

**JUNIOR ACADEMIC
CONFERENCE**

2012

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Using the Academic Conference Booklet

This Academic Conference booklet is designed to coordinate with the Academic Conference video. The material printed in italics and enclosed in the box is information provided in the Academic Conference video. You may use this information at home to answer questions you may have about the college application process. The information in this booklet is enriched with handouts, checklists, examples, and other additional materials for you to use.

As you begin to apply to your selected colleges, this material should help clarify and simplify the process. At the beginning of your senior year, you will receive additional guidance through counselor visits to the classroom, Senior Parent Night, and College Night.

Good luck as you take the next steps toward a successful, fulfilling future.

Script for Academic Conference Video

Welcome to Plano West Senior High School. Please follow us as we take a brief tour of the counseling center. Here is the director's office as well as the offices for each counselor. Another resource in the department is the educational specialist. The College Corner contains college course catalogues, videos, and scholarship information. In addition, the counseling center bookshelves hold a variety of resources. The counseling staff includes Ann Raidt (Director), Kathy Havel, Michael Kaprelian, Julie Tallant, Linda Puster, Michelle Buonasera, and Tracy Stafford. Students are assigned alphabetically to the various counselors.

Today you will begin taking the first of many steps toward graduation. The purpose of this junior academic conference is not only to plan your senior classes but also to explore your plans for the future. Whether it is college, work or the armed forces, the decisions you make today can affect the rest of your life. If you are headed toward college, applying involves many steps. We hope this video simplifies this process for you.

Students must learn about the requirements for each college to which they will be applying. Many schools require some or all of the following documents:

- *Admissions Application*
- *Entrance exam scores (SAT Reasoning, ACT, SAT Subject Test)*
- *THEA Test Scores (if applicable)*
- *High School subject requirements must be met*
- *Official high school transcript*
- *Letters of recommendation*
- *Student resume*
- *Essays*

Most of the paperwork and applications that you will be handling over the next year will have definite dates. It is always in your best interest to submit materials early.

Plano West Senior High School
5601 West Parker Road, Plano, TX 75093
469-752-9600

COUNSELING CENTER

A – Chu	KATHY HAVEL	29617
Ci – G	MICHAEL KAPRELIAN	29626
H - Lao	JULIE TALLANT	29618
Lap – O	LINDA PUSTER	29760
P – Sm	MICHELLE BUONASERA	29715
Sn – Z	TRACY STAFFORD	29619
DIRECTOR OF GUIDANCE	ANN RAIDT	29616
COUNSELING SECRETARY	SUZETTE PRINCE	29620
COUNSELING RECEPTIONIST	JUANITA MATUSHEK	29615
REGISTRAR	ANNE LEHMAN	29623
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR	BARBARA PALMER	29625

SUB SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

EXT. #'S

ARCTIC	VICTOR NIXON	A-Ev	29613
	SECRETARY: Hilda “Sam” Scott		29716
LOBOS	MARLYS DIGGLES	Fa – La	29710
	SECRETARY: HEDY DISARRO		29722
TIMBER	KEVIN LYONS	Le – Rob	29614
	SECRETARY: BONNIE NEUMANN		29720
TUNDRA	LARRY FARNEN	Roc – Z	29711
	SECRETARY: LEONA HARDIMAN		29725

<http://www.pisd.edu/schools/secondary/pwsh/index.shtml>

SEVEN PERIOD DAY

SAMPLE BELL SCHEDULE

**optional choice: 0-6th period or 1-7th period*

0	8:00 - 8:50
1	9:00 - 9:50
2	9:56 – 10:50
3	10:56 – 11:46
4	11:46 – 1:33 (A/B lunch/class)
5	1:33 – 2:23
6	2:29 – 3:19
7	3:25 – 4:15

Plano I.S.D.

Final Exam Exemption Guidelines

Senior Exemption Guidelines

A senior may qualify for exemption from final exams during the second semester if he/she meets the following criteria:

- A minimum grade of 85 overall 2nd semester average (per class), and an 85 for the 6th six weeks must be maintained (per class).
- Students shall have no more than four (4) absences during the second semester (per class).
- The student shall have no more than five (5) tardies in each class.
- No major infractions resulting in ISS, Saturday School, Out of School Suspension, or Special Programs.
- The student must have no outstanding fines, fees, or debts for school property or services (summer school, night school, etc.)
- The student must report to class for attendance accounting and check out requirements at the start of the first period each exam day to be exempt from taking any exam. Failure to report to the first period class each exam day will result in a zero as the grade for the examination. If the student has a pass for an excused absence, he/she will be allowed to take the make-up examination on the scheduled date.

AP Exemption Guidelines

Juniors and Seniors enrolled in an AP course for the second semester of the school year may qualify for exemption from the final exam in that subject for the second semester if the following conditions exist:

- **A minimum grade of 80 overall 2nd semester average (per class) and 80 for the 6th six weeks must be maintained (per class).**
- Student takes the National AP Exam for that course in May.
- Students shall have no more than four (4) absences during the second semester (per class).
- **The student shall have no more than five (5) tardies in that AP class.**
- **No major infractions resulting in ISS, Saturday School, Out of School Suspension, or Special Program Center.**
- **The student must have no outstanding fines, fees, or debts for school property or services (summer school, night school, etc.).**
- **The student must report to class for attendance accounting and check out requirements at the start of the first period each exam day to be exempt from taking any exam. Failure to report to the first period class each exam day will result in a zero as the grade for the examination. If the student has a pass for an excused absence, he/she will be allowed to take the make-up examination on the scheduled date.**
- **Seniors in an AP/IB course who choose not to take the national exam may also qualify for the final exam exemption if all of the requirements for the Senior Exemption Guidelines are met.**

The Parent Viewer for Grades and Attendance gives parents access to student attendance records and periodic student grade reporting. Web site

<http://parentviewer.pisd.edu>

Wolf Call provides daily announcements. To subscribe go to www.pisd.edu/eNews.htm

District course catalog grades 9-12 <http://www.pisd.edu/students/courses/index.shtml>

STUDENT'S TIMELINE FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Spring Semester of Junior Year:

- Attend individual student/parent academic conferences
- Pass all sections of exit level TAKS
- Register to take an SAT and/or ACT during the spring semester in order to review your results and retake the exams if necessary or to improve scores
- Register for AP exams through the Counseling Center
- Complete all AP exams in May
- Finalize your senior schedule making sure you have met all the requirements for high school graduation

Summer between Junior and Senior Year:

- Visit colleges. Call ahead for appointments with admissions, financial aid, and academic advisors at the schools you are interested in attending.
- If you go on interviews or visits, send thank you notes.
- Send for applications or go on line to view applications. Practice filling out the information without submitting applications. Focus on the essay portions and decide how you want to present yourself to college admissions.
- Check your college deadlines and develop a calendar for submission of materials. Pay particular attention to early decision or early action deadlines.

Fall of Senior Year:

- Check your credits for graduation and your schedule of classes.
- Register to take the SAT or ACT test if you have not done so or if you want to retake the test to raise your score.
- If you need SAT Subject tests be sure you have registered to take them.
- Double check deadlines for your colleges and begin your applications. If you need a counselor letter of recommendation be sure you obtain the necessary materials from the counseling center. Remember to allow **3 weeks** for your counselor to write your letter. If you need a teacher recommendation letter please provide the teacher with a resume and stamped, addressed envelope (the teacher mails the recommendation directly to each college).
- Retake your TAKS test if you did not pass a section.
- Check on housing reservations as required by your colleges.
- Aim for completion of all college applications by December 1st.
- Order transcripts for each college to which you are applying.

Spring of Senior Year:

- If you fail a class necessary for graduation in the fall, be sure to add it to your spring semester schedule, and inform your counselor how you will complete the class.
- Complete FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) as soon as possible after January 1.
- Check Wolf Call and the Wolf Howl for scholarship information. Check the counseling center for scholarship information. Discuss financial aid information with the financial aid office where you will attend college.
- Meet all deposit deadlines for your college.
- Sign up and take AP Exams.
- Notify the counseling office of all the scholarships, awards, and grants you receive.
- **GRADUATE!**

TESTING

There are many standardized tests that you may encounter over the next year or so. They all start sounding alike but are actually different tests. Let's see if we can clarify each test and its purpose.

PSAT

We hope you took it in the fall of your junior year and have received your results. If you didn't take the PSAT during your 11th grade year, you won't have another opportunity. The PSAT is used primarily for National Merit competition but is also a valuable preparation tool for the actual SAT.

SAT/ACT

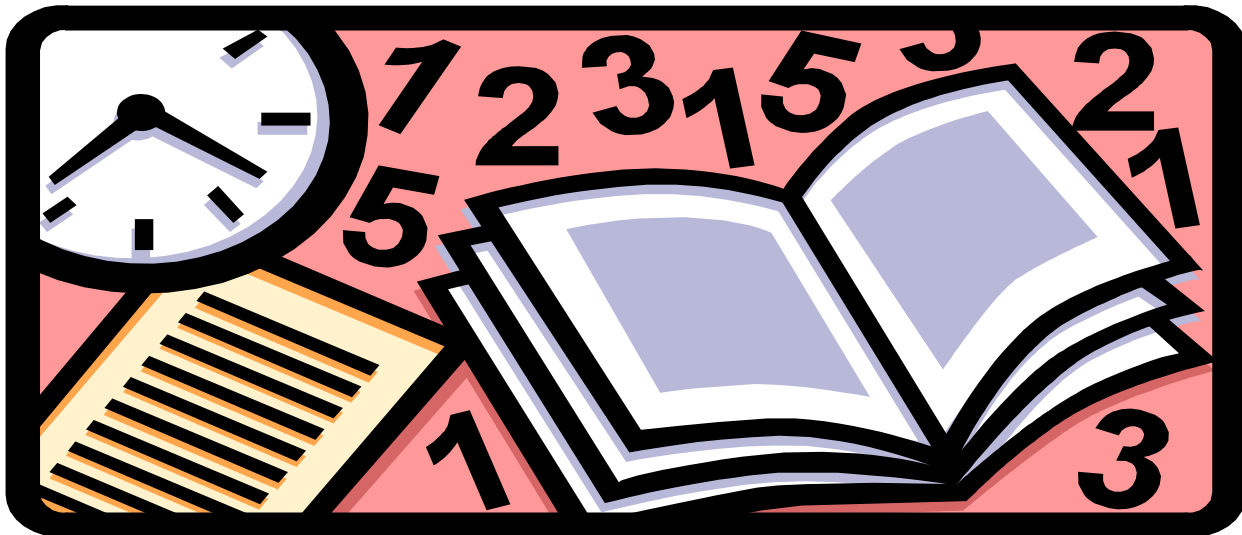
Most colleges will consider your SAT and/or your ACT score as part of the admission process. You may sign-up on-line or through the mail for either test. We recommend that seniors interested in college take one or both tests during the spring of their junior year. Your academic conference packet describes the differences between the tests and provides some test taking strategies. Test prep has become big business. We have a list of agencies as well as individual tutors who provide such a service. Local bookstores carry a wide variety of study aides. The websites for ACT and for SAT also offer practice tests. We have seen an improvement in scores when a student makes a diligent effort to prepare prior to testing.

SAT SUBJECT TEST

SAT Subject Test are used for college admissions, covering specific subject areas. Many of the selective colleges require that you take certain SAT Subject Test. Occasionally, even if a college does not require them as a part of the application, the scores will be considered for possible college credit.

THEA

THEA is a test used for college course placement and not criteria for admission. It is only required by public colleges in the state of Texas including 2 and 4-year colleges. The test consists of 3 parts: Reading, Writing and Math. There are ways to be exempt from the test – based on your test scores on either your TAKS, SAT or ACT results. If you are not exempt, our office does have applications to take the test that is offered on college campuses. We recommend that you pick-up that packet early in your senior year and select the testing date that fits your schedule. Note that this test is not offered many times during the year.



SAT AND ACT INFORMATION

ACT: includes 4 test sections, 3 hours, 25 min. (including 30 min. optional writing test).

English - measures knowledge about the use of standard written English; 4 reading comprehension passages, and no vocabulary or analogies,

Math - math reasoning skills; primarily Geometry and Algebra, 4 questions on Trigonometry.

Reading - measures ability to understand what is read and reasoning skills.

Science - measures ability to interpret, analyze, and evaluate information related to natural sciences.

Writing - optional; however, colleges may require this section for scores to be considered.

Composite Score - the average score of the four tests. Highest possible score is 36. Note: you **are not** penalized for guessing on the ACT.

SAT Reasoning: includes 3 test sections; 3 hours, 45 min.

Verbal - measures reading comprehension, sentence completion, and vocabulary. Grammar is important.

Math - measures reasoning ability; Geometry and Algebra II.

Writing - measures ability to write an essay in an allotted amount of time.

Score - ranges from 200-800 on EACH section. Highest possible score is 2400. Note: you **are** penalized for guessing on multiple-choice questions for the SAT.

SAT SUBJECT TEST: specific subject tests; may be required for admission to some universities. Subject tests include: Writing, Literature, American History, World History, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and several languages.

SAT		ACT
25 minutes, required	Essay	30 minutes, optional
7 times a year	Administrations	6 times a year
10 sections: 3 Critical Reading, 3 Math, 3 Writing, 1 Experimental	Structure	5 sections: English, Math, Reading , Science Reasoning and Writing
Basic geometry and some Algebra II	Math Content	Up to Trigonometry
Yes	Is there a penalty for wrong answers?	No
200-800 on each section; 2400 is the highest combined score	How is it scored?	1-36 for each subject. 36 is the highest score, made from averaging each subject score
Yes. Scores from every SAT a student has ever taken are sent every time a score is reported. Schools are only concerned about the highest scores.	Are all scores sent to schools?	No. Students can choose which scores the schools see.

Study Hints

Here are some hints that test-preparation companies are giving students for the new SAT:

- **Don't spend as much time cramming vocabulary words. Vocabulary is still valuable on various sections of the test, but less so.**
- **Don't stress too much about the Algebra II questions. There will be only four or five on the entire test. You could afford to miss all of them.**
- **Make your essay structured: A clear beginning, supporting paragraphs and a conclusion. Graders will take only 60 to 90 seconds to grade each essay, and they'll look for clear, supported arguments more than stylish, graceful writing.**
- **Don't forget about the grammar multiple-choice questions. Everyone's focusing on the new essay, but two-thirds of your writing score will be based on the grammar questions.**
- **If your handwriting is tiny, make it a bit larger on the essay. Take up most of the writing space provided; you don't want graders (even subconsciously) thinking you haven't put forth a full effort.**
- **Use the process of elimination and don't be afraid to guess. You'll be penalized for every wrong answer you give, but it's still worth your while to guess on questions where you can eliminate at least one of the five possible answers. The penalties from your mistakes usually won't be big enough to counter the benefits you'll get from those you guess correctly.**

Sources: The Princeton Review; Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions: Fiske's New SAT Insider's Guide.

CHECKLIST: GATHER THESE ITEMS TOGETHER THE NIGHT BEFORE THE TEST

- Your admission ticket. If you haven't received it at least one week before the test, or if you lost it, call the testing service at 609-771-7600. For the ACT, call 319-337-1270.
- Photo ID (Driver's License, School ID or Passport).
- Number 2 pencils and a good eraser.
- Calculator (put in new batteries) and a watch (use it to pace yourself).

Standardized Testing Commonly Asked Questions

What is the SAT? - It is a Standardized Aptitude Test that many colleges use for admissions decisions. The Critical Reading section places greater emphasis on reading comprehension. The Math portion includes math concepts thru Algebra II. The Writing section assesses both knowledge of grammar and usage, and includes an essay that comprises 30% of the overall score. Each section is scored on a 200- to 800- point scale, so the high score is now 2400.

As always, the SAT plays an important role in admission at colleges that require it; very often, it is among the top two or three items in importance (some colleges do not require standardized testing for admission; visit the website www.fairtest.org for a list of colleges that do not require testing). At present, the Writing score is required by a great number of colleges, but the vast majority do not use the Writing score as part of the admission process. Thus you will notice many admissions criteria still referring to scores on the 1600 scale (does not include Writing). The extent to which admissions offices will use the Writing score remains to be seen.

What is the ACT, and should my child take it?

The ACT is another standardized test used in the admission process, usually interchangeably with the SAT, and we highly recommend that students take both tests. Since the ACT and SAT are structured differently, some students will perform better on the ACT than the SAT (and vice versa). In fact, some students score significantly higher on one test over the other. Thus it makes a great deal of sense to take both tests. If you retake a test, focus on the one with the higher score to try to improve.

What are SAT Subject Tests and should my child take them?

SAT Subject Tests are one-hour exams that measure a student's knowledge of specific subject areas. Only about 30 colleges nationally require one or more Subject Tests for admission, so go online to check whether or not these tests will be required. Tests are scheduled throughout the year.

Websites

The official SAT online course, paid for by PISD, can be accessed at: Collegeboard.com/SATonlinecourseschool, in the "STUDENTS" box click "Register Now." Then enter your school code: 445-573. for ACT order "ACTive Prep Personal Version CD-ROM" (item number 040 20H 000) by calling 1-319-337-1429.

Additional online sources for SAT/ACT prep information:

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

<http://www.collegequest.com>

<http://www1.kaplan.com>

<http://www.testprep.com>

<http://www.testu.com>

<http://www.act.org>

**The SAT/ACT registration booklets and other testing materials are available on the bookshelves in the counseling center. A free preparation booklet to review for the SAT and the ACT is also available in this location.*

2011 - 2012 National Test Dates

SAT - Test Date	SAT - Registration Deadline	Late Fee Required
*October 1	September 9	September 21
*November 5	October 7	October 21
December 3	November 8	November 20
*January 28	December 30	January 13
March 10	February 10	February 24
May 5	April 6	April 20
June 2	May 8	May 22

ACT – Test Date	ACT – Registration Deadline	Late Fee Required
September 10	August 12	August 13-26
October 22	September 16	September 17-30
December 10	November 4	November 5-18
February 11	January 13	January 14-20
April 14	March 9	March 10-23
June 9	May 4	May 5-18

High School Code 445-573

*Testing at Plano West Sr. High School

TEXAS SUCCESS INITIATIVE STATE REQUIREMENTS

WHAT IS THE TSI?

TSI is a program which requires testing in reading, mathematics, and writing designed to ensure that all students attending public colleges and universities in Texas have the skills necessary to perform effectively in college-level coursework. This is not used for admission purposes; it is used for placement in college classes.

WHO MUST TEST?

All undergraduate students who enter a Texas public institution of higher education must take the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) test, or an alternative test: ASSET, COMPASS, ACCUPLACER, prior to enrolling in any collegiate-level coursework, unless they meet the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board exemptions in accordance with Texas Law.

How do I qualify for an exemption? Use the information on page 11 (Academic Conference Book).

WHEN SHOULD I TEST?

Students should take the THEA or alternate test either during the senior year of high school or during the summer before entering college. Material for the THEA is available in the counseling center. Registration is on-line or mail in. If you are not exempt, you must test before enrolling in any credit level course in Texas public colleges.

WHAT IF I DO NOT PASS A SECTION OF THE TSI?

Students that have not completed the TSI requirements in a particular area are required to complete a developmental program in that area. Students are allowed to take regular coursework during the same semester that they complete their mandatory developmental course(s).

HOW DO I COMPLETE THE TSI REQUIREMENTS?

The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements may be met by:

1. Retaking and passing an approved instrument for the sections not passed.
2. Passing the highest level of developmental course for that section.

MINIMUM PASSING STANDARDS FOR ALL TSI TESTS

	THEA TEST	ASSET TEST	COMPASS TEST	ACCUPLACER TEST
READING	230	41	81	78
MATH	230	38	39	63
WRITING	220	40/5	59/5	80/5 (or a 6 or higher on the essay and no multiple choice)

AM I EXEMPT?

Students are exempt from individual areas of testing (on a single sitting) if any one of the following is met:

READING	ACT: Composite 23 and English 19 SAT: Composite 1070* and Verbal/Critical Reading 500 TAKS: ELA 2200 & Writing Essay score 3
MATH	ACT: Composite 23 and Math 19 SAT: Composite 1070* and Math 500 TAKS: Math 2200
WRITING	ACT: Composite 23 and English 19 SAT: Composite 1070* and Verbal /Critical Reading 500 TAKS: ELA 2200 & Writing Essay score 3

**SAT Composite = Critical Reading plus Math*

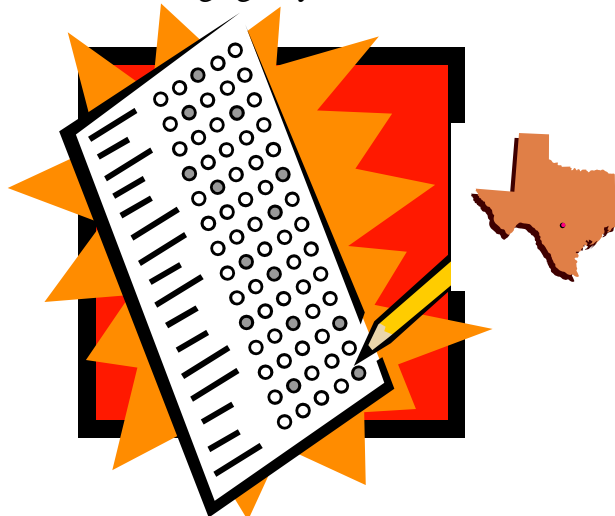
DO I NEED TO TAKE THE TOEFL?

Applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit proof of English proficiency. TOEFL is a test of English as a foreign language. If English is not your first language and you have been in this country five years or less, you may want to take the TOEFL. Registration forms are available in the counseling center.

Proof of English proficiency may be shown by the following:

1. A minimum TOEFL score of 550 for paper based testing, 213 for computer-based testing, or 80 for internet-based testing
2. A minimum SAT Critical reading score of 480
3. A minimum ACT English score of 19
4. Completing all four years in a U.S. accredited high school

Test scores must be sent directly from the testing agency to be considered official.



REGISTRAR

An important person whom you will want to be aware of in this college admission process is the registrar. The registrar's office is located diagonally across the hall from the counseling center. Official transcripts, class rank, and GPA are generated from this office. When you finish submitting your college application, immediately request an official transcript from the registrar. An updated class rank and GPA will be available in September of your senior year.

PLANO WEST SENIOR HIGH

TRANSCRIPT REQUEST

Student's **Legal Name** _____

PWSH ID Number _____ Telephone _____

Birth date _____ Graduation Year _____

Send to: _____

College Name

Address

City

State

Zip

_____ Send Immediately _____ Personal Copy

Most Texas schools are sent electronically – no envelope necessary.

For all other schools, an addressed envelope is required –

NO POSTAGE and NO RETURN ADDRESS please.

****Test scores are NOT included on transcripts. TAKS only is sent electronically. ****

**EACH TRANSCRIPT WILL COST \$1.00 FOR A PERSONAL COPY
AND \$2.00 FOR AN OFFICIAL COPY.**

Signature of person requesting transcript

Date

APPLICATIONS

You may apply to college by submitting an application either online or through the use of a paper copy. Colleges typically prefer an application be submitted online as this eliminates many possible errors and incomplete applications. The use of one application for Texas public colleges and universities which is called Apply Texas could save time when applying to several schools within our state. There is also a common application that many private schools use. Whether applying through Apply Texas or specific college materials, you will need to be aware of certain terms. On the first page of the college application you will be given a choice that will determine your application deadline. Please refer to your Academic Conference packets for the descriptions of these terms.

You will be handling many different forms in the college application process, such as housing, scholarships, financial aid, orientation, parking, etc. An awareness of all deadlines is crucial as they are all time sensitive.

College/University Plan Checklist

- ▲ **Tests and Test Date:**
 SAT I _____ SAT Subject Test _____ ACT _____ *THEA _____
 *may be exempt
- ▲ **College Visits – pick up form in sub school and return it after visit**

- ▲ **Completed a College Application Form:**
 Paper Form _____ On-Line Form _____
 *Essays submitted, if required
- ▲ **School Report (if needed) to Registrar** _____
 - Counselor Recommendation Packet needed for completion of this report
 - Submit to counselor 3 weeks in advance of application deadline
- ▲ **Transcripts (to Registrar-bring addressed envelope and \$2.00)** _____
 - Official copy of high school transcript-for completing all applications
 - Submit final copy to college you will be attending
- ▲ **Mid-year Report (if required) to Registrar** _____
 *Include stamped, addressed envelope
- ▲ **Financial Aid:** *FAFSA _____ CSS Profile _____ *HB 1403 _____
 *PIN number in fall/form in Jan. *immigration status
 Scholarships _____ Grants and Loans _____
- ▲ **Letters of Recommendation – Check on application to see if needed**

Name	Position
_____	_____
_____	_____
- ▲ **Mailed/submitted all forms and letters to the correct departments** _____

Be sure everything is submitted well before due dates!

CHOOSING YOUR COLLEGE

Things to consider:

Admission requirements

- What minimum ACT/SAT scores are required?
- Is an essay, and/or an interview, and/or recommendations required?
- What are the application deadlines? Does the school offer early decision?

Location

- How far do you want to be from home? Do you want to live in a large city or small?
- Do you want to live on campus or will you commute? Attend a large campus or small?
- What type of transportation is available to get you to the campus? Cost of airline ticket?

Academics

- Does the academic program meet your needs/interests? Is career counseling available?
- What is the student-to-faculty ratio? Do graduate students teach classes?
- Do most students graduate in four years?

Campus housing and facilities

- What are the dorms like? How are roommates chosen? Is off-campus housing available?
- Are students required to live on campus? For how long?
- What facilities are offered: athletic center, computer lab, library?

School activities

- Does the school offer intercollegiate and/or intramural sports?
- What types of student organizations exist?

Student body

- Do you want to attend a public or private institution (costs vary greatly)?
- What size school interests you? Do you want to attend a co-ed school?

Cost and financial aid

- What is the cost of the college?
- Is financial aid available? What percentage of students receives financial aid?

WHAT A SCHOOL WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT YOU

- What is your academic history and GPA?
- Did you take challenging classes in high school and a strong senior year schedule?
- How do your ACT/SAT scores compare with other students' scores?
- What honors and awards have you received?
- What extracurricular activities/volunteer activities are you involved in?
- How does your writing compare to other applicants (the essay)?
- What does your counselor and/or teachers say about you?

RESOURCES FOR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

- Counseling office
- College websites
- College admissions offices
- www.applytexas.org

(Texas Common Application for Texas public colleges)

- www.commonapp.org

(Common Application for numerous private colleges)

- www.eduinonline.com

(Common Application for numerous black colleges)



Filling Out the College Application

Filling out applications for college is time consuming. A huge “time saver” is using the Texas Common Application (typically for public schools in the state of Texas) www.applytexas.org or the Common Application (typically for private schools) www.commonapp.org. Each of these will list the colleges that accept this application when you enter their websites. Colleges prefer use of the online applications when possible. Each college has applications available on line.

When filling out an application, please remember to:

- Fill out the application completely and neatly and then submit. Keep a copy for your records. If mailing, be sure the address is correct.
- If filling out the Texas Common Application, download the information into the scholarship section.
- Look for any additional requirements (School Report pages, Midyear Report, Teacher Evaluation pages) that must be completed.
- Turn in essays that are grammatically correct; always read, reread, have someone proofread, and proofread again your essays.
- Request a transcript from the registrar (bring \$2.00 plus an envelope addressed to the admissions office of the college). If additional forms are necessary from the counselor, then mark “hold for counselor” on the transcript request form; otherwise, mark this form “send immediately.”

If you must submit the **School Report** pages (which are filled out by your counselor), then you may need a counselor letter of recommendation. In order to get a letter of recommendation from a counselor, you must complete the Counselor Recommendation Packet. Complete the student portion of the School Report form before submitting to the counselor, making sure to sign any waiver agreements (typically students waive the right to access records so that materials submitted to the college may be viewed as confidential and not influenced by others). Please give the counselor at least three weeks before your due dates to complete this information.

If you must submit **Teacher Evaluation** pages, ask a teacher(s) in an academic subject to complete the form as instructed (this typically requires a teacher letter of recommendation). Provide the teacher a copy of your resume and a stamped, addressed envelope for each college you are requesting. The teachers will mail these directly to your schools.

Some colleges require a supplemental form along with the Common Application. Check the Requirements Grid for how to obtain and submit these forms.

Some colleges may require additional writing samples or materials such as music tapes, artwork, reports of scientific projects, etc. Consult each institution’s instructions for submitting these materials.

It is your responsibility to report any changes to your schedule to the colleges to which you are applying. Senior classes and grades are important in this application process.

COUNSELOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Your application may contain a section called "The Secondary Counselor School Report" or will indicate that a section needs to be completed by a school official. At Plano West, your counselor completes this form. Look carefully to see if your application requests a letter of recommendation from your counselor. If a college requires a letter of recommendation, you will need to complete a Counselor Recommendation Packet, which may be found in the Counseling office. This provides your counselor with the best possible information in order to personalize your recommendation letter. Usually only private universities and some out-of-state public colleges require a counselor recommendation. Filling out the Counselor Recommendation Packet is one part of this college application process that may be started early. **Letters of recommendation must be requested 3 weeks in advance.**

Some colleges also require a letter of recommendation from a teacher. If this is required of you, ask your teachers if they will write one for you. If so, give your teacher your resume (including social security number) and a stamped envelope addressed to the college admissions office. Upon completion, request your teacher mail it directly to your college. Be sure to write a thank you note to your teacher.

RESUME

If you have not already started doing so, begin assembling a resume outlining your high school activities and honors. You may want to refine your resume so that it mimics the actual application in terms of categories. For instance, if a college requests the number of hours involved in a volunteer activity, be sure your resume includes this information. It may be important to include what you have gained from the volunteer experience. Do not consider anything that you have accomplished unimportant. This is your opportunity to shine.

To see and print the Blue Packet, refer to: <http://k-12.pisd.edu/Schools/pwsh/counseling/senior.html>



COLLEGE VISIT

Narrowing your college choices may not be easy. Visiting the campus may help determine where you want to apply. While you are on the campus, getting acquainted with various people may help your chances for acceptance. This semester is a good time to begin those visits. Contact the college admission office to set up that appointment. They will provide a campus tour and an information session. When initially arranging for the visit, request any additional appointments you would like to make while on campus. For instance, you may want to observe a classroom or speak with a professor.

If you are going to miss school, you will need to complete a permission form through the sub school office several days before the actual visit. This form requires your signature and the signatures of a parent, your sub school principal and a college official. Return the form to your sub school upon returning to school. When the paperwork is completed properly, college visits are excused absences but do count against exemptions.

COLLEGE VISIT

Organization:

- Call and set up appointment at the College.
- Request permission form from sub school prior to the visit.
- Parent and sub school principal must sign permission form.
- Have college admissions advisor sign form.
- Return college visit form to sub school following visit.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK ON A COLLEGE VISIT

When you visit a campus:

- Take a tour, check facilities, including dormitories.
- Talk to students, a very useful source of information about a college; but remember that students' personal opinions must be considered with care.
- Visit a class: talk with a faculty member if possible.
- Have a meal on campus.
- Visit the coffee shop, snack bar or pub as a place to meet students.
- Read the campus newspaper; check bulletin boards to discover campus issues.
- Ask questions! Don't be bashful!

Ask College Students:

- Do you spend most of your time outside class studying? Is that amount typical for most students here?
- Are campus jobs readily available?
- Are faculty members accessible outside of class? Do faculty members teach undergraduate courses?
- Do many students go home on the weekends?
- Is it possible to study in your dorm room?
- Do you like to study in the library? Do you often do research there?
- Is it relatively easy to get the classes you want at registration time?
- If you could do it again, would you still choose this college?

As you tour the campus, ask yourself:

- Are the older buildings in good repair?
- Are there new buildings as well as old?
- Is the lab equipment up-to-date and available?
- Are the rooms in the residence halls pleasant? Are there kitchen and laundry facilities?
- How accessible are computer labs and internet access?
- What's the surrounding town or city like? Could I live here?

NOTE: If you visit the campus of a college that offers personal interviews, be sure to set up an appointment when you call to arrange the visit.

COLLEGE VISIT FORM

PLANO WEST SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
5601 West Parker Road, Plano, TX 75093
(469)752-9600

College Visitation Prior Approval Request Form:

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

College: _____

College Contact Person: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Reason for Request: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

- Junior & seniors may visit college campuses.
- No limit to the number of college visits.
- Form to be completed by parent, sub-school principal and student.
- Must get college stamp/signature.
- Each college visit counts as an excused absence, therefore, a senior student may lose the spring semester exemption if college visits cause the student to exceed three absences.

**Prior approval if signed by
administrator**

Sub School Principal (must be signed
before departure)

College Representative Signature _____

Date: _____ **(College Seal)**

ESSAYS

You may be required to write an essay or two as part of your college application. Through this essay, the college may get to know you more personally as well as assess your writing skills. Your essay may weigh heavily in the admission process; therefore, writing, rewriting, and editing are encouraged. Waiting until the last minute is never in your best interest.

WRITING THE COLLEGE ESSAY

The college essay offers the student the opportunity to share thoughts, insights, and opinions and convey the student's maturity and outlook on life. It is the only time this is possible in the application process except during a college interview. Be sure to follow the instructions given in the application when writing an essay.

Guidelines for writing the college essay:

- It should reflect the voice of the student writer.
 - Is this essay about me?
 - Essays that tell stories are better remembered
 - Is it about me NOW (not in the past)?
 - Is this essay in my own voice?
 - Will it resonate with those who know me as authentic?
- The topic should be one the student can be passionate about.
- The essay should contain humor, flexibility, and creativity.
- The college essay should be proofread many times for errors but never lose the student's voice.
- There should be no grammatical errors in the essay.
- It is a narrative and thoughts should flow smoothly throughout.

Hints:

- If an essay is optional, choose to write it.
- Begin early so that it is possible to write, set it aside, reread, rewrite, have someone proofread, rewrite, etc. It should be a very polished paper.
- Strive to analyze and show depth.
- Make the reader want to read the essay again.

A typical college essay topic might be: "Write an essay in which you tell about someone who has made an impact on your life and explain how and why this person is important to you."

Topics may change from year to year. The topics that are required differ between colleges so you must look up each particular college and be sure to respond to the appropriate questions. Always answer the question expressed in the essay very directly.

Attempting to modify one essay to use for another question often results in a very poor attempt to respond to the essay question presented. Take the time necessary to do your best on this important part of the application process!

WEBSITES

It is not always possible to visit a campus before making your decision. College websites have become an invaluable source for information. Your Academic Conference booklet contains information on college search websites. Our department library includes many college course catalogues and videos. Have fun exploring all your options.

INTERVIEW

Some colleges have an additional requirement for admissions... the college interview. If this is required of you look for tips in your booklet in order to make lasting, positive impression.

TIPS FOR COLLEGE INTERVIEWS

HELP THE INTERVIEWER FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE

- Relax.
- Consider in advance the positive points about yourself.
Use silence to collect your thoughts; talk about yourself honestly.
Answer questions with more than a “yes” or “no.”
Don’t try to bluff or charm the interviewer.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE IMPORTANT

- Be prompt (arrive about 15 minutes early).
- Appearance; wear neatly pressed yet comfortable clothes.
- Attitude; sit erectly, do not slouch; firm handshake; make eye contact.
- Bring a resume and unofficial copy of transcript.
- Language (avoid slang and using the word “LIKE”).
- Discuss your interests with enthusiasm.
- Travel—include only unusual trips, re: archeological digs.
- Do not use cell phones during the interview, do not tell how hard your high school is, do not say negative things about your high school, or talk about other colleges you are applying to.
- Do not point out bad grades on your transcript or blame teachers for your grades.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What are your goals? What are you passionate about?
- How does this college fit in with your interests and talents?
- Why do you want to attend college? What majors are you interested in, and why?
- What extracurricular activities are important to you?
- What academic or intellectual topics interest you? What types of books do you enjoy?
- What do you expect to be doing in 5-10 years?
- What might you change about your high school?
- What are your strengths and how are you using them?
- How do you feel about competition?
- What are you doing when you lose track of time?
- What do you want to get out of college besides a degree?

WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR INTERVIEW:

- Know facts about the college and why it’s a good match for you.
- Do not ask questions whose answers could have been read in catalogs, brochures, or the school’s website.
- Be ready to volunteer information: know your scores, rank-in-class, latest grades, and what courses you carry.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

Thank the interviewer. Ask for a business card. Follow up with an email or write a note as a thank you.

Some interviews are conducted by alumnae and some by admissions officers.

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

NCAA Freshman Eligibility Standards

Quick Reference Sheet

NCAA Division I Academic Eligibility Requirements

For the class of 2008 and after: 16 core courses

If you plan to enter college in 2008 or after, you will need to present 16 core courses in the following breakdown:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of Mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 years of Natural/Physical Science (one must be a Lab Science)
- 1 year of additional English, Math or Science
- 2 years of Social Studies
- 4 years of additional core courses (from any area listed above, or from Foreign Language, Nondoctrinal Religion or Philosophy)
-

NCAA Division II Academic Eligibility Requirements

The following information is posted by the NCAA on www.ncaastudent.org:

If you enroll in a Division II college and want to participate in athletics or receive an athletics scholarship during your first year, you must:

- Graduate from high school;
 - Complete these 14 core courses:
 - 3 years of English
 - 2 years of math (algebra 1 or higher)
 - 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your high school)
 - 2 extra years of English, math or natural or physical science
 - 2 years of social science
 - 3 years of extra core courses (from any category above, or foreign language, nondoctrinal religion or philosophy);
- Earn a 2.000 grade-point average or better in your core courses; and
- Earn a combined SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.

Important Change

All SAT and ACT test scores must be reported to the NCAA Clearinghouse directly from the testing agency. Test scores will not be accepted if reported on a high school transcript.

When registering for the SAT or ACT, input the NCAA Clearinghouse code of 9999 in the Score Report section to make sure the score is reported directly to the them. You can also input Illinois' code to insure we receive the scores. Our codes are 1836 (SAT) & 1154 (ACT).

YOU MUST REGISTER WITH THE NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

Why you need to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse

- If you are going to play NCAA DI or DII athletics you have to be cleared by the NCAA
- You can't receive official scholarship offers until you have registered
- You can't go on official visits unless you have registered
- All NCAA coaches use the Clearinghouse/Eligibility Center to verify your academics

You should register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at the start of your junior year. If you are a senior, register immediately and get your official documents ready.

Please note the NCAA now refers to the Clearinghouse as the Eligibility Center. These are the exact same organizations.

Academic Eligibility Requirements

Your GPA from your core courses are used in combination with your SAT or ACT test scores to determine your academic eligibility. You need to achieve a minimum of 2.0 GPA in your core course. There are total of 16 core courses you are required to pass. You will need 4 years of English, 3 years Math (Algebra 1 or higher), 2 years Science (natural or physical including lab), 2 years Social Science, 1 extra year of Math, Science or English and 4 years of any of the previous courses or Foreign Language, Religion or Philosophy.

SAT or ACT Score Requirements

You will need to take the either the SAT or ACT test and have the records sent directly to the NCAA. Your test score is then combined with your GPA to determine your eligibility. Please see the sliding scale at the bottom of the page to see what test scores you will need given your GPA.

*It is best to take the either test more than once as you can combine your highest subject scores for the best total score.

Steps after registering

You will need to send complete academic records, test results, finish you amateurism certificate and submit payment. Complete instructions are below.

Academic Records – you will need official copies of all of your academic records. If you have attended multiple schools in high school you will need the official records from each school. International athletes from non-English speaking countries will need to have their documents translated by an official translator.

Test Scores – you will need take either the SAT or ACT tests and have your results sent directly to the NCAA by the testing organizations. When you are preparing for the test there will be an area to indicate where you would like to have your results sent by entering a four digit code of 9999.

Amateurism Certificate – once you have created your account you will have series of questions to answer online to determine your status as an amateur athlete.

Payment – the cost for registering with the NCAA is a onetime fee of \$65 for domestic athletes and \$95 for international athletes. There are opportunities for a fee waiver and all instructions are made available once you have created your account.

MILITARY ACADEMIES

The United States Military Academies include West Point, Annapolis, Air Force Academy, United States Coast Guard Academy, and Merchant Marine Academy. The application process for these schools is more complex than other colleges. It is very important to begin this process in the spring of your junior year to increase your chances for acceptance. Be sure to include your counselor in this process.

SERVICE ACADEMIES AND ROTC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

While all juniors should begin exploring possible educational programs following graduation, it is imperative to begin as soon as possible if interested in the service academies and ROTC scholarship programs in order to receive full consideration. Plano West ROTC instructor, Major John Napoli, is a good source of information regarding this educational path.

The **first step** in securing an appointment to one of the academies is to write or email and ask for a pre-candidate questionnaire. Do this during the junior year. Addresses follow:

Admissions Office
U.S. Military Academy
West Point, NY 10996

Admissions Office
U.S. Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD 21402

Admissions Office
U.S. Air force Academy
U.S.A.F. Academy, CO 80840

The second step is to request a recommendation from one of your senators or congressmen. US Congressman Sam Johnson is available to answer questions. He may be contacted through his website: www.samjohnson.house.gov or by calling 972-470-0892. The person providing the nomination will need the following information:

- Name, address, and telephone number
- Date of birth
- Social Security number
- High school name and year of graduation
- Names of parents
- The student may indicate first, second, third, and fourth choices for Academies.

The Coast Guard Academy and the Merchant Marine Academy have an admissions procedure similar to other highly competitive colleges. There is no nomination process involved. Write directly for an application or apply online (the preferred method):

Admission Office
U.S. Coast Guard Academy
New London, CT 06320

Admissions Office
Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, NY 10024

ROTC scholarship programs involve a competitive process as well. In addition to the written application, candidates must undergo a physical exam, formal interviews, and a physical abilities test. The **first step** in the process is to request an application:

Army ROTC
www.goarmy.com

Air Force ROTC
www.afrotc.com

Navy ROTC
www.navy.com

US Coast Guard
www.uscg.mil/

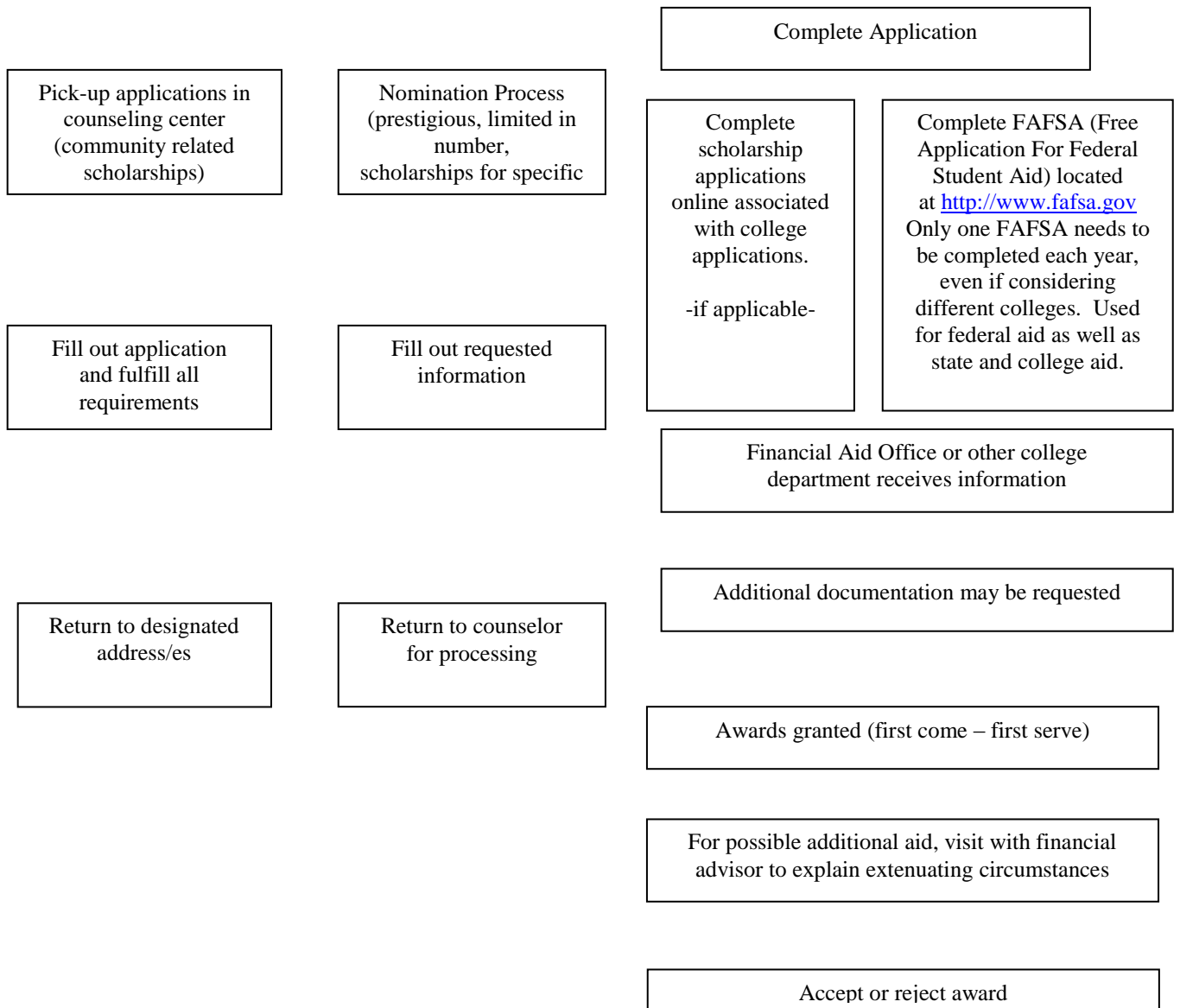
US Marines
www.usmc.mil/

A good reference tool is [How the Military Will Help You Pay for College](#) (Peterson).

PATHWAYS TO FINANCIAL AID

Through Plano West Counseling Center

Through Your College



FINANCING COLLEGE

There are many different resources available to help you in planning your college financing. Within the counseling department itself, there is information regarding many scholarships. Juniors are eligible to apply for a limited number. It is not too early to begin your search; however, scholarship season tends to fall during the spring semester of the senior year. Information regarding these scholarships is disseminated through the Wolf Call as well as in the scholarship file cabinet, which is located in the college/career center. In addition this information is compiled on a spreadsheet, which can be found in the counseling center.

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS TIME LINE

Junior Year:

- Shop around for colleges/universities. Go for college visits.
 1. Check out admission requirements and deadlines.
 2. Check out financial aid and scholarship requirements and deadlines.
- Check out other scholarship options such as: scholarships offered by your parents' employers, private organizations including business or professional groups, fraternal organizations, and your family's bank. Check out the reference section of the library, the counseling center, and www.fastweb.com.
- Meet early scholarship deadlines. Some scholarships require essays.

Senior Year:

Fall

- Check on individual college/university general academic scholarship deadlines.
- Acquaint yourself with FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
- Scholarship applications will be listed in the Wolf Call as they become available.

January or February

- Parents and students complete tax returns
- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.gov
 1. Request pin number at www.pin.ed.gov.
 2. Have results sent to all colleges/universities you are considering.
 3. Use figures from completed tax returns if possible.
- Complete college/university specific financial aid applications if required
- Complete additional scholarship applications

Spring

- Evaluate colleges/universities and financial aid packages
 1. Be sure to compare the cost of the schools, not just the financial aid packages.
 2. Explore and compare colleges, majors, and living arrangements.
- Select college/university.
- Get personally acquainted with the financial aide office where you will attend college.
- Accept financial aid package from only one college or university and notify all other schools of decision.
- Notify scholarship donors where to send scholarship funds.

All Subsequent Years of College

- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), scholarship applications, and school specific financial aid applications early every spring.

Texas Grant Program

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the program is to provide a grant of money to enable well-prepared eligible students to attend public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education in Texas. The priority in making awards is to provide continued funding to recipients already enrolled in the program who are in college and are making progress towards their degrees. Because funding for awards to new students is limited, many students who meet the eligibility requirements will not be able to receive awards in the future.

Who can compete for an award? A student who:

- Is a Texas resident;
- Has financial need and an expected family contribution (EFC) of no more than \$8,500;
- Has applied for any available financial aid or assistance;
- Has not been previously granted a baccalaureate degree
- Enrolls at least ¾ time in an undergraduate degree or certificate program at a Texas non-profit college or university;
- Meets one of the following two requirements:
 - Graduated from an accredited high school in Texas no earlier than the 1998-1999 school year
 - Completed the recommended or distinguished achievement high school curriculum or its equivalent (1)
- Enrolls in an eligible Texas college or university within 16 months of high school graduation;

Please note that funding in this program is limited. Though you may meet eligibility requirements, your financial aid package may not include this Grant if funds are not available at your college.

When should students apply?

Funding in this program is limited; therefore, students should apply as early as possible. Deadlines vary by institution, but fall and spring grants are generally awarded in the spring prior to enrollment.

How much can a student receive through the program?

The award amount depends on the tuition and fees to be paid by the student. In general, it is an amount equal to the student's tuition and required fees at public institutions. In past years, the award was approximately: \$1,570 per semester for public university students; \$635 per semester for community college students; and \$930 per semester for technical college students, based on enrollment of 12 hours per semester.) Private institution awards are based on the public university amount.

Is this a one-time award?

No. Students who qualify on the basis of their high school curriculum and who continue to meet program academic standards in college can receive awards for up to 150 credit hours or for six years or until they receive their bachelor's degree, whichever occurs first. In the first year of college, the institution sets the academic standards. In subsequent years, the requirements are completion of at least 75 percent of their hours taken in the prior year, plus an overall college GPA or at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

How do students apply?

Students must complete the FAFSA. Awards will be made by the financial aid office at the student's college or university. Persons interested in the program should contact the financial aid office at the student's college or university to find out about deadlines and additional procedures.

Where can I get additional information?

Contact your college financial aid office for additional information on eligibility or availability of funds. To read more about this program check out: [Texas Education Code, Chapter 56 and, Subchapter M. Coordination Board Rules, Chapter 22L.](#)

Types of Financial Aid

Grants and Scholarships – Money given to a student that carries no stipulation of repayment is known as a scholarship or a grant. Scholarships and grants can originate from the federal or state government, private sources or the college itself. Grant eligibility tends to be based on need; when need is high, the grant aid tends to be high as well. Scholarship eligibility is often based on financial need, academic achievement, particular talents or skills, or a combination of one or more of these factors. In some cases, the terms “grant” and “scholarship” are used interchangeably.

Loans – Any program described as a loan requires repayment, usually with interest, to the source of the funding. Loans often come from the institution or private lender. Generally the greater the financial need, the larger the loan. A variety of repayment options are usually available, and sometimes permit payment to be deferred while the borrower is enrolled in school. Many banks and lending institutions now make special loan programs available to help parents finance their student’s education.

Jobs – On and off-campus employment for hourly wages during the academic year. In some cases, the jobs are designed to complement the student’s field of study.

Applying for Financial Aid

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) - a detailed form that is the first step in applying for federal aid, offered by the U.S. Department of Education. Only one FAFSA needs to be completed each year, even if you are considering several different colleges. You may be able to use the FAFSA to apply for state and college aid as well. It is available in electronic format.

CSS Financial Aid Profile – A supplemental need analysis document used by some colleges and private scholarship programs to award their non-federal aid funds. Early in your senior year, participating colleges may ask you to file a CSS Profile so that a predetermination can be made of your financial aid eligibility at that school. The CSS Profile does not replace the FAFSA. You should file a CSS Profile only for those colleges and programs that request it.

Financial Aid Package – Describes the total amount of aid that a student receives. It generally consists of several parts: grants/scholarships, loans and jobs.

NOTE: Whatever you’re financial resources, don’t allow the cost of a college education to cut short your educational pursuits.

FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or the FAFSA, is a very important document to be completed for federal and state student grants, work-study, and loans. Your application needs to be submitted as early as possible but no earlier than January 1st of the student's senior year, as the financial information is based on your earnings the full year prior to starting college.

FAFSA: Step by Step

Basic FAFSA Facts:

What is it?

The federal government uses this form to determine your eligibility for financial aid, which includes: grants, work-study, scholarships and loans.

Why fill it out?

The FAFSA is used to determine how much aid you will receive. It may also be prerequisite for other scholarship monies.

What type of aid can I expect to receive?

Your prospective college will try to meet your financial need through federal, state, school and private sources, as well as loans, grants and student employment.

May I complete FAFSA on the Web?

Yes, visit www.fafsa.gov and click "Before Beginning a FAFSA" to get started. The Web provides "edit check" and is a quicker process.

Where do I obtain a paper copy of FAFSA?

You may go to your guidance counselor's office, local library, or call 1-800-4-FED-AID to ask for a copy.

FAFSA Tips:

- Fill out the form as soon as possible after January 1.
- Do not leave any fields blank. Enter "0" if a question does not apply.
- List your information accurately.
- Take your time and follow the instructions. For assistance call 1-800-4-FED-AID.
- Sign the applications. If you are a dependent, have your parents sign too.
- Report ALL required sources of untaxed income (e.g., Social Security/child support).
- Fill out the FAFSA every year, even if you don't think you will qualify for aid. It may be a prerequisite for scholarships.

PIN: Your Key to Online Identification

The Personal Identification Number (PIN) is the code that is used to identify you online. To obtain a PIN, visit www.pin.ed.gov. Click on "Apply for PIN". You may receive your PIN via e-mail or regular mail. You must submit your name, date of birth and social security number to receive a PIN. Do not reveal your PIN to anyone. The PIN allows anyone to electronically sign federal documents and access confidential information,

Fill Out the FAFSA:

Keep a completed copy for your records. You'll need the following to fill out the form:

- Social Security number
- 2011 W2 and /or tax return
- Driver's license (if any)
- 2011 federal income tax return
- Parent's 2006 income tax return (if a dependent)
- 2011 untaxed income records (if any)
- Current bank statements
- Current mortgage and investment records (if any)
- Alien registration card (if not U.S. citizen)

Signing the FAFSA (required on WEB or paper filing):

- Use your 4-digit PIN. Parents will also need their own PINs to electronically sign the FAFSA.
- Print the signature page, get the required signatures and mail the form to the address listed on the signature page.
- Wait until you receive your SAR (Student Aid Report), get the required signatures and return it through the U.S. Postal Service via certified mail.

Review the Student Aid Report (SAR)—receive within 5 weeks of filing:

- Review immediately and carefully.
- Report errors to the FAFSA Help Desk and ask how to make corrections
- Call 1-800-433-3243 if you do not receive the SAR within 5 weeks.
- An asterisk after the EFC means your SAR has been selected for verification and you may be asked for more information which will go to the prospective college.

WEBSITES AS RESOURCES

In the academic conference book, you will find a listing of helpful websites that will assist in exploring colleges, majors, financial information, as well as other areas. We would like to take a moment to point out a few. First, look at Fastweb.com. This website is a free resource which will match students to appropriate scholarships. If you have not become acquainted with Collegeboard.com, please take the time to explore this website. It contains help in researching colleges. If you are undecided about your college major, www.mymajors.com and bridges.com both offer excellent interest assessments.

COLLEGE INFORMATION

Plano's University Ready

<http://ur.pisd.edu>

Designed to aid Plano students and parents as they prepare for all aspects of post-secondary experience.

College Board

www.collegeboard.com

Includes college search engine. Offers a unique side-by-side option to help compare as many as three colleges.

College NET

www.collegenet.com

Over 1500 colleges linked. Narrow searches by region, tuition, major, private/public, etc., Applications are linked and allow transfer of common data from one form to another.

Hobson's College View

www.collegeview.com

One of the most detailed search engines on the Net. Excellent FAQ section under the college search .

Peterson's Education & Career Center

www.petersons.com

Campus news, college search engine, test prep, financial aid.

The Princeton Review

www.princetonreview.com

Under the heading of "research," explore majors, complete a unique college search, and read the latest 'best' colleges as determined the Princeton Review.

NACAC

www.nacacnet.org

The National Association for College Admission Counseling highlights central issues for high school students considering college-college visits, financial aid, choosing a college or interview savvy.

My Roads

www.collegeboard.com/psatextra

Major, college, and career exploration tool.

TACAC 24/7 College Information Hotline

www.asktacac.com Toll-Free number 1-877-275-7007

COOL (College Opportunities Online Locator)

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/>

See and compare profiles of nearly 7000 colleges and universities across the nation.

American Universities

www.clas.ufl.edu/au/

American Universities granting bachelor or advanced degrees

TESTING

Princeton Review

www.PrincetonReview.com

Search profiles

Kaplan

www.kaplan.com

Testing Information

Petersons

www.petersons.com

Test Prep

My Roads/Quick Start

www.collegeboard.com/psatextra

Major, college, and career exploration tool.

The Official SAT Online Course

www.collegeboard.com/satonlinecourse school

Resource available through PISD as a PSAT/SAT online review course.

Topcat

www.testprep.collegefortexans.com

Test prep tutorials for all subjects, SAT and ACT

AP Scores

www.collegeboard.com

This site gives information concerning credits granted by colleges/universities based on AP testing scores.

1. Top left hand corner, choose student.
2. Bar in middle of page, choose college Board Tests.
3. Under tools, select AP Credit Policy Info.
4. Find Index and use this to find the college or university.
5. Click bar that reads: "Click here for this institution's AP credit and placement Policy on the Web."

CAREERS

Connect EDU

www.connectedu.net

At no cost explore colleges, majors, careers, and employers.

My Majors

www.mymajors.com

After completion of interviews, MyMajors recommends six majors to the student and offers information about these majors.

Kuder

www.kuder.com/

Offers a career planning system to help answer questions.

Occupational Outlook Handbook

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

For hundreds of different types of jobs this site tells you: the training and education needed: earnings expected job prospects: what workers do on the job: working conditions: job search tips: links to information about the job market in each State and more.

America's Career InfoNet

www.acinet.org/acinet/

This site is a resource for making informed career decisions to support a demand-driven workforce.

FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIPS

In Roads

www.INROADS.org

Paid summer internships for minority students, who meet criteria for qualification.

College For Texans

www.collegefortexans.com

Students whose father or mother was a police officer or fireman killed in the line of duty, may obtain financing for college through this resource. TOPCAT: free SAT/ACT test preparation.

Department of Education

www.ed.gov

Packed with information in a question/answer format about topics such as: paying for tuition, applying for financial aid. Links to FAFSA.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid

www.fafsa.ed.gov

Required step in the college financial aid process.

FAFSA 4Caster

www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/

Provides estimate of eligibility for federal student aid, helps increase knowledge of financial aid process, and provides knowledge regarding federal student aid and other sources of aid.

Think Ahead, Inc.

www.collegeaidcalculator.com

Private company that sells software to assist in the college financial planning process.

FinAid

www.finaid.org

Free resource for scholarships, information about loans and general college financial planning.

The Wired Scholar

www.wiredscholar.com

Free internet scholarship database, careers and financial aid information.

Fast Web

www.fastweb.com

Free internet scholarship database. Complete (and update if necessary) a personal profile.

College Board

www.collegeboard.com/parents/pay/

Information on college costs, applying for scholarships and other types of financial aid, and student loans.

The Scholarship Coach

www.scholarshipcoach.com

Fun graphics appeal to students while explaining financial aid packages and scholarships.

Jackie Robinson Foundation

www.jackierobinson.org

Scholarships for minority youths.

Hispanic Scholarship Fund

www.hsf.net

Source for many scholarships for Hispanic youth planning to attend 2 or 4-year universities.

Federal Trade Commission

www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarship/index.html

Information about how to avoid the pitfalls of scholarship scams.

Sallie Mae

www.salliemae.com

Website on Sallie Mae, the largest college loan finance company.

College Savings

www.savingforcollege.com

Information and comparisons about section 529 college savings plans.

Nelnet

www.nelnet.net/collegeplanning

Help in understanding the financial aid process, college planning center, student loans. Profiles for each college (includes community colleges). Live web-chat with real time response.

Making College Financial Planning Count

www.elearning.makingitcount.com

Develop your own personal college strategy.

One Stop Resource to find Colleges, Scholarships and Expert College Planning Advice

www.Collegeexpress.com

RESOURCES

Glasser, William, M.D. *For Parents and Teenagers-Dissolving the Barrier Between You and your Teen.*

Jones, M., & Ginsburg, K. (2006). *Less Stress, More Success.* Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.

Jones, Marilee and Kenneth R. Ginsburg. *Less Stress, More success: A New Approach to Guiding Your Teen Through College Admissions and Beyond.*

Levine, Madeline. *The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage Are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids.*

Mathews, J. (2007, July). *Ten Ways To Reduce College Application Stress.* Washington Post.

Moyer, M. (2008). *How To Make Colleges Want You.* Sourcebooks, Inc.

Pope, Loren. *Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That's Right for You..*

Pope, Loren. *Colleges That Change Lives.*

Robbins, Alexandra. *The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids.*

Ruggs, Frederick E. *Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges.*

The Sport Source: The Official Athletic College Guide.

Thomson, Michael Ph. D. *Parenthood: Who's Raising Whom? Strategies for Saving Your Sanity.*

****Web Resources for the College-Bound**

Identify resources that exist on the WEB through this helpful book. Send request and \$5 payment to: NACAC Publications, 1631 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA, 22314-2818, or call 1-800-822-6285.

LARGE TEXAS UNIVERSITIES

THE STATE OF TEXAS COMMON APPLICATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEB AT WWW.APPLYTEXAS.ORG

<u>COLLEGE</u>	<u>ENROLLMENT</u>	<u>% ACCEPTANCE</u>	<u>Average SAT (CR+M)/ACT</u>	<u>Tuition</u>
SAM HOUSTON Huntsville	14,689	47%	995/21	\$7,328
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN Nacogdoches	11,269	65%	970/21	\$7,344
TEXAS A&M College Station	39,148	69%	1215/27	\$8,424
TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY San Marcos	27,448	76%	1060/23	\$8,232
TEXAS TECH Lubbock	25,462	72%	1095/24	\$8,765
UNIV. OF HOUSTON Houston	30,688	70%	1090/23	\$9,211
UNIV. OF NORTH TEXAS Denton	28,283	65%	1100/24	\$8,349
UNIV. TEXAS – AUSTIN Austin	38,420	47%	1240/28	\$9,794
UNIV. TEXAS – ARLINGTON Arlington	25,106	70%	1075/23	\$8,878

UNIFORM ADMISSION POLICY: Texas Education Code (TEC) 51.803-51.809 requires that all students meet one of the following college readiness standards in order to be *ELIGIBLE to be considered for admission at a Texas Four-Year Public Institution:

- Successfully complete the recommended or advanced high school program
- OR
- Satisfy the College Readiness Benchmarks on the SAT or ACT assessment:
SAT – 1500 out of 2400 (Verbal + Math + Writing)
ACT – 18 English, 21 Reading, 22 Mathematics and 24 Science

* Check individual college websites for admission standards above and beyond this minimum requirement.

Automatic admission at Texas Universities

<u>College</u>		<u>SAT(CR+M)/ACT</u>
ALL TEXAS PUBLIC UNIV. EXCEPT UT AUSTIN*	Top 10%	No Minimum
Sam Houston State	Top 25%	850/17
Stephen F. Austin	Top 25%	No Minimum
Texas A & M University	Top 25%	1300/30 (individual subscore requirements)
Texas State University	Top 25%	920/20
University of Texas – Austin	Top 9%	No Minimum
Texas Tech University	Top 25%	1140/25
Texas Women’s University	Top 25%	No Minimum
University of Texas at Dallas	Top 15%	1200/26

EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO ENSURE ACCURACY OF THIS FORM. HOWEVER, IT IS UP TO YOU TO CONTACT YOUR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY TO MAKE SURE THERE HAVE BEEN NO CHANGES IN ADMISSION STANDARDS.

SMALL TEXAS UNIVERSITIES & COMMUNITY COLLEGES

COLLEGE	ENROLLMENT	% ACCEPTANCE	AVERAGE SAT(CR+M)/ACT	Tuition Only
ANGELO STATE San Angelo	6,155	95%	955/21	\$7,349
AUSTIN COMM. COLLEGE Austin Open Admission/No Housing	44,100	N/A	No Minimum	\$2,115
BLINN COLLEGE Brenham Open Admission/No Housing	17,559	N/A	No Minimum	\$2,160
COLLIN COLLEGE McKinney/Plano Open Admission (SELECT ADMISSION FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS)	27,069	N/A	No Minimum	\$1,020
KILGORE COLLEGE Kilgore Open Admission	6,691	N/A	No Minimum	\$1,590
MIDWESTERN STATE Wichita Falls	5,712	64%	1005/21	\$6,910
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M Prairie View GPA OF 2.0 (4 PT. SCALE) OR BETTER	6,973	42%	845/17	\$7,401
RICHLAND COLLEGE Dallas Open Admission	19,201	N/A	No Minimum	\$1,350
TEXAS A & M – GALVESTON Galveston	1,805	71%	1110/23	\$7,226
TEXAS A&M - COMMERCE Commerce Regular Admission	6,143	59%	970/21	\$6,283
TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE Tyler Open Admission/Housing available (SELECT ADMISSION FOR HEALTH SCIENCE & COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY)	11,738	N/A	No Minimum	\$2,162
UNIV. OF TEXAS, DALLAS Richardson ALL OTHER STUDENTS REVIEWED ◆ STUDENTS MUST HAVE 4 ENGLISH, 3.5 MATH, 3 SCIENCE, 3 SOCIAL STUDIES, 2 FOR LANGUAGE, .5 FINE ARTS	10,648	50%	1250/27	\$11,168
WEST TEXAS A&M Canyon	6,441	72%	995/22	\$6,282
TEXAS WOMENS UNIVERSITY(TWU) Denton	8,483	91%	1000/22	\$6,960

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8/11

POPULAR PRIVATE & OUT-OF-STATE COLLEGES FOR PISD GRADUATES

NAME ONLY	ENROLLMENT	%ACCEPTANCE	AVERAGE SAT(CR+M)/ACT	TUITION
ARIZONA STATE TEMPE, AZ	56,562	87	1095 23	\$22,319 (OUT/STATE)
UNIV. OF ARIZONA TUSCON, AZ	30,592	75	1100 24	\$25,509 (OUT/STATE)
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FAYETTEVILLE, AR	17,247	60	1135 26	\$17,606 (OUT/STATE)
AUBURN UNIVERSITY AUBURN, AL	20,221	79	1205 27	\$22,890 (OUT/STATE)
AUSTIN COLLEGE SHERMAN, TX	1,293	83	1240 26	\$31,270 (PRIVATE)
BAYLOR UNIVERSITY WACO, TX	12,438	48	1215 27	\$31,658 (PRIVATE)
BOSTON COLLEGE CHESTNUT HILL, MA	9,099	31	1340 31	\$42,204 (PRIVATE)
BOSTON UNIVERSITY BOSTON, MA	18,714	58	1275 28	\$41,420 (PRIVATE)
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIV. PROVO, UT	30,409	64	1260 28	\$ 4,560 (PRIVATE)
BROWN UNIVERSITY PROVIDENCE, RI	6,318	9	1430 31	\$42,230 (PRIVATE)
CALIF. POLYTECH. SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA	17,332	33	1220 27	\$ 19,081 (OUT/STATE)
UC – BERKELEY BERKELEY, CA	25,540	22	1360 30	\$35,713 (OUT/STATE)
UCLA LOS ANGELES, CA	26,162	33	1295 28	\$35,564 (OUT/STATE)
CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIV. PITTSBURGH, PA	6,108	33	1400 31	\$43,812 (PRIVATE)
UNIV. OF COLORADO BOULDER, CO	26,433	83	1180 26	\$30,330 (OUT/STATE)
CLAREMONT MCKENNA CLAREMONT, CA	1,261	17	1395	\$42,240 (PRIVATE)
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY NEW YORK, NY	5,888	10	1480 33	\$45,290 (PRIVATE)
CORNELL UNIVERSITY ITHACA, NY	13,935	18	1405 31	\$41,541 (PRIVATE)
DUKE UNIVERSITY DURHAM, NC	6,663	16	1435 32	\$41,938 (E)
EMORY UNIVERSITY ATLANTA, GA	5,325	29	1405 32	41,164 (PRIVATE)
FLORIDA STATE UNIV. TALLAHASSEE, FL	31,418	60	1200 26	\$20,992 (OUT/STATE)

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NAME ONLY	ENROLLMENT	% ACCEPTANCE	AVERAGE SAT(CR+M)/ACT	TUITION
UNIV. OF FLORIDA GAINESVILLE, FL	32,660	43	1265 28	\$27,934 (OUT/STATE)
GEORGE WASHINGTON WASHINGTON, DC	10,358	32	1300 29	\$44,148 (PRIVATE)
GEORGETOWN UNIV. WASHINGTON, DC	7,553	20	1390 29	\$41,393 (PRIVATE)
HARVARD CAMBRIDGE, MA	6,641	7	1490 33	\$39,849 (PRIVATE)
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN	31,540	67	1320 29	\$27,980 (OUT/STATE)
INDIANA UNIV. Bloomington, IN	32,367	69	1170 27	\$27,689 (OUT/STATE)
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA Iowa City, IA	21,176	84	1180 26	\$25,099 (OUT/STATE)
IOWA STATE Ames, IA	23,104	81	1150 25	\$19,358 (OUT/STATE)
JOHNS HOPKINS BALTIMORE, MD	4,997	21	1400 31	\$42,780 (PRIVATE)
UNIV. OF KANSAS LAWRENCE, KS	19,852	93	25	\$22,608 (OUT/STATE)
LSU Baton Rouge, LA	23,685	72	1160 26	\$18,878 (OUT/STATE)
MIT CAMBRIDGE, MA	4,299	10	1485 34	\$40,732 (PRIVATE)
UNIV. OF MICHIGAN ANN ARBOR, MI	27,027	51	1335 29	\$37,782 (OUT/STATE)
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI Columbia, MO	24,901	84	1185 26	\$21,784 (OUT/STATE)
MOREHOUSE COLLEGE ATLANTA, GA	2,579	64	1005 21	\$23,520 (PRIVATE)
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY NEW YORK, NY	22,097	38	1345 30	\$41,606 (PRIVATE)
UNIV. OF N. CAROLINA CHAPEL HILL, NC	18,579	32	1305 29	\$26,834 (OUT/STATE)
NORTHWESTERN EVANSTON, IL	8,947	23	1425 33	\$41,983 (PRIVATE)
NOTRE DAME NOTRE DAME, IN	8,442	29	1415 33	\$41,417 (PRIVATE)
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIV. STILLWATER, OK	18,197	81	1120 25	\$18,765 (OUT/STATE)

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NAME ONLY	ENROLLMENT	%ACCEPTANCE	AVERAGE SAT(CR+M)/ACT	TUITION
UNIV. OF OKLAHOMA NORMAN, OK	20,892	85	1180 26	\$19,278 (OUT/STATE)
UNIV. OF PENNSYLVANIA PHILADELPHIA, PA	9,865	14	1440 32	\$42,098 (PRIVATE)
PEPPERDINE UNIV. MALIBU, CA	3,447	31	1230 28	\$40,752 (PRIVATE)
PRINCETON UNIV. PRINCETON, NJ	5,220	9	1490 33	\$37,000 (PRIVATE)
RICE UNIVERSITY HOUSTON, TX	3,262	21	1440 32	\$35,551 (PRIVATE)
UNIV. SOUTHERN CALIF. LOS ANGELES, CA	17,380	24	1370 31	\$42,818 (PRIVATE)
SMU DALLAS, TX	6,192	59	1240 28	\$39,430 (PRIVATE)
SOUTHWESTERN UNIV. GEORGETOWN, TX	1,372	67	1215 27	\$33,440 (PRIVATE)
SPELMAN COLLEGE ATLANTA, GA	2,177	39	1025 22	\$23,254 (PRIVATE)
STANFORD UNIVERSITY STANFORD, CA	6,940	7	1440 32	\$40,050 (PRIVATE)
TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIV. WORTH, TX	7,853	53	1165 26	\$32,490 (PRIVATE)
TRINITY UNIVERSITY SAN ANTONIO, TX	2,417	63	1270 30	\$31,356 (PRIVATE)
TULANE UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS, LA	7,803	26	1315 31	\$43,434 (PRIVATE)
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY NASHVILLE, TN	6,879	18	1445 32	\$41,996 (PRIVATE)
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA Charlottesville, VA (OUT/STATE)	15,595	33	1335 31	\$35,898
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY WINSTON-SALEM, NC	4,657	40	1310 30	\$41,576 (PRIVATE)
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY ST. LOUIS, MO	7,138	21	1465 33	\$41,992 (PRIVATE)
WELLESLEY COLLEGE WELLESLEY, MA	2,411	34	1375 30	\$40,660 (PRIVATE)
YALE UNIVERSITY NEW HAVEN, CT	5,310	8	1500 34	\$40,500 (PRIVATE)

Tuition and fee charges are correct as reported, but should be considered a guideline. Please consult with the university for exact costs, size and admission information.

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Ten Concurrent Admissions Agreements

with Collin College: A & M Commerce, Austin College, Baylor, Dallas Baptist University, SMU, TWU, Texas Tech, Texas A & M at College Station, UNT, UTD

CC (Collin College) has new worlds of opportunity for its students by signing concurrent admissions agreements with A & M Commerce, Austin College, Baylor, Dallas Baptist University, SMU, TWU, Texas Tech, Texas A & M at College Station, UNT, UTD.

These agreements will benefit students in several ways:

- Students may enroll at the college and either university simultaneously and earn credits at Collin College and the university at the same time. The agreements are open to students in all disciplines.
- Concurrent admissions will lower costs, making college more affordable and accessible. Students will complete their lower level course requirements for their bachelor's degrees and pay community college tuition rates.
- Students can reduce the time it takes to earn degrees, since concurrent admissions provides a clear pathway to program completion. Both students and the state of Texas can save money when a more direct route to degree completion is provided.
- Collin College students participating in the concurrent admissions programs will be rewarded for pursuing an academically rigorous program of study. They will be eligible for prestigious university scholarships and will receive recognition for completing honors courses at Collin College.

"These are the first agreements of their kind in Texas," Cary A. Israel, Collin College president, said. "They allow the maximum amount of flexibility for our students. I think having such privileges at the state's leading universities will be a major benefit for our students," he added.

"We are expanding the opportunities for our Collin College students and laying the groundwork for what we believe will be long and mutually beneficial agreements with these universities," said Sam Roach of Frisco, chairman of the Collin College Board of Trustees.

For more information about concurrent admissions, please call academic advising SCC 972/881-5782, CPC 972/548-6782 and PRC 972/377-1778.

RESEARCH TOOLS USEFUL FOR DISCOVERING YOUR STRENGTHS, AND MATCHING YOUR INTERESTS TO SPECIFIC COLLEGES

My College QuickStart – www.collegeboard.com/quickstart

My College QuickStart is an online college and career planning kit available free of charge to all students who take the PSAT/NMSQT. It is powered by their responses to the test and provides personalized information that helps students take their next steps toward college by exploring:

- My Online Score Report-an enhanced score report that allows students to review each test question, their answers, and the correct answers with answer explanations
- My SAT Study Plan-a customized SAT study plan based on students' PSAT/NMSQT test performance, highlighting skills for review and practice
- My Personality-a detailed personality test that helps students learn about themselves and discover majors and careers that fit their strengths and interests
- My Major & Career Matches-extensive information about majors and careers, including insights about what to expect and what courses to take now
- My College Matches-a starter list of colleges based on students' home state and indicated choice of major

To sign in, students need:

- The access code printed on the upper right corner of their PSAT/NMSQT score report
 - A College Board student account (Students who do not already have a College Board account will be prompted to create one. It typically takes less than two minutes to create a free account.)
-

Appendix

Admission Terms and Processes

Highly Selective College Admission Calendar—Many college admission office timetables call for applications to be filed during the fall or early winter of the senior year.

Regular Decision—The application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable period of time (usually not later than April 15th). It is always wise to complete applications before deadlines occur.

Rolling Admissions—The application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are completed and renders admission decisions to students throughout the admission cycle.

Early Decision—A student may apply to a single college by the early deadline date to be considered for admission. If admission is granted, the student is obligated to attend that college under a binding contract and withdraw all other applications. Should a student who applies for financial aid not be offered an award that makes attendance possible, the student may decline the offer of admission and be released from the Early Decision commitment. The greatest benefit of Early Decision is early notification concerning admission.

Early Action—The application process in which students make application to an institution of preference and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. Students are not obligated to accept the offer of admission.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *There are several variations of early decision and early action at different colleges. Read the literature of each college carefully, and ask questions if you don't understand the program completely.*

Common Application—Allows a student to fill out one application form (the "Common Application") and download or photocopy the application for filing at more than one college. Check with the admission office to see if a college will accept the common application and if any supplements are required. Obtain the form from the counseling office or at www.commonapp.org.

Deferred Admissions—A student with financial, personal, or work-related concerns may delay or postpone college enrollment for up to one year.

Open Admission—Some colleges do not practice selective admission and offer admission to virtually all students who apply.

Wait List—This is an admission decision option utilized by institutions to protect against shortfalls in enrollment. By placing a student on the wait list, an institution does not initially offer or deny admission, but extends to a candidate the possibility of admission in the future, before the institution's admission cycle concludes.

NOTE: Colleges may revoke a previous offer of admission from any student who is found to have sent tuition deposits to more than one college. You should pay particular attention to a college's policies concerning application fees and tuition and housing deposits before you complete the application.

Higher Education Terms

College—An institution at which students study toward two- or four- year undergraduate degrees after completion of high school.

Concurrent Enrollment or Dual Enrollment—A plan that allows students to take courses at nearby colleges while completing high school.

Private College—An academic institution financed primarily by tuition and endowments.

Public College—An academic institution financed primarily by tuition, endowments and state or local taxes. Tuition for in-state students is reduced and programs and policies are state-regulated.

Transfer Program—A two-year program which results in an associate degree. It is designed for students who intend to continue their studies at a four-year college.

University—An institution which may be the same as a college, but which usually offers graduate degrees in addition to undergraduate degrees.

Undergraduate Degree—Two-year (associate) or four-year (bachelor's) degrees.

Associate Degree (A.A., A.S.)—A two-year degree that generally prepares the student for further study. Some associate degree programs are sufficient training for certain careers.

Bachelor's Degree (B.A., B.S., B.F.A.)—A four-year degree in a specified subject.

Graduate Degree—A degree completed by study after the bachelor's degree.

Master's Degree (M.A., M.S., M.F.A.)—One or two years of study in a specific subject after completion of the bachelor's degree.

Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D.)—Three or four years of study in a very specific subject after completion of a bachelor's and/or master's degree.

SCHEDULING OPTIONS FOR SENIORS

Senior Early Release

Senior students may choose to take Senior Early Release for one or two classes during the 2012-13 school year if they meet the following qualifications:

Senior Release for 1 class period (Student takes 6 classes)

- Student is on Recommended or Distinguished Plan for graduation.
- Student has obtained parental approval.
- Student must pass all portions of the Exit TAKS in the Spring of 2012.
- Student has 17 credits or more on January 3, 2012.

Senior Release for 2 class periods (Student takes 5 classes)

- Student is on the Recommended Plan or Distinguished for graduation.
- Student has obtained parental approval.
- Student must pass all portions of the Exit TAKS in the Spring of 2011.
- Student has 17.5 credits or more on January 3, 2012.
- Student is enrolled in 3 or more AP courses per semester.

A student's decision to choose the Senior Early Release option is binding and may only be changed within the first two weeks of each semester.

Some Do's and Don'ts of the College Selection Process

Don't...

- Set a particular college as the goal for your child
- Judge the success/failure of your child-rearing by a college admission decision.
- Use language like “first-tier” or “second-tier” to describe colleges. If your son or daughter attends a so-called “second-tier” school, does that make him or her a second-tier person?
- Fall prey to Woody Allen syndrome: “I wouldn't want to attend any college that would accept me.”
- Fill out your child's application or rewrite their essay; colleges may interpret this as incompetence on the part of your child. Admissions offices are able to spot the difference between the writing of an adult or a student.

Do...

- Listen. And listen. And listen.
- Make time for college visits.
- Have a frank discussion with your child about financing a college education, but don't let costs drive the search.
- Encourage your child to take appropriate risks.
- Keep an open mind about colleges you may not be aware of.
- Encourage your child to explore various genuine non-academic interests.
- Remember that life is a marathon, not a sprint.
- Remember that they will be your sons and daughters a lot longer than they'll be high school seniors and college students.

And three quotes worth pondering:

“Our children or our students are not trophies to be displayed to admiring neighbors, nor are they expensive, late-model automobiles to be parked conspicuously for all to see. Rather, they are living, breathing human beings going through a perplexing process at a vulnerable time in their young lives, and I ask that you remind yourselves of that from time to time. I can assure you that I and my staff will be reminding ourselves as well.”

-Tom Parker
Dean of Admission and Financial Aid
Amherst College

“Applying to college is about trying to control all these things you couldn't control even if you tried.”

- Becca Jannol
Student
Quoted in *The Gatekeepers*

“The greatest gift you can give your student is to allow him or her the chance to work through problems independently, with your support and guidance but not intervention. This will help him or her grow, mature and develop new skills to deal with future challenges.”

-Williamette University

WRAP-UP

We hope this academic conference helps you as you plan for your high school graduation and the years beyond. Your counselor is here to provide assistance along the way. Next year there are several programs planned to continue this process. In the fall, the counselors will meet with their students in the classroom to offer more details regarding the college application process. Also, parents will be invited to an evening event, Senior Parent Night, where more information will be provided. You will have a choice of attending one of the two College Nights in our district, which rotate among the three senior high schools. The fall of your senior year is the time for submitting college applications; we recommend completion of your applications before the Thanksgiving break.

Your senior year will be extremely exciting, but often stressful. Starting the process early and staying organized will help immensely. Utilize resources within your school, at your desired colleges, and in the community. Plan wisely; continue to challenge yourself academically and in exploring your interests. Please know that we wish you success in all that you undertake.