

PATHS TO EDUCATION AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

You approach a fork in the road. You are pressed to make a decision. Do I turn left, right or go straight? Will my GPS guide me?

Many high school students and young adults find themselves in a similar situation when it comes to decisions on a path to follow after high school.

Thankfully, there are many, each a powerful choice for an individual to reach their goals and aspiration.

A student's academic, personal and financial background as well as aspirations and goals are the key indicators evaluated to determine the path to follow. BUT, to encourage students, all paths must be supported, mentored and celebrated equally by society.



WHICH PATH IS YOURS

High School to College – the traditional route to a 4-year public or private college. Focused on an outcome that provides a gateway to graduate school and/or a professional career in any number of industries. Students who follow this path are typically enrolled in a college prep program (or combination) with a GPA equal to a B- or better and following mandatory state equivalent academic courses for acceptance in a state college. Students take college prep, Honors and AP course. Individuals seek acceptance 4-year public and private colleges and universities throughout the U.S., Canada or internationally.

Associates2Bachelors (A2B) – students who struggle academically in high school and have the aspirations to complete a Bachelor Degree program can turn to the successful A2B program option. Students begin at a Community College, generally enrolling full-time (many work part-time), complete a 2-year Associates Program transferring and completing the remaining two years at their choice of college and/or university. The A2B Program is a very important option for all students including those seeking a financially affordable option to attending college. (example: [Mass Transfer](#))

Earn and Learn – individuals who wish to enter the workforce but continue their educational path attend college. The option for these individuals is general a Community College and/or a Continuing education/Professional Studies Program offered at a local college and/or university. Students can attend full-time but many select this option and attend part-time. Individuals are independent trade professionals, working in financial, health care, retail, hotel management fields. Many states offer programs to assist individuals pursue this option including incentives to commit to these post high school options (example: [Commonwealth Commitment](#))

Gap Year – a timeline between high school and college where students with aspirations for college need a little more time to prepare. This is not a period for “lets travel the world”, but a time for soul searching and self-evaluation. Most students are academically ready, so no we are not talking about prep school. Many individuals need this time to mature, evaluate and plot academic and career options. Individuals during this one-year span will pursue volunteer services, enroll in non-academic courses, internships and/or work.

Technical and trade – property owners of all shapes and sizes know the critical importance of professionally trained technical and/or trade personal. But today organizations and companies rely heavily on individuals who can join an organization as a contract and/or permanent employee. Individuals filling these roles can range from technology specialist, cyber security, 3-D designers and other technology proficient individuals. Individuals who fall into this category come directly from a technical and trade focused high school environment.

Military Service – a role that calls for a special type of man or women who is willing to place their county and its citizens before their own Individuals who are called to this role are high school and/or college graduate with academic and personal character positioning them to meet the enlistment eligibility criteria of the specific brand of service. Individuals select from a wide range of Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) that include communications, administrative, technology, engineering, infantry, equipment and others. Once one completes their service commitment they are able to take their training and leadership skills in pursuit of an educational and/or workplace path.

Caution – enlisting right out of high school requires a mature individual prepared mentally as well as physically. You step off the bus and stand ready, there is no turning back!!

Finding and following your path is an individual journey. As a society we should not be marching young adults like sheep towards one path. In fact, we should be endorsing, supporting and celebrating choice. The pursuit of education after high school is a life long journey not a sprint!!