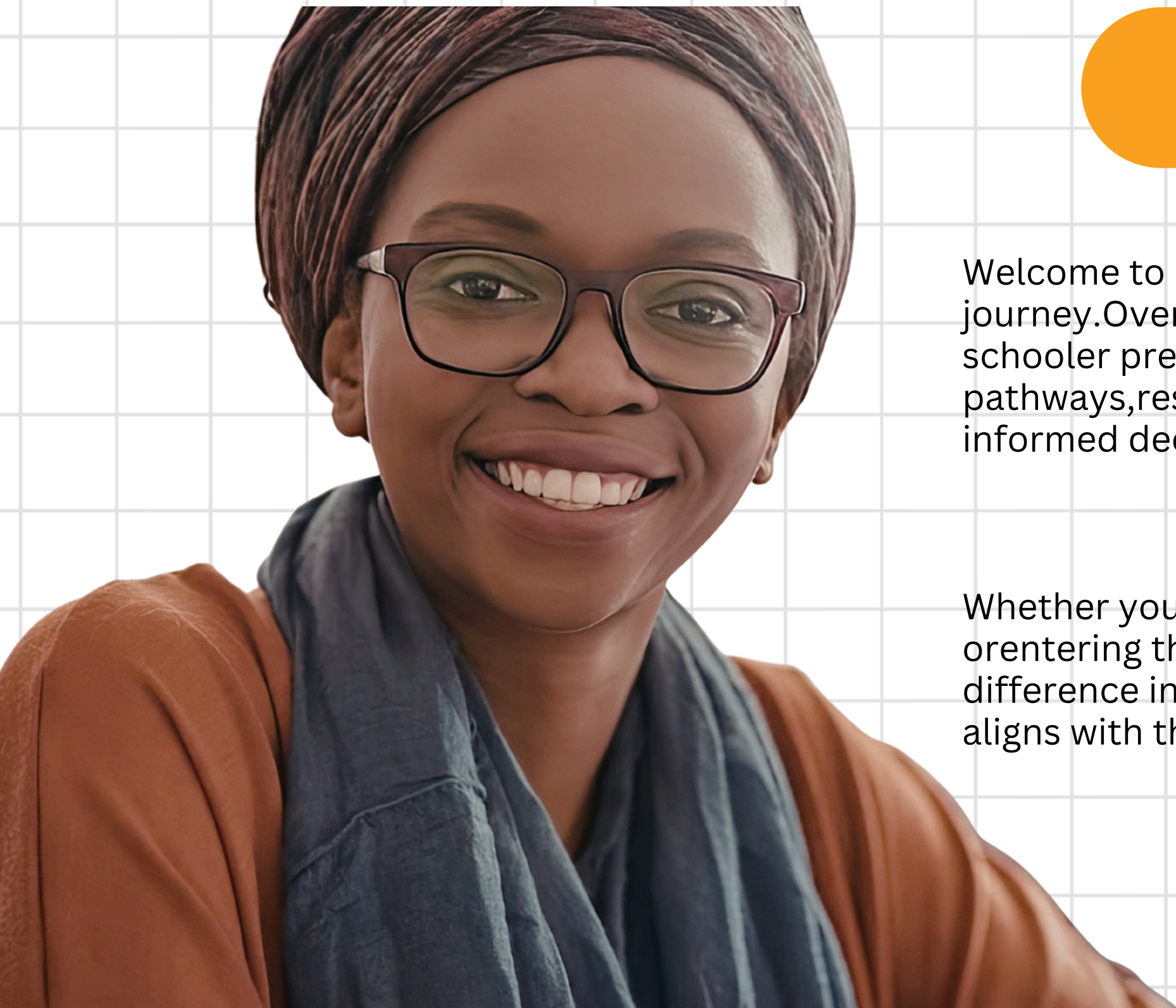
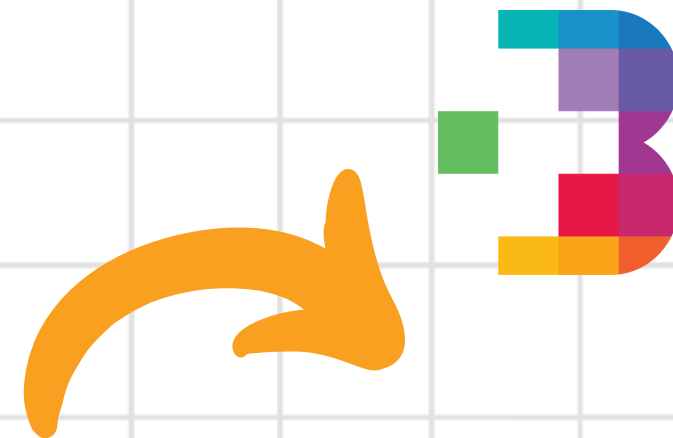




Mapping Your Child's Journey Beyond High School





Mapping Your Child's Journey Beyond High School

Welcome to our session on planning your child's postsecondary journey. Over the next hour, we'll explore how to help your middle or high schooler prepare for life after graduation. Together, we'll discover various pathways, research strategies, and financial considerations to make informed decisions.

Whether your child is considering college, trade school, military service, or entering the work force directly, early planning can make a significant difference in their success. Let's work together to map out a future that aligns with their unique interests, strengths, and aspirations.

Why Start Postsecondary Planning Early?



Beginning the postsecondary conversation during middle school can profoundly impact your child's academic journey. Early planning doesn't just prepare them for graduation—it shapes their entire educational experience by influencing course selection and extracurricular activities throughout middle and high school.

Consider Marisol, whose early interest in healthcare led her to take additional science courses in 8th grade. By senior year, she had completed APBiology and Chemistry, making her a stronger candidate for nursing programs. Starting early allowed her to build experiences aligned with her goals.

Remember that college isn't the only valuable path. Many students find fulfilling careers through community colleges, trade schools, military service, or direct workforce entry.



4

Explore Key Resources

Explore interests and aptitudes through electives and extracurriculars

Early High School

Research career fields and corresponding education requirements

Junior Year

Visit campuses or work places; begin narrowing options

Senior Year

Apply to programs and prepare for transition

Researching Postsecondary Options



Effective research helps families identify the best postsecondary pathway for their child. Start by understanding academic benchmarks for various options—four-year colleges typically look at GPA, test scores, and coursework rigor, while trade schools may prioritize specific skills or aptitudes.

Online resources can illuminate potential career paths based on your child's interests. Tools like My Next Move.org and CareerOneStop offer assessments that match students with careers that align with their strengths and preferences, helping narrow down educational requirements.

Nothing replaces firsthand experience. Take advantage of college visits, virtual tours, or career shadowing opportunities. These experiences help students envision themselves in different environments and make more informed decisions about their future.



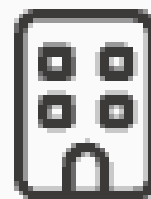
Research Academic Requirements

Understand GPA expectations, standardized test requirements, and prerequisite coursework for different pathways



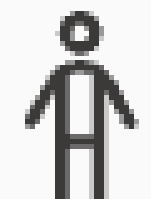
Utilize Career Inventories

Explore aptitude assessments that match interests to potential careers and corresponding educational paths



Visit Campuses or Workplaces

Arrange campus tours, attend open houses, or shadow professionals to gain first hand experience



Speak With Professionals

Connect with individuals working in fields of interest to learn about their educational journey and daily work



Postsecondary Brainstorming Activity



Take the next few minutes to brainstorm potential pathways that align with your child's interests, strengths, and aspirations. Consider both traditional and non-traditional options—from specialized degree programs to apprenticeships or entrepreneurship opportunities.

For each pathway you identify, determine at least one concrete step you can take within the next month to learn more. This might include scheduling a meeting with a school counselor, registering for a campus tour, or researching scholarship opportunities for specific programs.

Remember that this exercise isn't about committing to a single path—it's about opening doors of possibility. Many successful professionals explore several options before finding their ideal fit.

List your child's academic subjects, extracurricular activities, and natural abilities they most enjoy

Identify Interests & Strengths

Research professions that utilize these strengths and offer stability, growth, and personal fulfillment

Match to Potential Careers

Determine what training or education each career requires—degrees, certifications, or on-the-job training

Explore Educational Pathways

Schedule information interviews, campus visits, or research specific programs within the next 30 days

Plan Concrete Next Steps

Financial Planning & Support Resources



Financial preparation is crucial for postsecondary success. Start by familiarizing yourself with the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), which is essential for accessing grants, work-study, and loans. Mark your calendar for October 1st of your child's senior year when the application opens.

Don't overlook scholarship opportunities through platforms like Fastweb and College Board. Many local organizations, businesses, and community foundations offer grants specifically for students from your communities. Budget for immediate expenses too—application fees, test costs, and campus visits can add up quickly.

With changes to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs at many institutions, some targeted scholarships and support services may be limited. Connect with community organizations, cultural centers, and advocacy groups that continue to provide mentorship, financial assistance, and academic support for underrepresented students.

Financial Planning & Support Resources

Federal & State Aid

- Complete FAFSA as early as possible
- Research state-specific grant programs
- Explore income-based repayment options

Alternative Support Networks

- Cultural and community organizations
- Professional associations in target fields
- Religious institutions with education funds

Explore income-based repayment options

- Search engines: Fastweb, College Board
- Local sources: community foundations, employers
- Apply to many, even smaller awards