

# COUNTDOWN TO COLLEGE

by Dominic Lucente

## Things to consider as a parent of a future college student.

As a parent, of course you want to give your child the best opportunity for success, and for many, attending the “right” university or college is that opportunity. Unfortunately, being accepted to the college of one’s choice may not be as easy as it once was. Additionally, the earlier you consider how you expect to pay for college costs, the better. Today, the average college graduate owes \$37,731 in debt, while the average salary for a recent graduate is \$49,785.<sup>1</sup>

Preparing for college means setting goals, staying focused, and tackling a few key milestones along the way – starting in the first year of high school.

**Freshman Year.** Before the school year begins, you and your child should have at least a handful of colleges picked out. A lot can change during high school, so remaining flexible, but focused on your shared goals, is crucial. It may be helpful to meet with your child’s guidance counselor or homeroom teacher for any advice they may have. It’s never a bad idea to encourage your child to choose challenging classes as they navigate high school. Many universities look for students who push themselves when it comes to learning. A balance between difficult coursework and excellent grades is the gold standard. Keeping an eye on grades should be a priority for you and your child as well.

**Sophomore Year.** During their sophomore year, some students may have the opportunity to take a practice SAT. Even though they won’t be required to take the actual SAT for roughly a year, a practice exam is a good way to get a feel for what the test entails.

Sophomore year is also a good time to explore extracurricular activities. Colleges are looking for the well-rounded student, so encouraging your child to explore their passions now may help their application later. Summer may also be a good time for sophomores to get a part-time job, secure an internship, or travel abroad to help bolster their experiences.

**Junior Year.** Your child’s junior year is all about standardized testing. Every October, third-year high-school students are able to take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT), also known as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT). Even if they won’t need to take the SAT for college, taking the PSAT/NMSQT is required for many scholarships, such as the National Merit Scholarship.<sup>2</sup>

Top colleges look for applicants who are future leaders. Encourage your child to take a leadership role in an extracurricular activity. This doesn’t mean they have to be a drum major or captain of the football team. Leading may involve helping an organization with fundraising, marketing, or community outreach.

In the spring of their junior year, your child will want to take the SAT or ACT. An early test date may allow time for repeating test their senior year, if necessary. No matter how many times your child takes the test, most colleges will only look at the best score.

**Senior Year.** For many students, senior year is the most exciting time of high school. Seniors will finally begin to reap the benefits of their efforts during the last three years. Once you and your child have firmly decided on which schools apply, make sure you keep on top of deadlines. Applying early can increase your student’s chance of acceptance.

Now is also the time to apply for scholarships. Consulting your child’s guidance counselor can help you continue to identify scholarships within reach. Billions in free federal grant money goes unclaimed each year, simply because students fail to fill out the free application. Make sure your child has submitted their FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to avoid missing out on any financial assistance available.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, talk to your child about living away from home. Help make sure they know how to manage money wisely and pay bills on time. You may also want to talk to them about social pressures some college freshmen face for the first time when they move away from home.

For many people, college sets the stage for life. Making sure your children have options when it comes to choosing a university can help shape their future. Work with them today to make goals and develop habits that will help ensure their success.

**Dominic may be reached at 603.645.8131  
or [Dominic.lucente@LPL.com](mailto:Dominic.lucente@LPL.com)  
[Dlucente.com](http://Dlucente.com)**



Maintaining a vibrant lawn and landscaping requires year-round effort. Thoughtful planning, thorough preparation of all the necessary tools, a decent amount of hard work, and making adjustments for seasonal changes are all important. But sometimes a little help from a professional can be a key to success.

Similarly, your plan for retirement should be carefully crafted to your personal dreams and objectives. An experienced financial professional can provide valuable insight and a comprehensive strategy designed to help you work towards your goals and the vibrant future you and your family are dreaming of.

## A SUCCESSFUL RETIREMENT IN YOUR FUTURE STARTS WITH CREATING A PLAN TODAY.



**Dominic M. Lucente, CFP®, RFC®**  
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™  
NORTHEAST PLANNING ASSOCIATES, INC.  
425 Hooksett Road · Manchester, NH 03104  
(603) 645-8131 · [dominic.lucente@lpl.com](mailto:dominic.lucente@lpl.com)  
[www.dlucente.com](http://www.dlucente.com)



21-091 Financial planning offered through Northeast Planning Associates, Inc. (NPA), a registered investment adviser (RIA). Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial (LPL), an RIA and broker-dealer (BD), member FINRA/SIPC. Credit union is not an RIA or BD. Insurance products offered through LPL or its licensed affiliates. LPL registered representatives offer products and services using NPA. These products and services offered through NPA, LPL, or their affiliates, which are separate entities from, and not affiliates of the credit union, are:

Not Insured by NCUA or Other Government Agency | Not Credit Union Guaranteed | Not Credit Union Deposits or Obligations | May Lose Value

Financial planning offered through Northeast Planning Associates, Inc. (NPA) a registered investment adviser. Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment adviser and member FINRA/SIPC. Insurance products offered through NPA, LPL Financial, or its licensed affiliates. The Credit Union, NPA and LPL Financial are unaffiliated. This material was prepared by MarketingPro, Inc., and does not necessarily represent the views of the presenting party, nor their affiliates. This information has been derived from sources believed to be accurate. Please note - investing involves risk, and past performance is no guarantee of future results. The publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional services. If assistance is needed, the reader is advised to engage the services of a competent professional. This information should not be construed as investment, tax or legal advice and may not be relied on for the purpose of avoiding any Federal tax penalty. This is neither a solicitation nor recommendation to purchase or sell any investment or insurance product or service, and should not be relied upon as such. All indices are unmanaged and are not illustrative of any particular investment.



### Citations

1. The Federal Reserve, February 2020
2. The College Board, February 2020
3. StudentAid.gov, February 2020



**603.801.5720**

FULLY LICENSED AND INSURED

**ERIC COOKE**  
[ericcooke137@gmail.com](mailto:ericcooke137@gmail.com)

54 Woodhill Road  
Bow NH 03304



[www.facebook.com/E.CookePlumbingandheating.com](http://www.facebook.com/E.CookePlumbingandheating.com)