



# Pinellas Education Foundation

## 2025-2026 TSIC 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Agenda

### Semester 1

#### **Back to School Workshop & Quarter 1 Review**

**Program stats** of TSIC Results and how the program makes a difference in student's lives:

- High school graduation rate for TSIC is **98%**, non TSIC are at 72%
- TSIC college enrollment rate is **91%**, non TSIC are at 52%
- TSIC college graduation rate is **73%**, non TSIC are at 29%

#### **Students' Responsibility:**

- Maintain C's or better
- Meet with Mentor 2x a month & Attend required coaching sessions each semester
- Remain Crime & Drug free
- Refrain from receiving referrals
- Miss no more than 5 days of unexcused absences each quarter
- Check email regularly and respond to coach

#### **Clubs, Activities, Sports, & Volunteering**

Being involved in clubs, volunteering, tutoring, or participating in athletics, band, chorus, or theater can show leadership and is often considered when applying to college or university. It also helps when applying for other scholarships.

Having leadership experience:

- Shows a willingness and ability to take on responsibility
- Indicates that your peers believe in the student's success and leadership ability
- Revels confidence and courage to be a leader
- Demonstrates dedication and commitment

#### **Staying Academically Competitive**

Staying academically competitive can mean taking at least 2 honors classes in the 10th grade.

#### **What is the PSAT and why is it important?**

The PSAT won't count towards your college admissions applications, but it is the qualifying test for the [National Merit Scholarship](#). Some of the highest scoring students may win scholarship money, so while you shouldn't stress out about the PSAT, you certainly shouldn't ignore it either. Use the PSAT as practice for the SAT and ACT and an important guidepost on your college admissions journey.

All 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders will take this for free to practice taking a college readiness test. While this test cannot be used for college admissions and will not affect GPA, it can be used as a concordant score for the Algebra 1 EOC graduation requirement.

## Semester 1 continued

**Additional facts about the PSAT:** The PSAT, also known as the PSAT/NMSQT® (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test), is a practice version of the SAT exam.

- The purpose of the exam is to determine if a student is on track for college and open doors for opportunities to prepare and pay for college.
- A student can only take the PSAT/NMSQT once per year.
- The State of Florida provides the funding for all 10th-grade students to take the PSAT/NMSQT throughout Florida.
- Many students take the test in both 10th and 11th grade. If a student earns a high score on the PSAT/NMSQT in the student's junior year, the student could qualify to receive a National Merit Scholarship.
- Students who opt to take the PSAT/NMSQT in the 11th-grade year must pay a fee to take the test.
- PSAT/NMSQT is scheduled for October each year.
- The test is usually taken during the school day.
- The test lasts 2 hours and 45 minutes.
- PSAT/NMSQT tests a student's reading, writing and language, and math skills.
- Highest score for PSAT is 1520.

### PSAT & SAT Test Prep

Practice questions, tips, study guides, and tests for the SAT go to:

PSAT/NMSQT Information: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10>

PSAT/NMSQT Practice: <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt/preparing>

SAT <https://learn.khanacademy.org>

SAT <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/>

ACT <https://www.act.org/>

**TIP:** For studying the SAT's, Khan Academy is a great place to start because they work together with College Board - the maker of the SAT test.

### College and Career Center

The College and Career Center is the hub of information and support for students and families. Working in collaboration with school counselors, the College and Career Readiness Coordinators provide individualized and targeted assistance to navigate the college process.

- Career pathway and major exploration
- College exploration and match
- Application development and submission
- SAT/ACT preparation resources
- College Fair and admission events
- Financial and scholarship planning
- Essay preparation and review
- FAFSA assistance

<p><b>Annual College and Career Fair</b> Countryside High October 6, 2025, from 6:00-7:30pm</p>
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## Semester 1 continued

### High School Resume

A high school resume gives colleges a snapshot of a student's accomplishments, extracurricular activities/club involvement, hobbies, and work history. Example of how to create a resume, go to: [Click here to download a template](#) or email [TSIC@pinellaseducation.org](mailto:TSIC@pinellaseducation.org) and ask for the **Creating a Student Resume** document shown in Quarter 1 of the coaching agenda.

### Mentor Meetings: In person, TSIC App, or virtual options

As TSIC student, you are expected to meet with your mentor during your lunch period at least twice per month. We understand that sometimes students may miss a meeting or may not yet have a mentor assigned. For students who are not attending a traditional Pinellas County Schools campus, or who need additional support, we also offer virtual group mentoring sessions after school. These sessions are a great way to stay connected, ask questions, and continue working toward your goals.

### **TSIC Virtual Mentoring Options are available for:**

1. Full time virtual students.
2. Students who don't attend a traditional PCS school.
3. Students who do not have a mentor **temporarily** assigned to them.
4. Students that missed a meeting or have fallen behind mentor sessions.

**\*The virtual sessions are not meant to replace a currently assigned mentor.**

[Virtual mentoring link - CLICK HERE](#)

## Semester 2

### College & Careers Research

It is never too early to begin exploring possible career paths. It can help you to know what might interest you, so you know what type of schools to apply to in your senior year. Encourage students to visit copy of webform emailed to them to visit the links.

1. As you gather information about colleges and universities, keep it all in a notebook or centralized location.
2. Explore majors, courses of studies, and certifications offered.
3. Gather information on the admission requirements.
  - <https://www.floridashines.org/>
  - <https://gettherefl.com/>
  - <https://www.careeronestop.org/GetMyFuture/default.aspx>

### Additional Scholarships to work towards

**Bright Futures Scholarship** – Community service hours and/or paid work hours are required to qualify for every level of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship. ACT and SAT test scores will also determine the level of Bright Futures you may qualify for, in addition to work or community service hours served.

Hours needed to qualify for each level:

#### **Florida Academic Scholars:**

- 100 hours community service hours,
- Or 100 paid work hours,
- Or 100 hours of a combination of community and paid work hours.
- 3.5 GPA

#### **Florida Medallion Scholars:**

- 75 hours community service hours,
- Or 100 paid work hours,
- Or 100 hours of a combination of community and paid work hours.
- 3.0 GPA

#### **Florida Gold Seal (CAPE or Vocational) Scholars:**

- 30 hours community service hours,
- Or 100 paid work hours,
- Or 100 hours of a combination of community and paid work hours.
- 2.75 GPA

For more information, go to: <https://www.floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org/>

### **National Merit Scholarship**

Begin preparing for the PSAT in October. If you earn a high score in your junior year for the PSAT, you may qualify to receive the National Merit Scholarship. It is best to not wait until your junior year to take the PSAT for the first time.

[www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org)



## Semester 2 continued

### What is Financial Aid?

Financial aid is money to help pay for college or trade school and this includes money you don't have to pay back and money that you do.

There are 4 types of financial aid:

1. Grants (Ex: Federal Pell Grant)
2. Scholarships (Ex: TSIC or Bright Futures – privately and state funded)
3. Work-Study (Federal Work-Study provides part-time jobs allowing students to earn money to help pay for education.)
4. Loans (Money you pay back with interest)

Financial aid can come from federal, state, and private resources. To learn more about financial aid, please visit: <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types>

### Top Q&A Scholarship facts

- **Scholarship Type:** Your TSIC scholarship is a Florida Prepaid Plan (FPP). Colleges and universities will use your Social Security Number (SSN) to invoice the plan for tuition costs.
- **Tuition-Only Coverage:** This is not a full-ride scholarship. It covers tuition only, you'll still be responsible for other expenses like housing, meal plans, books, and additional fees.
- **Scholarship Ownership:** You are the beneficiary of the scholarship. The TSIC Foundation owns the plan and manages its use.
- **Enrollment Requirement:** You must enroll in at least one college course within 15 months of graduating high school to maintain eligibility.
- **Using It Elsewhere:** You can use the scholarship at private or out-of-state schools, but reimbursement is limited to about \$100 per credit hour. These schools often cost over \$25,000 per semester, so plan accordingly with the financial aid office ensuring you have enough loans, scholarships, and grants to cover your costs.
- **Scholarship Provided:** Upon graduation, you'll receive a 60-credit hour plan. Once those are used, you may apply for up to 60 additional credits if funds are available.
- **Best Value:** The scholarship offers the **most value at Florida public colleges**. These institutions align with the Florida Prepaid tuition rates.
- **Tuition Rate Differences:** University tuition is nearly double that of state colleges. This means your credits are used up faster at universities. Example: If you take 15 credits at a Florida public university, it may use up 28 credits from your plan due to higher tuition rates. At a state college like St. Petersburg College (SPC), the same 15 credits would only use 15 credits from your plan—thanks to the College Tuition Rate Plan.

For general questions about your plan, refer to the **TSIC Scholarship FAQ's** located in the section titled Current TSIC Student Meeting Requirements at <https://pinellaseducation.org/students/>

## Semester 2 continued

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