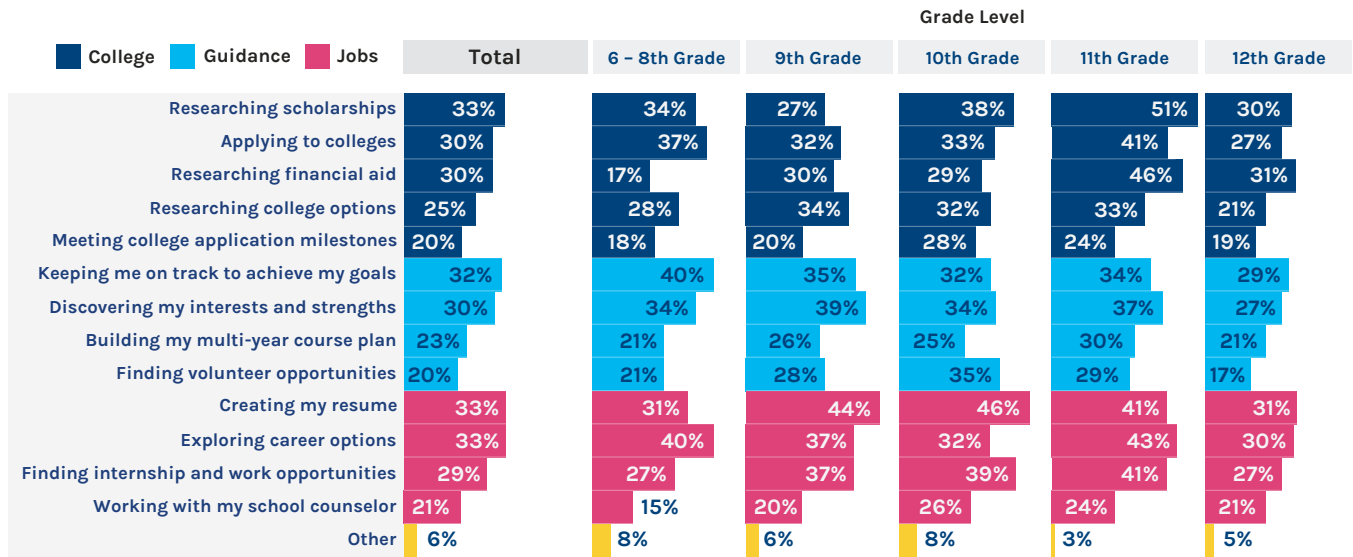
Like tenth graders, **juniors want more support in researching scholarships (51%), but their needs also include more help with researching financial aid (46%)**, the second largest area where they feel they lack support.



For seniors, the landscape is more mixed and the range of areas where they feel a lack of support is more diverse. **Creating a resume (31%), researching financial aid (31%), researching scholarships (30%), exploring career options (30%), and staying on track to achieve their goals (29%)** are all top mentions. This diversity likely speaks to seniors' more immediate needs to make decisions about their future.

Figure 16

Areas Where Students Wish Schools Provided More Support



Students Desire a Career That Is Interesting and Meaningful

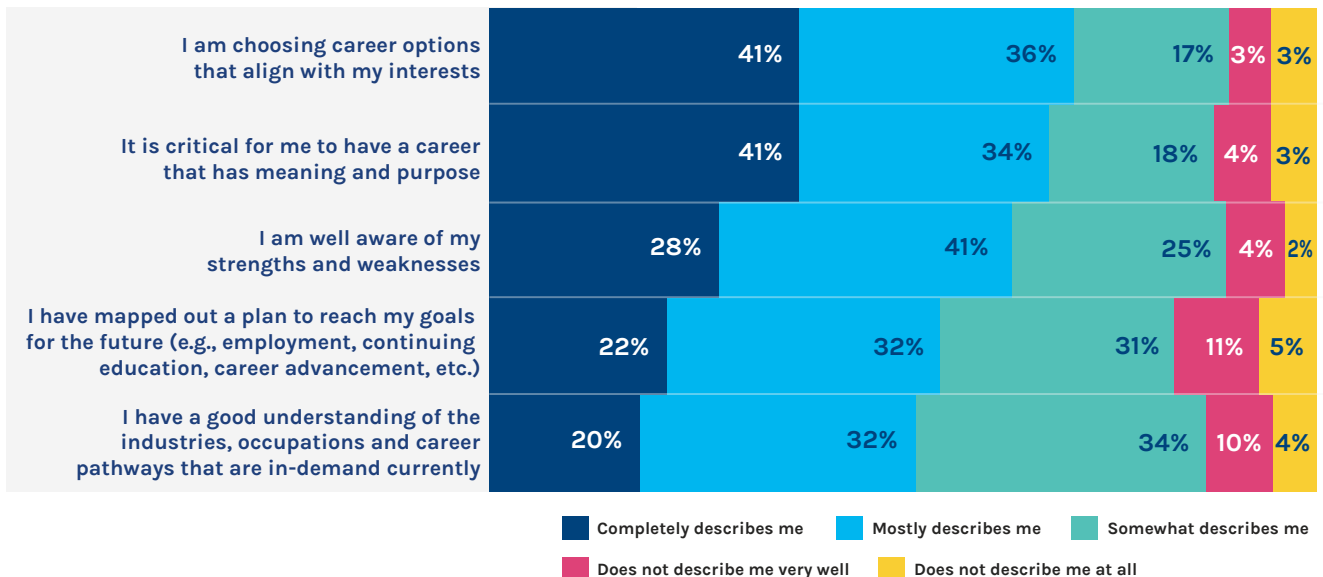
The overwhelming majority of students (77%) say that "I am choosing career options that align with my interests" completely or mostly describes them. In almost equal measure, 75% of students say that the statement "it is critical for me to have a career that has meaning and purpose" completely or mostly describes them.

In contrast, students are less aligned with statements around being aware of their strengths and weaknesses (68%), which is possibly reflective of a lack of awareness of what jobs they may excel in. Similarly, about half (52%) completely or mostly feel that they have a mapped-out plan to reach their future goals or that they have a good understanding of what is currently in demand.

This presents an opportunity for students to find more guidance that brings together the careers they find interesting and valuable with a plan.

Figure 17

Students' Self-Observations



Student Expectations for Job Movement Varies

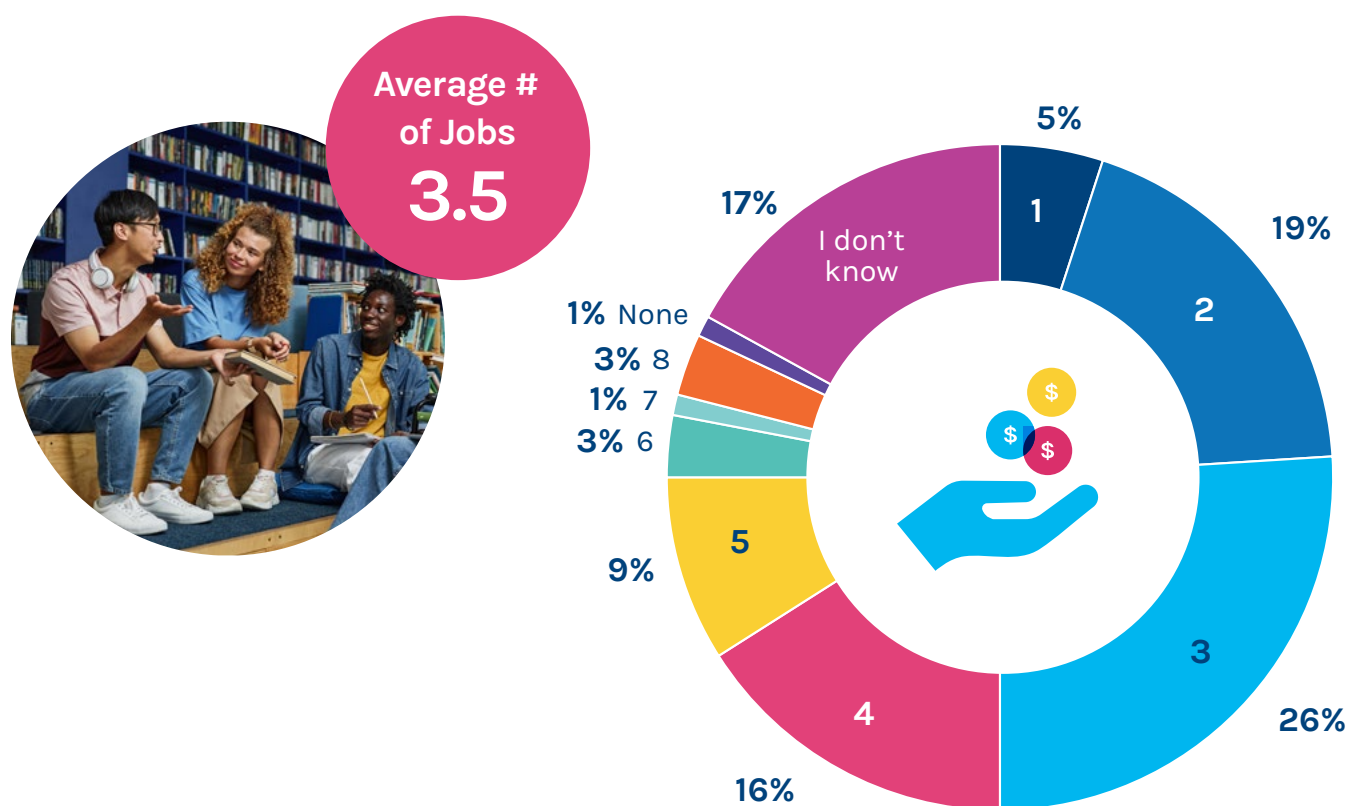
On average, students expect to have 3.5 jobs over the course of the next ten years. However, within that range, there is a wide divide. A handful of students (5%) think that they will only hold one job over the next decade while almost 1 in 5 (19%) expect to have two.

Most students select three jobs (26%), which seems to reflect an understanding of the gig economy, in which the labor market is more accepting of short-term, freelance workers, as well as movement away from the previous generations' tendency to climb the career ladder within one company.

Some students also expressed uncertainty, with 17% saying "I don't know."

Figure 18

Number of Expected Jobs in the Next 10 Years



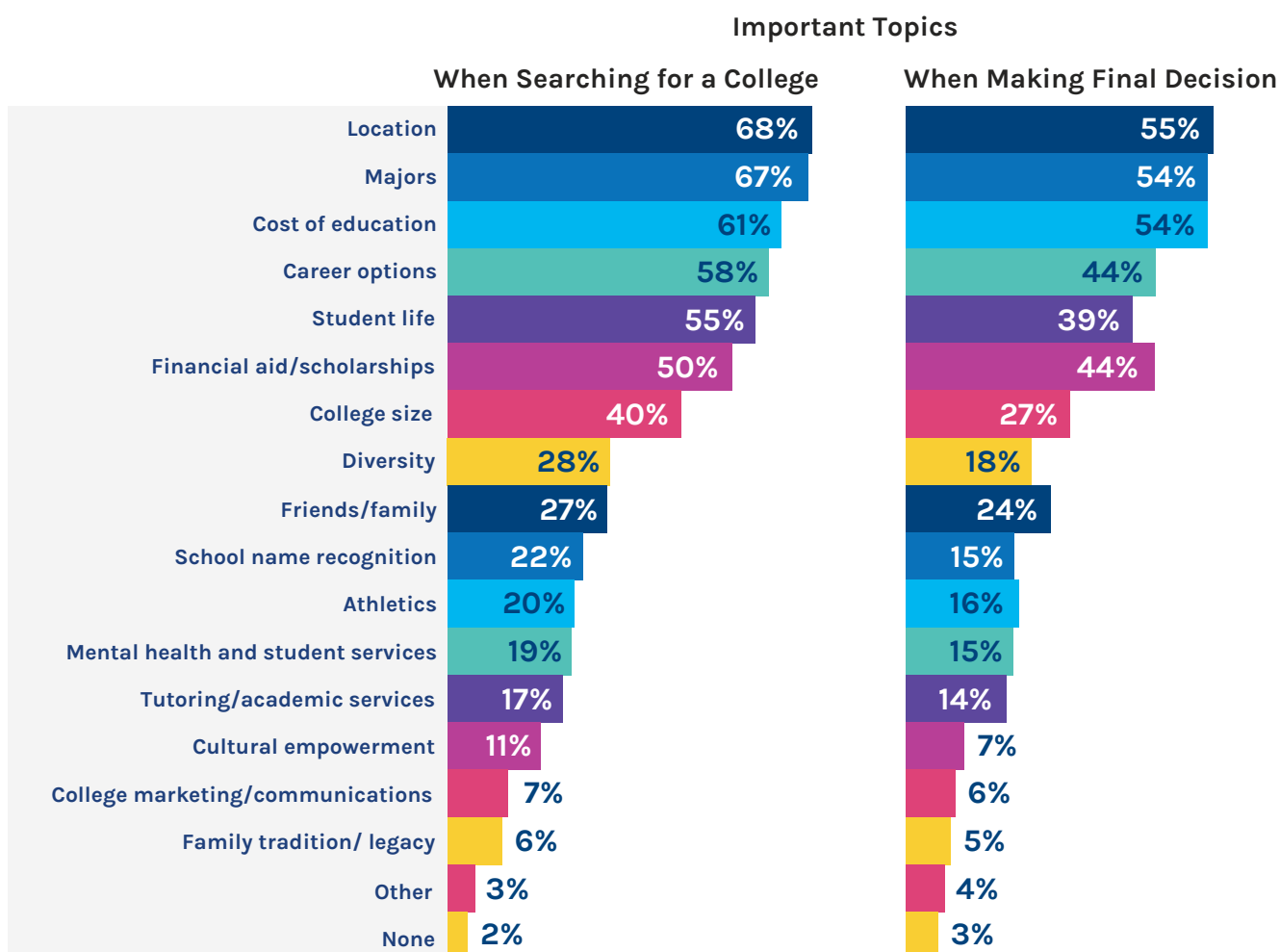
Trends Among College-Goers

School Location and Major Offerings Influence Matriculation Most

Among juniors and seniors, location and majors are the most important considerations when both searching for colleges (68% / 67%) and making a final decision (55% / 54%). A close secondary consideration is the cost of education.

Figure 19

Important Factors When Searching for, and Choosing, a College



Considerations are mostly consistent between interests when searching for a college and making a choice. However, **"student life," which ranks fifth (55%) when students are searching for colleges drops to sixth (39%) when students are making a final decision.** It is replaced by financial aid and scholarships (44%).

These important topics largely overlap with the areas where juniors and seniors want more support from their current school. **"Majors" likely aligns with "career options" where juniors (43%) and seniors (30%) both ranked a high need for support.** Scholarship and financial aid support were also in the top two areas that needed additional support for both juniors (51% researching scholarships; 46% researching financial aid) and seniors (31% researching financial aid; 30% researching scholarships).

Despite location being the leading factor for both considering a college and making a final choice, many juniors (41%) reported wanting more support when it came to applying for colleges.



Significant Uncertainty About Paying for College

Over half (60%) of seniors reply they "don't know" exactly how they will pay for college. Among those who felt they did know, parents/guardians/family are expected to make up less than half (43%) of their postsecondary education costs, with the rest coming from scholarships or grants (29%), student loans (13%), and themselves (14%).

Demographics play a role in expected sources of tuition costs. **Suburban males with highly educated parents tend to expect more support from their parents. Urban females are more likely to rely on scholarship support.**



Expectations for financial support impact a student's overall plan. Students who expect to be more self-reliant for tuition tend to have jobs during high school (67%), are more likely to consider trade school (17%), and are most likely to be a first-generation college student (30%).

For students expecting to rely on scholarships, learning about financial aid and scholarship programs is significantly more important (68%) when searching for colleges.

Figure 20

Proportion of Tuition Expected to be Covered

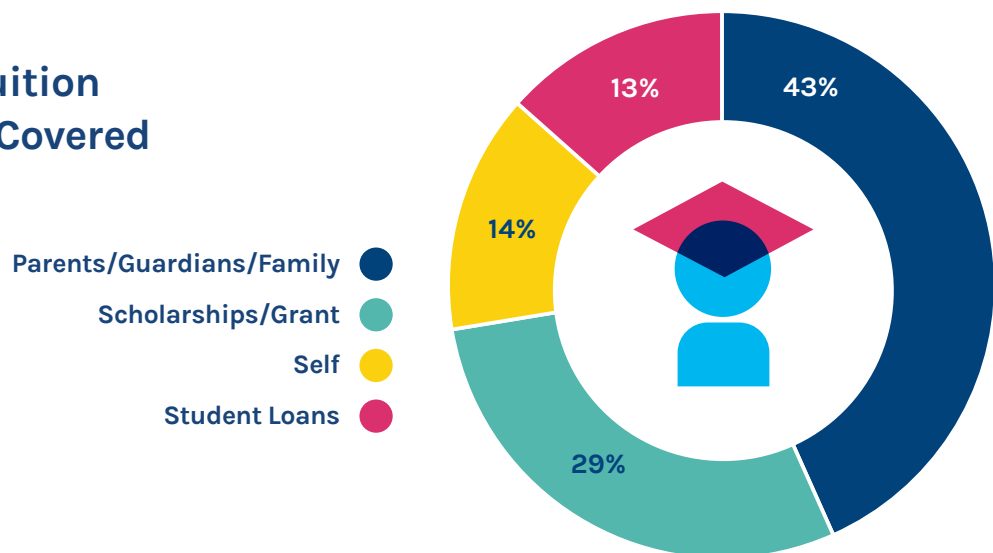


Figure 21

Profile of Those who Expect the Most Tuition from Each Source

Those Going to College or Trade School			Parents	Scholarships	Self	Loan
Gender	Male	48%	56%	43%	46%	42%
	Female	49%	42%	54%	49%	56%
Area	Urban	22%	14%	26%	17%	14%
	Suburban	49%	60%	50%	41%	42%
	Town	27%	22%	24%	37%	43%
	Rural	2%	4%	0%	5%	1%
Parent's Education Level	Grade School or less	7%	3%	9%	11%	8%
	High School	25%	14%	33%	34%	31%
	College Degree	30%	33%	26%	36%	33%
	Graduate Degree	28%	46%	27%	14%	25%
	I'm not sure	10%	4%	6%	5%	3%



STEM Industry of Highest Interest

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) careers saw the most interest with just over a quarter (26%) saying it was an industry they were interested in. While STEM was also the industry of highest interest for the Class of 2022, last year's percentage was lower, at 18%. Students who are planning to attend a four-year college are most likely to be interested in a STEM career (29%). Following STEM were the career paths of Business Management & Administration (23%), Health Science (21%), and Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications (20%).

For those planning to attend a two-year college, the rankings flip, with most being interested in Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communication (22%), and STEM careers (15%) landing as the fourth most popular industry of interest.

Those planning on either a two- or four-year college show comparable interest in Health Sciences and Arts careers, reflecting that both bachelor's degrees and other certifications are valid credentials for pursuing these paths.

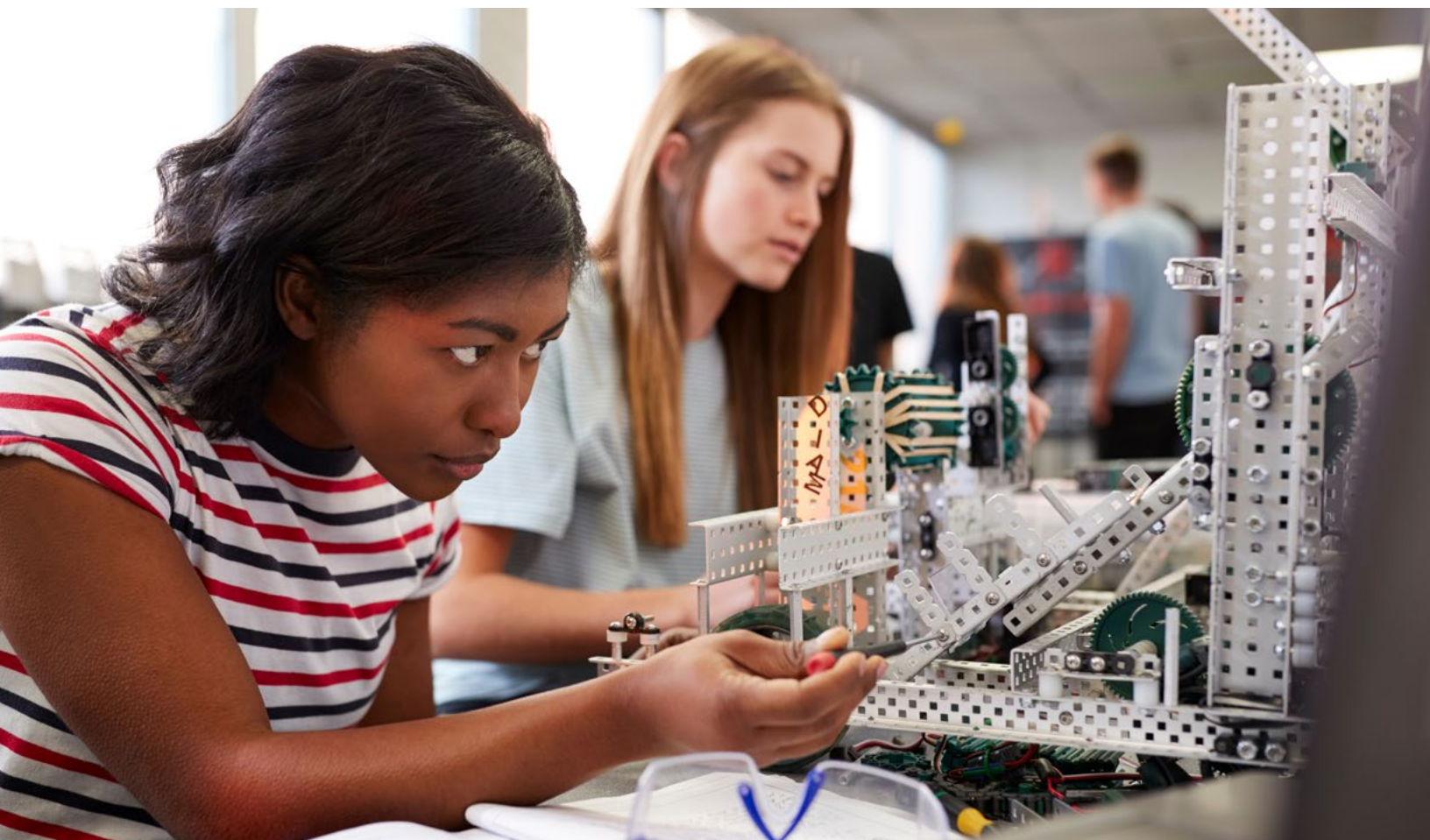
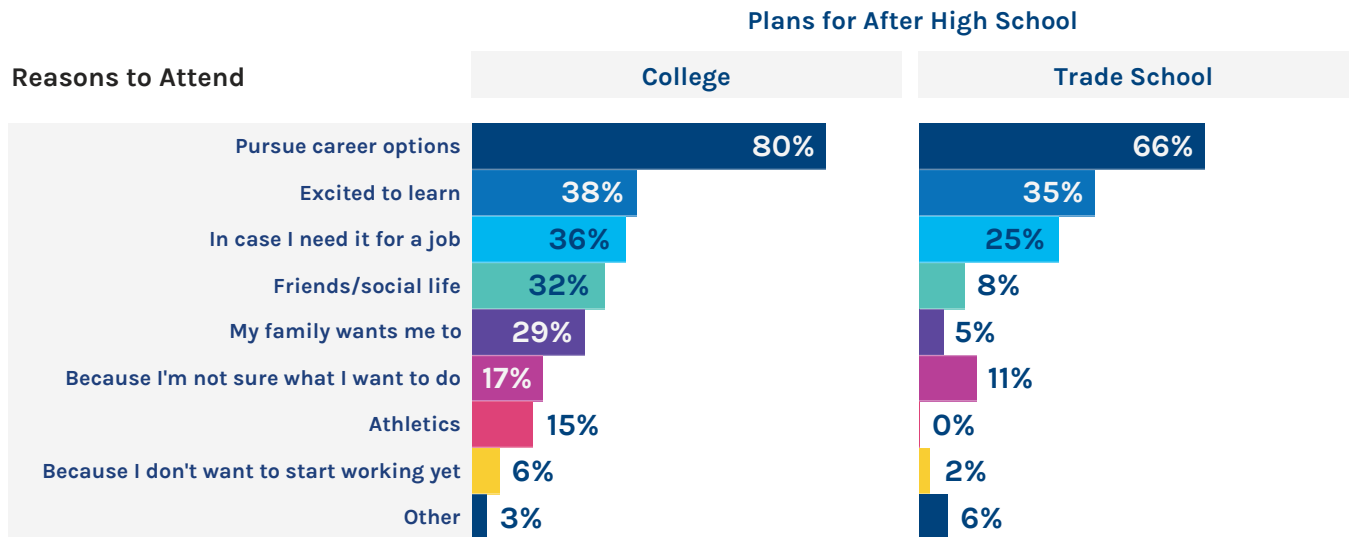
Figure 22

Industry Interest

	Plans for After High School			
	Total	4-Year College	2-Year College	Technical Certificate
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	26%	29%	15%	18%
Business Management & Administration	23%	24%	18%	18%
Health Science	21%	23%	20%	7%
Arts, Audio/ Video Technology & Communications	20%	20%	22%	13%
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	14%	15%	10%	7%
Human Services	13%	14%	14%	7%
Marketing	12%	13%	11%	10%
Finance	12%	12%	10%	11%
Education & Training	10%	10%	9%	8%
Architecture & Construction	7%	6%	7%	17%
Information Technology	7%	7%	7%	7%
Government & Public Administration	6%	7%	5%	2%
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	6%	6%	8%	5%
Hospitality & Tourism	4%	4%	4%	2%
Manufacturing	3%	2%	3%	16%
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	3%	3%	3%	7%
Other	15%	14%	14%	27%
I'm not sure	7%	5%	10%	13%

Figure 23

Reasons for Pursuing College or Trade School



Students Undecided About Their Future Plans Looking for More Guidance

About 8% of graduating students are still undecided regarding their plans after high school. Most undecided students are considering either working and not attending school (37%) or attending a four-year college (36%).

To make that decision, they feel they need more support or guidance from their family or friends (49%), or more information about jobs through job shadowing or career fairs (40%). They also feel that visiting a college campus (40%) could help them make their decision.

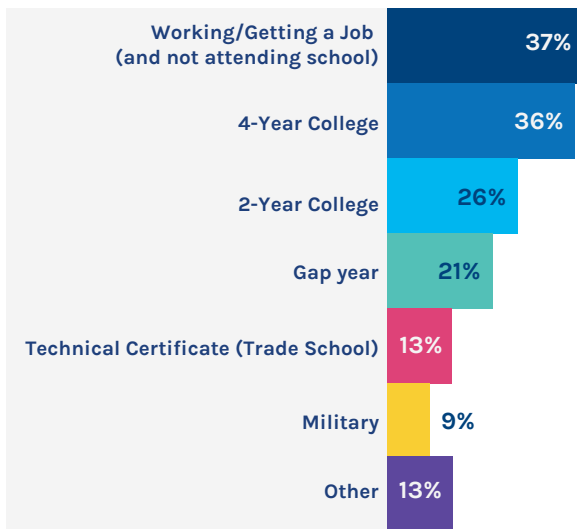
These students seem to be looking for specific, hands-on ways to determine what path is right for them by interacting with the people and places that can provide more information.

Figure 24

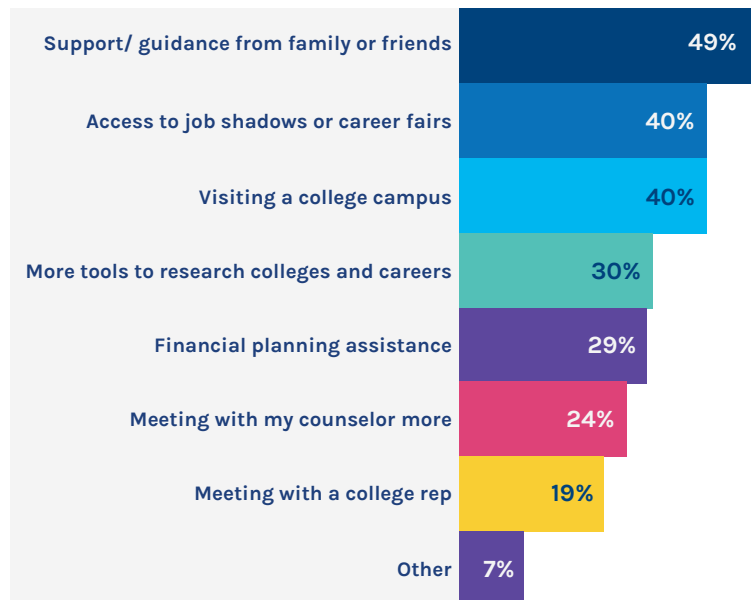
Undecided Students

Plans Being Considered and Resources Needed

Plans Under Consideration



Resources Needed to Inform Decision



A Desire to Begin a Career Motivates Some to Enter the Workforce Directly After High School

6% of students plan to immediately enter the workforce after high school because they are simply eager to start their careers (49%). A desire to earn an income (42%) likely connects to that desire.

Some of these students seem motivated by a desire to finish up the school portion of their lives with about a third (31%) saying they either don't like school or they need a break.

A smaller (28%) but still sizeable number of students know the job they want and don't need additional education to get started.

Figure 25

Reasons to Enter the Workforce Immediately

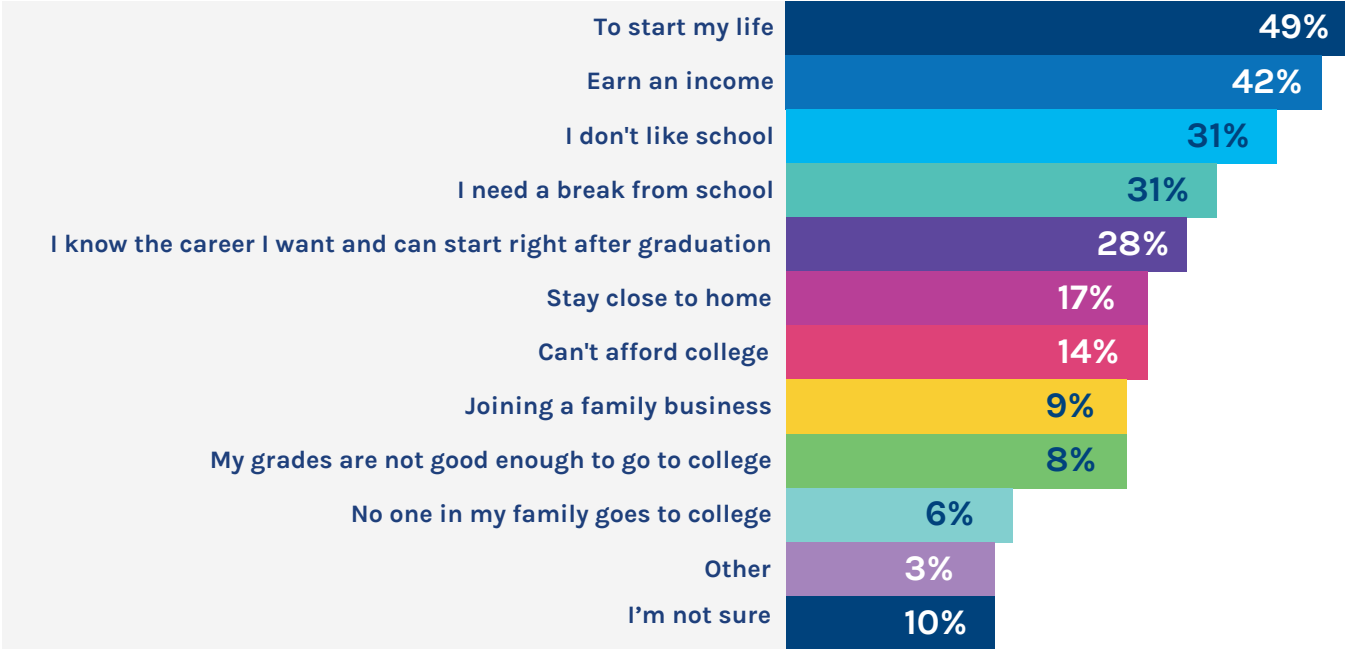


Figure 26

Will Your Career Path Ever Require a College Degree



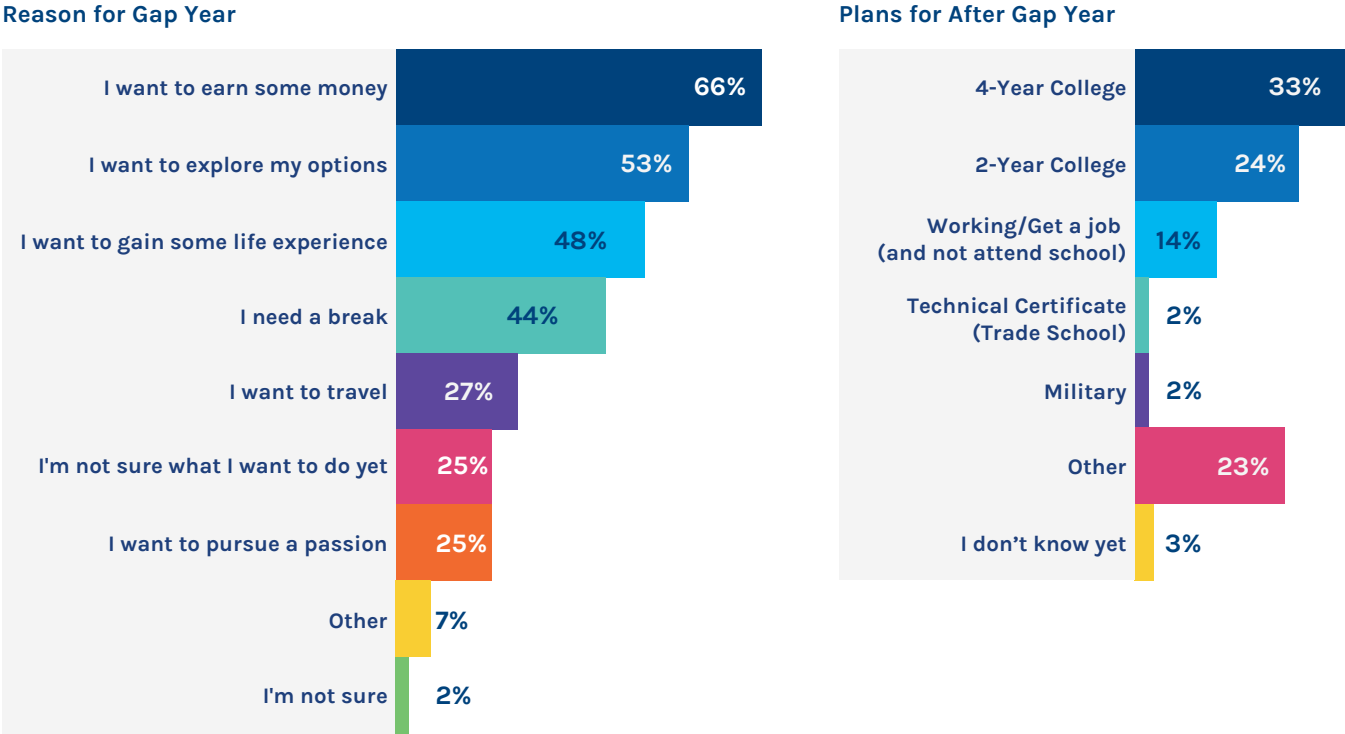
Students Planning on Taking a Gap Year Are Looking for Income and Experience

About 4% of students plan to take a gap year after high school. Motivations for wanting to take a gap year were consistent with the reasons students want to enter the workforce immediately after high school. Earning money (66%), exploring their options (53%), gaining life experience (48%), and just generally needing a break from formal education (44%) were the top responses.

To achieve what motivates their interest in a gap year, over half of these students expect to work during their gap year. The majority (57%) expect to work full-time, which matches their top priority of earning money.

Over half (57%) of students planning on a gap year are planning to attend either a four-year (33%) or two-year (24%) college after their year off. A number of these students (23%) don't know what they'll do post-gap year.

Figure 27
Reason for Choosing Gap Year and Plans for After Gap Year



Students Joining the Military Seem Fairly Certain of Their Decision

Approximately 3% of students plan to join the military after high school. Virtually all students planning to join the military are sure of which branch they plan to join, with the army as the most common response (34%).

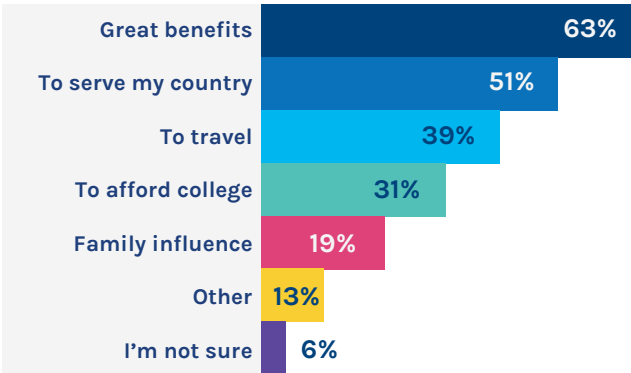
When researching their military options, these students relied heavily on several resources, most notably visiting recruiters (45%), online searches (42%), and family (39%).

The "great benefits" (63%) and "to serve my country" (51%) are the primary motivators for joining the service. However, travel (39%) and being able to afford college (31%) are also impactful. Many expect to have a long-term military career (28%), similar to the number (25%) who plan to attend either a four-year (18%) or two-year (7%) college after the military.

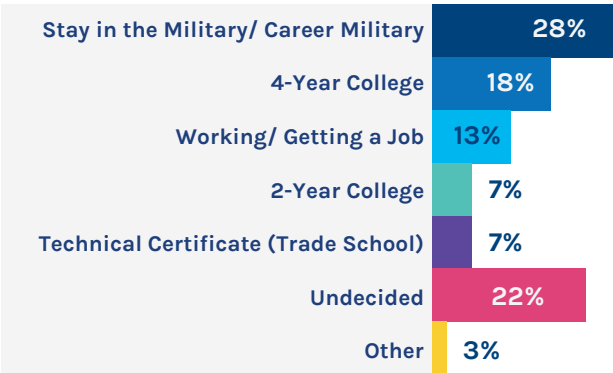
Figure 28

Reasons to Join the Military and Plans for After the Military

Reason to Join Military



Plans for After the Military



How Students Are Using Naviance CCLR

Engagement with Naviance CCLR is high among middle school students. This presents an opportunity to motivate younger students to connect learning to life and to understand the impact their education will have on their real-life futures.

Despite their young age, these students are clearly beginning to think about life after high school and, while their needs aren't imminent, the data suggests a desire to understand their future options.

Figure 29

Importance of Naviance CCLR for Middle Schoolers

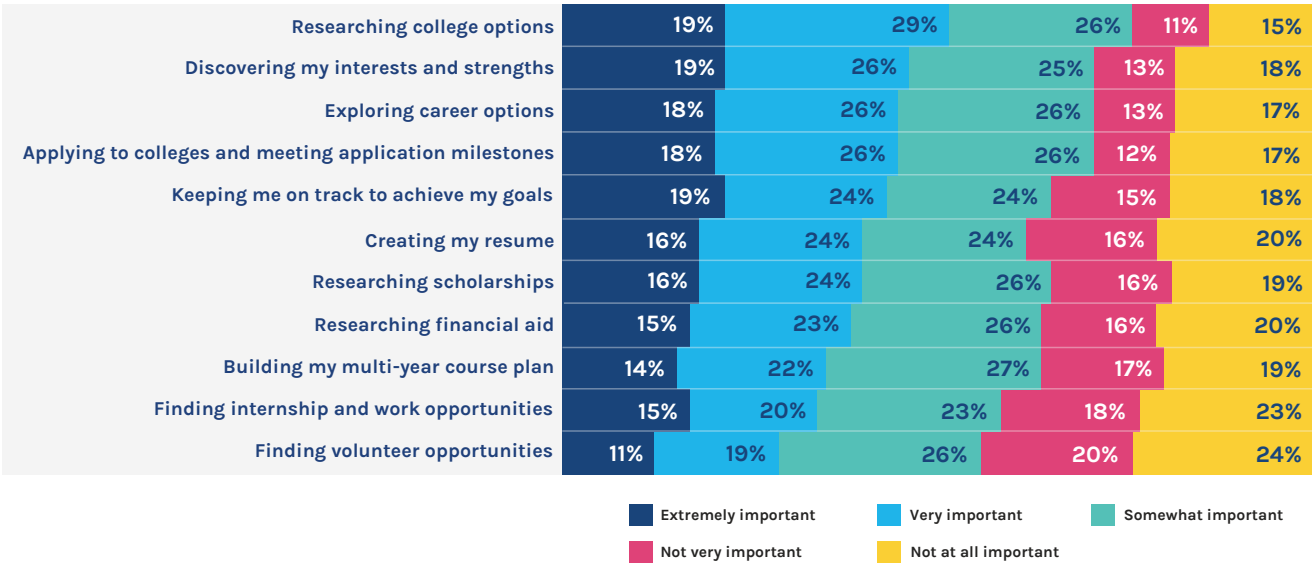


Students rate Naviance CCLR as "extremely important" or "very important" in a range of areas that align with their needs: researching college options (48%), discovering their interests and strengths (45%), exploring career options (44%), applying to colleges and meeting application milestones (44%), and keeping them on track to achieve their goals (43%).

Some of these areas are of particular importance for upperclassmen as they begin to make, or make, decisions about their postsecondary life. For juniors, researching college options (61%), applying to colleges (50%), and exploring career options (49%) are the most important resources from Naviance CCLR.

For seniors who are closer to, if not in, decision making mode, researching college options (43%) and applying to colleges and meeting application milestones (43%) are the most important elements of Naviance CCLR.

Figure 30
Importance of Naviance CCLR by Area



The importance of Naviance CCLR is impacted by the type of financial support students expect. For those who expect their parents to cover more of their tuition, Naviance CCLR has a lower importance. Those who are expecting to pay with loans rate Naviance CCLR as more important, particularly for researching college options (56%) and applying to colleges and meeting application milestones (56%).



Almost half (45%) of tenth graders are using Naviance CCLR at home which reflects a sizeable uptick in engagement away from school use compared to younger students (30% of ninth graders).

The majority (54%) of tenth graders see Naviance CCLR as important for finding their strengths, interests, and career options, which aligns with their focus on understanding postsecondary options that are right for them. The areas in which Naviance CCLR is most important for them also parallels the tenth grade peak (66%) of seeing themselves as the most important influence when choosing their postsecondary path. These students are prioritizing their own opinions and are not as heavily impacted by outside influences as their older counterparts.

The importance of Naviance CCLR for researching college options is highest for juniors with 61% saying that researching college options is an important area. Half (50%) also see Naviance CCLR as important for applying to college and meeting application deadlines. More than half of eleventh graders use Naviance CCLR at home.

These students are also using Naviance CCLR to address some of the gaps they see in support from their current school with 4 in 10 using it to research scholarships (43%) and financial aid (43%). Eleventh grade seems to be a transition point for these students who are beginning to see potential barriers for their post-high school plans. There is likely more opportunity to help them identify those barriers and find ways to address them.

About a third of seniors still want more support researching financial aid (31%) and scholarships (30%). They see Naviance CCLR as important in those areas (researching financial aid: 37%; researching scholarships: 35%), but there may be a need for students to more fully leverage Naviance CCLR, or meet with a counselor, earlier in the process.





Recommendations

How Naviance Can Help



Elementary School

Though elementary students are not surveyed, Naviance CCLR has a robust set of tools to engage K-5 students in beginning to explore the world of future opportunities that exist for them. With Naviance for Elementary, K-5 students can engage in play-based interaction to explore 900+ career options, access age-appropriate assessments to help identify career interests, and earn badges as students explore interests and career pathways and occupations.



Middle School

Middle schoolers are curious about their futures, and more than half are already thinking about planning their postsecondary paths. Therefore, the middle school years present an ideal opportunity to encourage students to discover their strengths and interests, explore career options, participate in work-based learning opportunities, do volunteer work, and use their network of friends, family, and acquaintances to learn what options exist.

Naviance CCLR features that support this work:

- **Roadtrip Nation**

Access 9,000+ videos of leaders who share how they achieved success and overcame obstacles and hardships. This unique tool introduces students to a wide array of careers and different paths leaders took to get there.

- **Career-Focused Assessments**

Career assessments help middle school students explore careers that align with their strengths and interests. The Career Key assessment encourages exploration of a variety of occupations and matches students to the careers that best fit their strengths.

- **Self-Discovery Assessments**

Self-discovery assessments, including AchieveWorks® Intelligences, AchieveWorks® Learning and Productivity, AchieveWorks® Skills, AchieveWorks® Personality, and Gallup's Clifton Strengths Explorer help students uncover their strengths and interests.

- **CCLR Curriculum**

Students can access lessons on critical topics such as stress management, understanding financial aid, and building a support network.

- **Success Planner**

Enable each student to have a truly personalized plan of action that provides an effective way for counselors, teachers, and families to monitor and coach students toward achieving their short-term and long-term goals.

- **Course Planner**

Students can easily create academic plans that align to future career goals. Starting as early as 5th grade, students can create multi-year course plans aligned to their career interests and graduation requirements.





High School

Of all four grades in high school, ninth graders are most able to see the big picture of their future and haven't yet begun narrowing down their options. This exploratory attitude should be nurtured and students encouraged to try various activities, internships, and experiences to better understand themselves and their interests. Rather than emphasizing the need to make a postsecondary plan, schools and families can support their students by fostering curiosity about the future and assuring students they have plenty of time before they need to make any decisions.

Tenth graders want to know how to connect their academic strengths and extracurricular interests to career paths. This is an ideal opportunity to initiate the early stages of more concrete postsecondary planning. Students can begin matching their own profile with career possibilities that feel both purposeful and meaningful. Tenth graders can begin to naturally align themselves with careers they feel more drawn to, disqualifying those that don't spark interest.

By eleventh grade, most students (75%) have decided to attend a four-year college. These students express a clear need for more support in understanding financial aid, scholarships, and other funding resources. This is when concrete conversations about financial literacy need to happen with students and families so that they both have a realistic idea of what they can afford and can avoid having to make difficult decisions or last-minute changes due to financial constraints. Schools can offer family workshops on the FAFSA and explain the scholarships database accessible in Naviance CCLR.

For the 25% of juniors who remain undecided, schools should identify those students and personalize outreach to get them talking with an adult so they don't slip through the cracks. Staff can determine what's contributing to their indecision, provide resources to fill in the gaps, and introduce students to alternative degrees (Associates, etc.) and certifications that can be just as useful as a Bachelor's but earned in less time and with less expense.



By twelfth grade, about 50% of students still plan to attend a four-year college, a substantial drop from the prior year. Schools will want to identify students who were initially planning on attending a four-year college but changed their path to discover why they changed their minds and ensure they have a backup plan. 1 in 5 seniors plan to attend a two-year college, and this option could be presented as a compelling alternative to those who had planned to attend a four-year college before changing their mind.



Overall, students understand they will likely change jobs many times (3.5 jobs in 10 years). For all college, career, and life readiness programs, the emphasis should be on acquiring transferable skills and cultivating a growth mindset rather than on attaining an "end" certification for a single career. Students are aware of the unstable job market they're entering and will be best equipped with skills that help them adapt to changing circumstances.

Lastly, high school students are clearly expressing the desire to have help writing a resume. This is a key need for students because, with relatively little job experience, their resume speaks more to their character, skills, and accomplishments. Well-written resumes can help students earn scholarships, gain internships or employment, and impress important network contacts. Without learning how to write a proper resume from reputable sources, they may mimic examples they find on the internet, a far less trustworthy source.

Naviance CCLR features that support this work:

- **Explore Careers**

Students can explore different careers, clusters, and pathways in Naviance featuring the 16 national career clusters. Students can view specific pathways and important information on each pathway, such as employment outlook over the next decade, and typical required credentials, helping students understand if they need to earn additional degrees or certifications or if they can go directly into their chosen career after graduation.

- **College Search and Planning**

Students have access to a robust set of tools to research and plan for college. Students can use SuperMatch®, a college search tool with over 90 filters to help students discover the colleges and universities that are a match for their needs. Students can easily track, manage, and request important material for their college applications all in one place. Additionally, our partnership with the Common Black College Application further expands college access for more students.

- **Work-Based Learning**

Students can experience real-world career learning through work-based learning, such as internships, job shadows, and apprenticeships.

- **Job Search Tool**

The job search tool allows students to access a national job search database. Students can search for active job opportunities (employment, apprenticeships, and internships) and can easily access the company website to complete the job application.

- **Military Careers Data**

Expand military pathway exploration with the military careers in Naviance CCLR. Students can explore military branches and add to their favorites list.

- **CCLR Curriculum**

Students can access lessons on critical topics such as stress management, understanding financial aid, and building a support network.

- **Success Planner**

Success Planner enables each student to have a truly personalized plan of action that provides an effective way for counselors, teachers, and families to monitor and coach students toward achieving their short-term and long-term goals.

- **Self-Discovery Assessments**

Self-discovery assessments, including AchieveWorks® Intelligences, AchieveWorks® Learning and Productivity, AchieveWorks® Skills, AchieveWorks® Personality, and Gallup's Clifton Strengths Explorer help students uncover their strengths and interests.

- **Scholarships**

Search college, local, and regional scholarships—including access to 3.5 million scholarships through the Sallie Mae scholarship database.



Conclusion

Students recognize that the world around them is changing, and their choices and plans reflect that change.

Very few (5%) students expect that they will only hold one job over the next ten years, which reflects not only their understanding that there will be periods of change and transition, but also that they are part of a larger, shifting economy.

Effective postsecondary planning for today's students requires a holistic approach that considers not only continued formal learning but also emotional resilience, transferable life skills, and personal aspirations.

College affordability continues to be a barrier for many students. Interest in financial aid and scholarships is very high, and most of these students do not know what resources they will use to pay for college. Beginning these conversations early is essential so that students and families have a clear understanding of what is possible for them. Encouraging students to think about credentials other than a bachelor's degree is one way to overcome the significant obstacle of college tuition.

As the educational landscape evolves and the economy becomes increasingly dynamic, the need for students to be adaptable, lifelong learners is paramount. The recommendations outlined here are in the service of empowering students to make informed decisions, set achievable goals, and find a professional path of meaning.

Ultimately, the success of a postsecondary planning framework rests in its ability to foster self-discovery, instill a sense of purpose, and provide the necessary tools and resources for students to embark on their chosen paths with confidence. As we collectively invest in the future of our students, we must remain dedicated to ensuring that every student has an equitable opportunity to achieve their aspirations and contribute meaningfully to the world.



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