Class of 2026 & 2027

JUNIOR/SENIOR HANDBOOK



CISD College Readiness

Junior/Senior Handbook

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For information about Title IX rights or Section 504/ADA rights, contact the Title IX Coordinator or the Section 504/ADA coordinator at 3205 W. Davis, Conroe, TX 77304; (936) 709-7752.

JUNIOR YEAR ACTION PLAN

FALL

- Get to know your counselor. Talk about your college plans.
- Check your Naviance Student account is active in your Student Access, if you have not done so.
  - You can get log in help from your Grade Level Counselor or in the College & Career Center.
- Sign up in Naviance Student to talk to College Admissions Officers who visit the College and Career Center.
- Attend CISD College Night.
- Attend the Military Service Academy information session at College Night if you are interested in an Academy appointment.
- Add prospective colleges to "Colleges I'm Thinking About" on Naviance Student.
- Use the college searches on Naviance Student to find colleges that match your needs.
- Start your portfolio if you are interested in drama, music, art, sports, etc.
- Do online campus tours on Naviance Student under College Lookup.
- Prepare for and take the PSAT/NMSQT in October.
- Determine the dates you will take college admissions tests (SAT and ACT).
- Investigate careers on Road Trip Nation.
- Identify what makes you the person you are:
  - Make lists of your abilities, preferences, and personal qualities.
  - List things you may want to study and do.
  - Additional resources: Naviance Student and your My College Board account.
- Visit with military recruiters if interested in military options.
- Consider taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Even if you are not interested in pursuing a military career, the ASVAB can reveal valuable information about your interests. Contact the College & Career Center for test dates.
- Start thinking about financial aid and investigating scholarships that match your criteria.
- Use financial aid calculators on college websites to estimate your financial aid eligibility.
- Attend free financial aid workshops available throughout CISD.
- Student athletes planning to continue playing a sport in college, register with NCAA Eligibility Center or NAIA Eligibility Center.

WINTER

- Your PSAT/NMSQT score report will be returned in November.
  - Use scores to help improve your skills and prepare for the SAT.
  - Login to your College Board account to access all the free tools.
  - Utilize free SAT test prep through Khan Academy.
- Determine if the colleges you are interested in will require SAT or ACT scores.
  - You can take the SAT School Day at your campus in the spring or register for a national SAT or ACT testing date.
  - Plan your testing schedule carefully to complete all testing before applications are needed.
- Determine the dates you will take college admissions tests (SAT and ACT).
- Register to take the SAT.
  - See SAT Practice test and test tips through College Board.
- Register to take the ACT.
  - See ACT Test Prep options.
- Look through the list of CISD Test Prep classes.
- Fee waivers for the SAT and ACT exams are available for students with financial need.
  - Contact your College & Career Counselor to determine eligibility.
- Limited accommodations on admissions tests are available for students with disabilities.
  - See your school counselor for more information.
- Contact your counselor if you are considering military academies or ROTC scholarships.
- Attend a Military Service Academy Workshop or explore the Service Academy Summer program for prospective students.
- Review your senior year class schedule with your counselor.
  - Challenge yourself with honors and AP classes and stick with the elective and academic sequences you have begun.
  - Take electives that support your interests and/or intended major(s).
- Attend CISD Junior Jumpstart in February.

SPRING

- Look for college Open House weekends on the university websites. Plan your spring visits.
- Attend all college planning programs available at your school and in the district.
  - College reps will present workshops on a variety of topics for juniors and parents.
- Explore colleges, trade and technical schools.
- Visit colleges whenever possible.
- Juniors and seniors get 2 college visit days – see your counselor for more information.
- There are many area colleges that will give you insight into large, small, public and private colleges. Get a feel for your personal college fit.
- Develop a list of colleges that interest you and continue to update your prospective college list on Naviance Student.
  - These can be 2-year colleges, 4-year colleges or trade/technical schools.
- Prepare for AP Exams.
  - High scores on AP exams may earn credit or advanced placement at colleges. Check college websites to determine qualifying scores.
- Research summer activities to include college and career experiences. Plan summer activities early.
- Enrich yourself and enhance your resume by volunteering, getting an interesting job or internship, or signing up for special summer enrichment programs.
- Sign up for any college workshops offered by your campus or district in the summer.
- Investigate college admissions requirements to make sure you qualify.
- Make an appointment with your counselor if you need help.
- Attend college workshops offered by your campus.

SUMMER

- Continue to update your resume.
- Begin organizing and planning college application essays.
- Engage in a summer enrichment camp, community service or employment.
- Visit colleges, take campus tours and schedule interviews with admissions counselors. Take notes.
- Consult college websites for applications and deadlines.
  - Check important dates. Some universities have early deadlines; others may not.
- Plan to attend August Application Work Sessions offered at your College and Career Center.
- Continue your scholarship search on Naviance Student.
- Finish your brag sheet and have your parents finish their brag sheets. These are used for recommendation letters during senior year.
- Establish a professional email account that you can use for your college applications
  - *i.e.* JohnDoe@gmail.com as opposed to videogamer@gmail.com

SENIOR YEAR ACTION PLAN

SEPTEMBER

- Narrow your list of colleges to which you will be applying to three to five.
  - If you have not done so, visit the website of each school.
  - Plan to tour as many of these colleges as possible.
- Create a planning calendar that includes:
  - Tests you will take and their fees, dates and registration deadlines.
  - College application due dates. **Try to apply by the Scholarship deadline**.
  - Financial aid application forms required and their deadlines.
  - Other materials you might need (recommendations, resume, etc.)
  - Your high school's own application processing deadlines.
- Start working on your college applications.
- Continue to work on your college essays.
- Complete College Application Checklist for each college that you are applying.
- Confer with military recruiters if interested in the military.
- Student athletes planning to continue playing a sport in college, register with NCAA Eligibility Center or NAIA Eligibility Center.
- If you have used a SAT or ACT fee waiver, you may be eligible for an application fee waiver or a fee waiver from the NCCA if needed – see your counselor for details.

OCTOBER

- Prepare Early Action applications as soon as possible.
- Submit requests for counselor and teacher recommendations if you need them.
  - Follow your high school's procedure for requesting recommendations.
- If you are submitting essays, write first drafts and ask the College and Career Center to review them.
- Many colleges consider students for merit scholarships based on their admissions application when submitted early. **Try to submit by November 1**.
  - Consult the college website to determine scholarship deadlines and procedures.
- Remember to start other college paperwork such as housing or honors program applications.

NOVEMBER

- Be aware of early decision and early action deadlines.
  - Some colleges have application deadlines during November; others may consider applicants for merit scholarships with applications submitted in November.
- Submit as many college applications as possible before Thanksgiving. Holidays will affect processing.
  - Check your application status at the colleges for updates.
- Request that your transcripts be sent to the colleges of your choice. **Watch application deadlines!**

DECEMBER

- Keep copies of everything you submit.
  - **Read and save** all emails from your prospective colleges.
- Turn in forms to your counselor as needed, allowing at least 15 school days for processing.
- Continue to research and apply for scholarships in the scholarship list on Naviance Student.
- Prepare for final exams.

JANUARY

- Attend a Financial Aid Night and Help Session offered at one of the Conroe ISD schools.
- Apply for a FSA ID (Personal identification number) for both student and parent.
- Complete the FAFSA online. Some students may be eligible to complete the TASFA.
  - Complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
  - Complete and submit a Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)
  - Submit a signed opt-out form.
- Certain private colleges require additional financial information through the CSS Profile
- Check your college application status to make sure your application is complete.
- Continue to research and apply for scholarships in the scholarship list on Naviance Student.
- Update your college admissions status on Naviance Student as you receive your admissions decisions.
- Turn in requests for Mid-Year Reports if required by your college to College and Career Center.

FEBRUARY

- Maintain strong academic marks. Colleges will review spring semester grades!
- Continue to research and apply for scholarships in the scholarship list on Naviance Student.
- Watch the scholarship list as many scholarships have deadlines in February and March.

MARCH

- Carefully evaluate college admissions decisions as they come in.
  - Revisit the campus if necessary.
- Register to take the TSIA2 if required for your two-year or four-year public Texas college.
  - Students with certain credentials may be exempt from the TSIA2. Consult with your college for details.
  - Refer to the college's website for requirements or confer with your counselor if you have questions.
- Continue to research and apply for scholarships on Naviance Student.
- Remember to update your college admissions decisions on Naviance Student.
- You should receive admission decision and financial aid offers by April.
  - Contact the college financial aid office(s) with questions.

APRIL

- If you have not yet done so, visit your final college before accepting an offer of admission.
  - Many colleges have "admitted students' weekends" for this purpose.
- Work with the financial aid office at your college to resolve any financial aid problems.
- Contact your college if you have questions about housing.
- Get your bacterial meningitis vaccination.
  - Send a COPY of the immunization record to your college (if required).
- Pay transcript fees and other required fees at your high school.
- Report all scholarships you are accepting to the College and Career Center at your school.

MAY

- Notify colleges of your intention to enroll no later than May 1st.
  - Make sure you pay the required deposits.
  - Send enrollment deposit only to the ONE college you will attend.
- Complete the CISD Senior Survey, Graduation Survey, Scholarships Received AND order your final transcripts in the College and Career Center at your school by your campus deadline.
- Attend the Senior Awards Ceremony to celebrate your scholarships.
- Schedule orientation, CLEP, TSIA2 exams or other requirements as directed by your college.
- If you are enrolled in Dual-Credit classes, request your Lone Star College transcript on your MyLoneStar account be sent to your college/university.

JUNE

- Pack and get ready for college.
- Make sure you have AP score information ready to give to your college at orientation.
- Update your high school if you have changed your college destination since graduation (final transcript).
- Attend freshman orientation at your college.

PLANNING YOUR FUTURE

"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it." – Alan Laken

Where am I going? What do I want to do with my life? What's after high school?
Should I get a job? Would I like the military? Where do I want to live? What do I want to study?
If I go to college, which is best -- a community college or a four-year college? Will the college I want accept me?
How will I decide? What if I change my mind? What if I make a mistake?

If you have been asking yourself some of these questions, be assured that these concerns and doubts are part of the college and career process. As you search for answers during these last two years of high school, you will be making important decisions about the direction of your life. The counseling staff designed this handbook to be a helpful guide as you explore all the possibilities.

Because the alternatives are too numerous and complex to be decided by chance, we encourage you to make informed decisions by…

- Knowing your strengths and weaknesses
- Establishing your objectives and goals
- Evaluating the options available to you. The counseling department will provide both assistance and information. Your counselor will help you coordinate your efforts by keeping you informed about important dates and deadlines. Counselors are available to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses, select your academic program, investigate colleges and careers, and make choices. Another valuable resource for you is the College and Career Center.

If you are uncertain about a college major or unsure of what to do after high school, a career decision-making program can match your individual interests to related occupations. Utilize the Naviance Student program to investigate colleges and careers. Be sure to take advantage of College Night and the parent/student information sessions offered by the school. Also, make use of community resources. Many companies sponsor job fairs, career days, career seminars, and job-shadowing opportunities.

There are two very important reasons for finishing high school and getting additional education:

1. Many careers demand more education.
2. The potential to earn more money over a lifetime is greatly enhanced by additional education.

If you decide that college is your next step, this guide will provide information you need about college entrance examinations, visiting colleges, selecting and applying to colleges, college interviews and financial aid.

DISCOVERING YOURSELF THROUGH NAVIANCE STUDENT

We know that the choices you are facing seem overwhelming at times. However, careful preparation on your part, as well as guidance and support from your family, your school and community will result in good decisions that will lead to a rewarding future.

Understanding yourself—your interests, abilities, values, and attitudes—is essential to making good decisions about your future. Naviance Student can help.

The Career Planning tools in Naviance Student allow you to realize your goals, knowledge, values, and interests to help make better academic decisions. During this process, you will gain a clear understanding of the academic preparation required to pursue careers that are likely to be fulfilling for you.

One way to better understand yourself is to assess what is important to you. There are several activities in Naviance Student located under the Self-Discovery tab that will assist you in completing this assessment.

Achieveworks Personality (Personality Assessment)

Achieveworks Personality assessment uses the Myers-Briggs personality types to suggest careers and clusters that might be a good match for you. During the assessment, you can stop and save your progress.

The results of the assessment provide you with a four-part personality type. Each of the four parts represents a personality trait that contributes to the student's overall personality type. The results page has detailed information about your type and potential careers and majors to consider.

Strengths Explorer®

StrengthsExplorer is a strengths assessment that assesses 10 talent themes for individuals and identifies each student's three strongest emerging talents.

Upon completion of StrengthsExplorer, students will be provided with explanations of their top three themes and will learn how to capitalize on their success and discover what they need to do next to continue building on their strengths.

AchieveWorks Intelligences®

AchieveWorks Intelligence assessment in Naviance Student uses Multiple Intelligences theory to reveal student's intelligence strengths and challenges, and then provides suggestions on ways to develop all their intelligences.

AchieveWorks Learning and Productivity®

AchieveWorks Learning and Productivity continues this exploration of multiple intelligences with hints and tips to identify student sensory and mindset preferences. Knowing this information helps students develop study practices to optimize productivity.

AchieveWorks Skills

AchieveWorks Skills helps students identify and develop skills that connect to careers. This assessment uses student assessments to bridge into career exploration.

Career Interest Profiler

The Career Interest Profiler captures student interests to determine personality traits and suggests careers based on U.S. Department of Labor data. The results include personality traits on Holland's interest codes. The assessment has about 60 questions. Your results include an interest profiler to help find career clusters organized by the amount of preparation each needs.

Browse Careers

There is a built-in list of careers, career clusters, and career pathways in Naviance Student that comes from the Department of Labor. You can find these by clicking Explore Careers and Clusters from the Careers tab in Naviance Student. This information comes from O*Net and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor.

You can find Careers by searching by keyword, browsing by alphabet or category, or searching by Holland Code. You can also explore career clusters by clicking on a cluster name.

Career Profiles and Career Cluster Profiles

Each career has a profile that includes an overview, knowledge and skills, tasks and activities, wages, and Plans of Study. Some careers include videos. To add the career to your interest list, make it a favorite.

Career Cluster Finder

The Career Cluster Finder is a simple assessment on Naviance Student that helps you discover which career cluster may be a good match based on the activities that interest you, your personal qualities, and the subjects you enjoy in school. The results of the assessment include the top three clusters you match and a ranking of all clusters with a percentage match for you.

Suggested Careers

After you add careers to your list in Naviance Student or complete the Career Cluster finder assessment, careers are suggested for you on Favorite Careers and Clusters page. These suggestions are meant to encourage you to look at careers that are similar to those that have already been identified as a good fit.

RoadTrip Nation

Starting in 2001, a group of friends took a road trip in their bright green RV to figure out what to do with their lives. Since then, the Roadtrippers have interviewed local, national, and international leaders, and have compiled an interview archive with thousands of videos just for you!

To access the Roadtrip Nation Interview Archive, go to the Careers tab and click Explore More to search the interview archive. You can explore the interview archives in three ways:

- Interests – choose from any of the interest categories such as medicine, art, or business.
- Themes – choose from the listed themes such as risk, failure, or determination.
- Leaders – choose from any of the leaders that have been interviewed.

THINKING ABOUT THE MILITARY?

Joining the military enables you to do several options at once. You can serve your country, earn a salary, and get training that will help you whether or not you make the service your lifetime career. Here are some options that the military can offer:

Military Academies

The US Military offers five prestigious colleges:

- Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO
- United States Military Academy in West Point, NY
- United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD
- United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT
- United States Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY

Acceptance to the academies is similar to college admissions, but once accepted all students receive free tuition, room/board, books, and a monthly stipend. Students will receive a college degree and an officer commission as they enter service upon graduation.

Military Colleges

If you are interested in a military experience while in college without the commitment to the Armed Services, you may want to explore a military college. The Citadel, Virginia Military Institute, and New Mexico Institute are examples of colleges with a military academy lifestyle.

ROTC Programs

Colleges and universities often offer ROTC programs and ROTC scholarships. Requirements for these programs and post-graduation responsibilities vary; contact the ROTC programs at the college campus of the Armed Service branches for more information.

National Guard or Reserve Programs

The National Guard works with college students who seek scholarship money. Students in this program will participate in monthly and summer Guard activities and agree to post-graduation responsibilities.

Enlistment

The military offers unique opportunities available nowhere else. After your service is completed, you will be eligible for money for college. Explore all branches of the military to decide which service, skills, and enlistment options will be best for you.

CAREERS AT WORK: DECIDING THE NEXT STEP

Now that you've explored your interests and strengths, it's time to think about your options to reach your career. As you discovered in Naviance Student, not all careers require a college degree. The following are terms you need to be familiar with when analyzing your options.

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ANTICIPATED LENGTH OF STUDY	TRANSFER OF CREDIT
On the Job Training	Specific training offered by an employer; includes military service	Usually less than 6 months	*
High School Diploma with Industry-Based Certifications	Allows students to finish with entry-level job skills	4 years	*
Vocational Technical Certificate	Allows students to finish with entry-level job skills; offered primarily at vocational-technical centers and at comprehensive high schools	1-3 years	*
Private Trade School	Specific skill training after high school for a particular occupation	From 3 months to 2 years	*
Associate Degree (Academic and Vocational)	Offered at community/junior colleges, some 4-year colleges; provides training after high school in specific vocations or for transfer to a senior college	2 years	Institution granting baccalaureate degree will determine applicable courses from A.D. program towards higher degree.
Apprenticeship	Formal training program between employee and employer; involves work experience and classroom instruction	2-5 years (usually 4 years)	Only credits earned in college may be transferable
Bachelor's Degree	Formal 4-year program leading to a degree from a college or university	4 years (can be longer)	Credits may transfer among college and universities
Master's Degree	Advanced degree; may be required for entry into certain careers	1-2+ years above Bachelor's degree	Credits may transfer among colleges and universities upon approval of receiving school
Doctorate or Professional Degree	Research/professional degree in preparation for such careers as medicine, dentistry, law education or science	3-5 years beyond Bachelor's degree	Transfer is difficult

NOT PLANNING ON FOUR YEARS OF COLLEGE?

Should you immediately go to work full-time after you graduate?

NO

- If you are just working until you make up your mind what to do... some careful planning and preparation now will make temporary jobs unnecessary after you graduate.
- If you are just working until you earn enough money for college... local college tuition remains inexpensive enough for nearly everyone who wants to go. Consider working part-time and continuing to live at home. Grants, loans and scholarships are available.
- If you know that you will do better in the long run by getting additional training or schooling now . . . schooling only becomes more difficult with added responsibilities.

YES

- If you are already employed part-time and know that you want to continue with that company.
- If you have a clear idea of the career you want to follow and know that you can succeed without further training or education.

Consider...

- Part-time jobs after school hours
- A career and technology program that combines school and work *(example: Cosmetology, Auto Tech/Collision Repair)*
- A cooperative work program at school
- Summer employment
- Job shadowing

You should get some work experience to make you more desirable to a future employer and to give you some ideas about the work you might, or might not, want to do.

Should you go for further training right after you graduate?

NO

- If you are still "fumbling around" looking for a career... Technical schools are very specialized and offer training in very specific jobs.
- If you haven't carefully studied the credentials of the vocational/technical school. Do not sign a contract with a school until you have verified that the school and its program is legitimate.

YES

- If you are reasonably sure what career you want to pursue, what training you must have and where that training is available.
- Getting training after high school will increase your opportunities in seeking employment. Additional job skills will raise the beginning salaries, improve working conditions and allow for more opportunity for advancement.
- Technical schools offer two-year programs designed to update technical competence and professional levels. Some technology curriculum may lead to an associate degree. Most technical schools will require an entrance examination in math, reading, English and perhaps a technical aptitude.

Examples of Vocational/Technical Schools include:

- Art institutes
- Allied Health Schools
- Business Schools
- Fashion Schools
- Land Surveying Schools
- Electronics Schools
- Junior Colleges
- Community Colleges
- Culinary Institutes

Examples of various Associate of Applied Science Degree Programs include:

- Automotive Technology
- Childcare and Development
- Cosmetology
- Criminal Justice
- Welding
- Nursing
- Office Administration
- Real Estate
- Veterinary Technology

Examples of various Certificate of Competency Programs include:

- Dental Assistant
- Microcomputer Applications
- Respiratory Care Technician
- Legal Secretary
- Records Technician
- Vocational Nursing

CHOOSING A TRADE OR TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Don't sign a contract until you get the facts

- Students have been misled by offers of a "scholarship", offers of "free" tools or computers, or reduced tuition for signing on the spot. Quality schools will give you time to investigate and not pressure you to "sign right now".

Contact employers

- For example, if a school offers civil service training, contact the U.S. Civil Service Commission. If a school offers to train you as a flight attendant, check some airlines. You may learn that the employer will provide the training or that you don't meet the qualifications for the job.

Contact the union or professional association in the trade

- The professional association can tell you better than a salesman whether a particular school will help you get a job in a chosen field or advance to higher positions in that field.

Contact state or federal agencies

- Determine if the field requires a license and if so, what education you need to qualify for the license.

Contact other educational facilities

- Comparable training may be offered by public or private non-profit schools at a better price. Many Texas public colleges offer the same programs at much lower tuition prices.

Contact the Better Business Bureau

- The Bureau will give you good advice or refer you to someone who can.

Contact graduates

- If a school claims "thousands of successful graduates," ask for several names. Contact these people to ask if they believe the school is worthwhile.

Verify your contract

- Have all promises put in writing!

Be wary of "accredited" or "licensed" schools

- Be sure you know what accreditation or licensing means.

Consult your family and friends

- Seek advice from people who have your best interest at heart before you make a commitment to a school. Business and professional persons may give you valuable advice about the training you should seek, and they are happy to talk to you.

Look before you leap!

- Education is a serious investment! Don't commit your time and money to a course of instruction until you are sure it is right for you. If you feel pressured by a school, walk away and ask your counselor for help.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

You should consider a community college:

- If you feel you want to get some coursework completed before going to a four-year college or university.
- If your target four-year university offers transfer and/or guaranteed admissions agreements.
- If the cost of attending a four-year institution is a challenge.

Community colleges generally have an "open admission" policy. Students who have graduated from high school can usually be admitted, although on-campus placement testing may be required. Low testing scores may necessitate some remedial or noncredit work before starting college credit courses.

Community colleges generally offer two major types of programs. One is the "transfer program" for those who later plan to attend a four-year college. The other is a "terminal program" that may lead to an Associate Degree or some kind of certification.

Junior colleges are similar to community colleges AND universities. They generally offer the same open admissions, but a junior college's purpose is to prepare a student for transfer to a 4-year degree program. Junior colleges typically offer **housing**, more extensive food services, **college athletics**, clubs, intramurals, and other campus activities.

Meeting with community college or junior college representatives will help you choose what types of programs and services fit your future needs.

Popular Texas community college and junior college options for students include:

- Lone Star College Montgomery
- Blinn College
- Austin Community College
- Tyler Junior College

COLLEGE PLANNING WITH NAVIANCE STUDENT

To select a college, use what you've learned about yourself. When making your list, remember that there is ***no one perfect college*** for you. Rather, there are many colleges that would be an "excellent fit."

STEP ONE

Explore your options with College Search under the Colleges tab

- Begin with **SuperMatch®**. With 5,000 colleges in the database, try to be specific and answer all of the questions in the ten categories. Is your list too long? Go through the SuperMatch again and change your criteria. Is your list too short? You need to broaden your selections.
- Move next to **Advanced College Search**. This has a slightly different list of questions than SuperMatch. Keep both lists.
- Want more results? Naviance Student has already made a list for you. Look under **College Match** for their suggestions and information about their choices. Try the college search engine on College Board's Big Futures and other websites listed under **College Resources**.

STEP TWO

Look at your results and decide what colleges / universities you'd like to explore

- Use **College Lookup** for detailed information on a college or university. College lookup will give you information about the school size, admissions/test score ranges, tuition prices, majors and degrees, and student life. Many colleges will also have a virtual tour and a direct link to their website for further research.
- Use the **College Compare** to make a side-by-side comparison for up to 10 colleges on your list.
- Use the links in **College Resources** to explore more information. You'll find links to college applications, financial aid resources, college athletics, and military information.
- Want to know where your high school's graduates have attended? Want to see where UT-Permian Basin is located? Use **College Maps** to see geographic locations of US colleges and universities.

STEP THREE

Narrow your list using information about admissions requirements.

- Use **College History** for a side-by-side comparison of your profile (GPA and test scores) and the averages for your high school's past seniors who have been accepted by the college. Acceptance History can give you a complete history of our student's admissions success rate since 2005.
- Use **Scattergrams** for a visual admissions profile. The Scattergram will show you on the graph in relation to the students at your high school who have applied to this college. Scattergram also gives information on students who were denied, deferred, and waitlisted.

STEP FOUR

Gather information to identify a short list of schools that have these characteristics and that meet your personal goals and needs. Use the following resources:

- College websites
- College Board's Big Futures
- College for All Texans
- Conroe ISD College Night
- Family & friends
- College Admissions Counselors
- Visits to College Campuses
- College Open House and Information Events

STEP FIVE

Apply to the three to five schools that top your list.

- As you narrow your college list, select one or two institutions that present an admission challenge. These schools are called "reaches". Make sure your final list also includes one or more "mid-range" colleges, where your qualifications closely match those of the average student. Finally, be sure to apply to at least one "safe" school where your academic profile is comparable to that of the admitted students.

TESTING

	WHAT IS IT?	WHO TAKES IT?	WHY?	FOR MORE INFORMATION
EOC	End of Course assessment for secondary-level courses in Algebra I, Biology, US History, English I and II (reading and writing).	Every student that is enrolled in a public Texas high school.	EOC is a graduation requirement and all subjects must be passed in order to receive a diploma.	TEA Testing
PSAT	Preliminary SAT Test which is a sample of the SAT Reasoning Test.	Juniors and Sophomores. PSAT is the ONLY way to qualify for National Merit Scholarship Program.	To familiarize self with the SAT test before taking it and/or want to try for National Merit recognition	PSAT Offered every October.
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test is a multi-choice test of mathematical reasoning abilities, reading and writing administrated by the College Board.	Students who plan on attending college whether in state or out.	Most colleges require either an SAT or ACT exam with a minimum score entry requirement.	SAT Usually taken in the spring of the junior or fall of the senior year.
ACT	American College Test is a curriculum based test in English Usage, Mathematics, Reading Comprehension and Science Reasoning.	Students who plan on attending college whether in state or out.	Most colleges require with a minimum score entry requirement.	ACT Usually taken in the spring of the junior or fall of the senior year
TSIA2	Texas Success Initiative Assessment is the state-mandated placement test used to determine a student's readiness for college level courses.	All students who will attend public college in Texas or enroll in Dual Credit, unless considered exempt.	Students must demonstrate mastery of basic academic skills before being allowed to enroll in college work.	TSIA2 Usually taken in the senior year.
ASVAB	Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery was originally designed to predict future academic and occupational success in military occupations.	Students who want to get a good sense of their verbal, math, and science and technical skills compared to other students in the same grade.	The ASVAB Summary Results sheet provides students with explanations of the scores, as well as suggestions for their use.	ASVAB Please check with your counselor or military recruitment office for dates offered.
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language measures non-Native speakers' English ability at college level.	Students who are not yet fluent in English and want to provide more test data to colleges.	TOEFL offers many test dates and free preparation materials.	TOEFL Check with your local colleges before registering.

Accommodations

Eligibility for accommodations on College Board tests and the ACT is determined by the College Board and/or ACT. For further information, go to www.collegeboard.org or www.act.org.

Should I take the ACT or SAT?

We strongly recommend that you take both! You may do better on one than the other and most colleges and universities accept both.

2025-2026 TESTING DATES

SAT

$68 (no writing)

TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	(LATE FEE REQUIRED)
August 23, 2025	August 8, 2025	August 12, 2025
September 12, 2025	August 29, 2025	September 2, 2025
October 4, 2025	September 19, 2025	September 23, 2025
November 8, 2025	October 24, 2025	October 28, 2025
December 6, 2025	November 21, 2025	November 25, 2025
March 14, 2026	February 27, 2026	March 3, 2026
May 2, 2026	April 17, 2026	April 21, 2026
June 6, 2026	May 22, 2026	May 26, 2026

ACT

$68 (no writing) / $93 (with writing)

TEST DATE	REGISTRATION DEADLINE	(LATE FEE REQUIRED)
September 16, 2025	August 1, 2025	August 19, 2025
October 18, 2025	October 12, 2025	September 30, 2025
December 13, 2025	November 7, 2025	November 24, 2025
February 14, 2026	January 9, 2026	January 23, 2026
April 11, 2026	March 6, 2026	March 24, 2026
June 13, 2026	May 8, 2026	May 29, 2026
July 11, 2026	June 5, 2026	June 24, 2026

PSAT / NMSQT

Designed as a pre-test for college admissions testing. Registration and costs are covered for all CISD juniors. The testing window is October 2 – October 31, 2025. Contact your campus for their selected date.

TEXAS SUCCESS INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT 2 (College Placement Exams)

This assessment is used by colleges and universities as a placement test. Your college will give you information on which type of test you will need. Lone Star Montgomery is the closest testing center.

COLLEGE LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM (CLEP)

This program is administered on college campuses. Check with your college of choice.

2026 AP EXAMS

Register with your high school.

TEST DATE	MORNING (8:00 AM)	AFTERNOON (12:00 PM)	AFTERNOON (2:00 PM)
May 4, 2026	Biology Latin	European History Microeconomics	
May 5, 2026	Chemistry Human Geography	US Government & Politics	
May 6, 2026	English Literature & Composition	Comparative Govt & Politics Physics 1: Algebra-Based	
May 7, 2026	Physics 2: Algebra-Based World History: Modern	African American Studies Statistics	
May 8, 2026	Italian Language & Culture United States History	Chinese Literature & Culture Macroeconomics	
May 8, 2026	Art & Design – Portfolios must be submitted by 8:00 pm ET		
May 11, 2026	Calculus AB Calculus BC	Music Theory Seminar	
May 12, 2026	French Language & Culture Precalculus	Japanese Language & Culture Psychology	
May 13, 2026	English Language & Composition German Language & Culture	Physics C: Mechanics Spanish Literature & Culture	
May 14, 2026	Art History Spanish Language & Culture	Computer Science Principles Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism	
May 15, 2026	Environmental Science	Computer Science A	

These dates are from the College Board website, and are subject to change.

COLLEGE READINESS TEST PREP CLASSES

Conroe ISD offers different types of test preparation; Our classes offer great value, are conveniently located, and are led by trained CISD instructors.

PSAT Test Prep Course

This course includes 16 classroom hours with a full-length PSAT practice test and specialized instruction. Students learn successful strategies for attacking the PSAT Test. This course is designed to be taken immediately before taking the PSAT Test. (Available only in the fall for students in grades 10-11.)

SAT Test Prep Course

CISD offers this SAT course for juniors and seniors who will be taking the SAT; courses are designed to correspond with a scheduled SAT date. This course includes 18 classroom hours with a full-length SAT practice test and specialized instruction, SAT study materials and access to on-line additional resources.

For class schedules and to register visit the College Readiness website.

Test Prep vs. Tutoring

Before registering for any test preparation program, it is important to evaluate what type of instruction you need. Test prep offers practice and question analysis; tutoring offers specific academic support.

Test Prep

Do you run out of time on tests?
Can you eliminate wrong answer choices?
Are you using the test tools to actively solve questions?

Tutoring

Do you need to learn math concepts?
Do you have difficulty with grammar rules?
Are you struggling with reading speed and summarizing?

VISITING WITH COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

College representatives routinely visit Conroe ISD schools. They are eager to meet with you to discuss their colleges and provide information regarding college programs, extracurricular activities, dorms, cafeteria food, as well as admission policies, financial aid and scholarship opportunities. Students are encouraged to meet with the college representatives of their choice, but must remember to make up any missed class work. The college visits are in the College and Career Center unless otherwise noted.

The college admissions counselors that visit with the students will also be the same admissions representatives who evaluate their applications. Building a rapport with that admissions officer will help your application experience.

Colleges visiting the high school are listed on the Naviance Student website and continuously updated. Students must sign up for college visits on Naviance Student. Follow these instructions to sign up for a college visit:

- Log on to your Naviance Student account. You must sign up on your student account, NOT the parent account!
- Hover on the colleges tab and find College Visits under the Research College heading.
- Click on view all upcoming college visits.
- Locate the event you want to attend, and then click on sign up.
- Read the details, and then click on sign me up.
- Screenshot or print the confirmation because you will use it as your pass for the college visit.
  - **You must have your teacher sign the pass to allow you to go to the college visit**.
  - Again, you are responsible for any missed class work.

Many colleges also schedule area information sessions, which are typically held in the evenings or on a weekend at a location in the Houston area. This information is often posted on Naviance Student as well. Also posted for your convenience are College Preview Days.

COLLEGE CAMPUS VISITS & TOURS

There is no better way to learn about a college or university than to visit the campus when the college is in session. A live campus gives you better insight to the right fit for you when you are on campus while students are learning, professors are teaching, and the campus culture is in full swing.

Preparing for the Visit

- Arrange for the visit in advance. Ask for a campus tour.
- Check to see if the college has special recruiting weekend events and tours.
- Allow sufficient time for a visit. Preferably a full day but not less than a half day.
- Familiarize yourself with the college before you visit.
- Inform the college about your areas of interest.
- Take a copy of your high school's profile with you.
- Take a copy of your resume with you.
- Take an unofficial copy of your transcript with you.
- Give careful attention to your appearance, grooming, and conduct. This will be your first contact with the school and first impressions do count. Follow up the visit with a thank-you email or note.

The Visit

- Visit several classes.
- Talk with students. If possible, stay overnight in the dorm to see what living at college is really like.
- Ask to meet a faculty member from the department in which you are interested.
- Eat in a dining hall.
- Notice campus flyers, posters, and communications to get a feel for campus culture.
- Take notes. Jot down what you liked and didn't like.
- Bring back a letter from the college on their stationery with your name and the date to count as an excused College Visit! *(Your high school may also have a form for you to take and get signed.)*

Questions to Ask

- What is the profile of students accepted to this college? What is your acceptance rate?
- What percentage of freshmen return for the next year? How long does it take the average student to graduate?
- What kind of assistance do you provide to help students find a job when they graduate?
- How many students go on to graduate school?

- Are freshmen required to live on campus? How many upperclassmen stay on campus? Are there campus apartment houses?
- How are the dorms set up? Do you have suites or individual rooms? How many people share a living space? Do you have theme dorms? Is housekeeping provided? Are the rooms networked for high-speed internet? Is there an additional fee for the internet?
- Do you have sororities/fraternities? What percentage of students pledge? Do you have fraternity/sorority housing? What is the alcohol policy? What is the smoking/vaping policy?
- What is the male/female student ratio? What states do most students come from? What are campus politics like? How does the local community feel about the college students?
- Are there opportunities for study abroad? For research? For work-study? For co-op? Internships?
- Is preference given to children of alumni?
- What kinds of merit scholarship opportunities are available?
- What kinds of financial aid are available?
- What is a typical weekend like?
- Is there a career planning or placement program for students?
- What is the average class size for freshmen? Upperclassmen?
- Who will teach freshmen courses - graduate assistants or faculty?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the faculty advising system? How accessible is the faculty?
- What are the college's top three programs or majors?
- How would you characterize the academic pressure and workload?
- How will the college be evaluating the student? What criteria are used?
- What are the application deadlines and procedures?
- What are the school's basic costs (tuition, room, board, fees, and books)?

After the Visit

- If time allows, drive around the surrounding area / town to get a sense of the college in context of its community.
- Write down your impressions (both positive and negative) of the visit that day when the experience is still fresh.
- As soon as possible, go through the university information given to you to add your own notes for later review or discussion. Discard items from those packets that aren't necessary to your decision.
- Write a thank you note / email to the people who helped you that day (tour guides, admissions reps, faculty members). Consider using social media to tweet out a big thank you!
- Bring the college's visit form back to your high school attendance office to receive your excused college visit day.

COLLEGE PLANNING WORKSHEET

Rank: _____ **Quartile:** _____ **SAT:** _____ **SAT EBRW:** _____ **SAT MATH:** _____ **ACT:** _____

	College 1	College 2	College 3
Location • Distance from home			
Size • Enrollment • Size of Campus			
Environment • Setting (urban vs. rural) • Location & size of nearest city • Religious affiliations • Male/Female ratio			
Admission Requirements • Deadline • Tests required • Average SAT scores • Average ACT scores • Rank in top 10% • Rank in top 25% • Rank in top 50% • Acceptance rate • Admissions notification date			
Academics • Your major offered • Special requirements • Student/faculty ratio • Average class size • Who teaches 1st yr. classes • Average graduation rate			
College Expenses • Tuition, room, & board • Estimated total budget • Application fee and deposits			
Financial Aid • Deadline • Forms required • % receiving aid • Scholarship awards			
Housing • Availability for freshmen • Food plan			
Facilities • Academic • Recreational • Other			
Campus Visits • When • Special opportunities			

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

FACTORS CONSIDERED IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

- Overall high school GPA
- Grades in college preparatory courses
- Strength of high school curriculum
- Essay / Writing Sample
- Test Scores

(NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2020 www.nacacnet.org)

RANK IN CLASS

Class rank is based on semester grades earned in all state-approved credit courses in grades 9-12. Class rank of students in Conroe ISD will be decided by using the following grade point system.

GPA/CLASS RANK SYSTEM

GRADE RANGE	LETTER SEMESTER GRADE	AP DUAL CREDIT*	CORE PREAP/H	LEVEL & ALL OTHER COURSES
90-100	A	6.0	5.0	4.0
80-89	B	5.0	4.0	3.0
75-79	C	4.0	3.0	2.0
70-74	D	3.0	2.0	1.0
Below 70	F	0	0	0

**Academic core courses taught on the high school campus.*

ADMISSION TESTS

Official score reports should be sent directly to your colleges from the testing agencies. It is your responsibility as an applicant to report your SAT, ACT, and/or TSIA2 by indicating colleges as score recipients on the registration form. Scores must be received by the college's application deadline in order for an application to be complete. Sending your scores directly to colleges when you take the test eliminates paying additional fees later, but also helps when colleges superscore.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Colleges will be looking at the quality of course selection, as well as grades. Colleges want to make sure a student is academically prepared for the rigors of college curriculum. "Academic intensity and quality are far and away the most powerful predictors of bachelor's degree completion." (College Board)

It is important that your grades represent your best efforts academically. Improved grades over past performance may perhaps indicate a greater seriousness of purpose about education. A decline of grades over past performance may be seen as a slackening of effort or less ability for more advanced work. A decline of grades may cause an admissions committee to reject what might have seemed an otherwise acceptable candidate for admission.

Both the Foundation High School Program with Endorsement and the Distinguished Level of Achievement graduation plans help ensure that Texas high school students have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed. These graduation plans require challenging academic courses which better prepare students for attending technical schools, community colleges, or four-year universities.

RESUME

Colleges and universities want to see student involvement and leadership. In order to judge the amount of involvement and leadership, some colleges will require a resume as part of an application. This resume should be a concise summary of your education, accomplishments, experience, and skills. The overall purpose of a college resume should be to generate interest in you by highlighting your achievements and strengths.

Tips to follow when developing your resume:

- Be neat and accurate. Proofread carefully. Remember this resume is a reflection of you.
- Emphasize your most significant achievements. Put your "best stuff" first.
- Be specific, offering examples when appropriate.
- Be honest.

See examples of various resumes online and in Naviance Student.

ESSAYS

Some colleges may require one or more essays. An essay gives the applicant the opportunity to set themselves apart from other applicants with their unique personality and/or experiences. If the essay is an optional part of the application, it is in the applicant's best interest to complete the essay.

Writing the College Essay

You do not have to get it right the first time! Instead, write the first draft of your essay with the main focus on content - communicating your thoughts. Then set it aside for a day or two, reread it with a fresh perspective, and make any necessary changes. This is also the point at which you should consider matters of organization, style, grammar, spelling, and tone. Once you have rewritten your first draft, you may wish to try it out on your family, College and Career Counselor, or English teacher.

While the final product and final "voice" should be yours, they may be able to offer helpful suggestions.
Within this general outline for actually writing the essay, there are some "do's" and "don'ts" which should be highlighted:

DO'S

- Do think "small" and write about something that you know about.
- Do reveal yourself in your writing.
- Do show rather than tell. By giving examples and illustrating your topic, you help bring it to life.
- Do write in your own "voice" and style.

DON'TS

- Don't write what you think others want to read.
- Don't exaggerate or write to impress.
- Don't use a flowery, inflated, or pretentious style.
- Don't neglect the technical part of your essay (grammar, spelling, sentence structure).
- Don't ramble – say what you have to say and conclude.

Your college essay, along with your high school record, standardized test scores, and extracurricular involvement, will provide the basis upon which the college makes its admissions decision. A thoughtful well-written essay can affect that final decision in a very positive way. Keep this in mind and take full advantage of the opportunity which the college essay affords you.

(John C. Conkright, Dean of Admissions,Randolph-Macon College)
Copied with permission of Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Virginia

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Some colleges will require recommendations. A recommendation describes an applicant's personal characteristics and academic abilities. The recommendation usually gives a more detailed analysis of your qualifications than the information received from the high school.

Before asking someone to write a recommendation, you need to consider:

- Waiving your rights to see the materials in your file. This will allow the person writing the recommendation to give a more accurate picture of the applicant. Most authorities recommend students waive the right so their evaluation is given more value.
- Deciding who should write your recommendation. It is important to choose teachers who know you well, like you, and will write a strong recommendation for you.
- Writing a letter of recommendation is time-consuming. Be sure you give the person writing the letter **a minimum of 15 school days** before the letter is due. Request recommendations only for those schools to which you are definitely applying.

Contact your high school College and Career Center to determine the proper procedure for requesting recommendations.

OTHER ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATIONS

In addition, factors considered in admission already listed, in the more highly competitive colleges, academically qualified candidates outnumber the spaces available. It becomes a question **of which** of the academically qualified applicants are admitted. A number of other admission factors then become important.

Some of these factors might be:

- Special talents such as musical, artistic, or athletic ability
- Geographic location
- Exceptional academic talent such as independent research, a science fair project or National Merit recognition
- Background or culture
- A demonstrated interest in the college
- First generation in family attending college

COMMON ADMISSION DECISIONS DEFINITIONS

Early Decision

Early Decision requires you to commit to a college or university at the time of application that, if admitted, you will enroll. Once admitted under Early Decision, a nonrefundable deposit will be required. You may apply to other colleges but may have only one Early Decision application pending at any time. Colleges have very strict rules about applying early decision. We strongly encourage you to meet with your counselor prior to applying Early Decision.

Early Action

Early Action permits you to apply to a college or university of your choice and receive a decision early in the senior year, well in advance of the normal spring response dates. You are not committed to attend and may apply to other colleges. You are not required to make a commitment before May 1.

Regular Decision

Regular Decision is a plan in which institutions review most of their applications before notifying the majority of candidates of their admission. In this process, colleges set a deadline for completing applications and will respond to completed applications by a specified date. You will not be required to make a decision regarding enrolling before May 1.

Rolling Admission

Rolling admission is a term used to describe the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are received and offers decisions to students soon after they are made. You may apply to other colleges and will not be required to make a decision regarding enrollment before May 1.

Wait List

Wait List is a term used by institutions to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or denying you admission, but rather extends to you the possibility of admission in the future. Colleges offer admission to wait list candidates if insufficient numbers of regularly admitted candidates accept their offers of admission. Please refer to the *Statement of Students' Rights and Responsibilities* for the rights, which you are assured if placed on a wait list.

A wait list does not guarantee admissions; therefore, you would also need to strongly consider acceptances from other institutions.

EARLY DECISION PROGRAM

Should you apply under an Early Decision Program?

Ideal candidates for Early Decision should fit both of these profiles:

- You have researched colleges extensively (visited at least 3 or 4) and are absolutely sure that College X is your first choice. **[If you are accepted under an Early Decision program, you have committed yourself to attending that college and must withdraw all other applications.]**
- You meet or exceed the admissions profile of students at College X (i.e., you SAT scores, GPA, and class rank should be comparable to students at College X.) You should have completed one round of the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests by October of your senior year. Some colleges, however, will accept November test scores if the scores are rushed to the admissions office. You have an academic record that has been consistently solid over time.

What are the advantages of Early Decision programs?

- Your application is reviewed early and you receive notification of your admission status by December 15.
- If you are accepted, you avoid having to complete other applications.
- Your application is reviewed against a smaller applicant pool. However, it is usually a much stronger pool than the group of candidates for regular admissions.

What are the disadvantages of Early Decision programs?

- You could be rejected early.
- In April, when other students receive their acceptances, you may end up wondering, "Could I have been accepted to Y University?"
- You might change your mind, but you are bound by contract to attend College X.

What are some of the mistakes students make in choosing to apply for Early Decision?

- Applying to a college for Early Decision when they have not researched/visited any other colleges.
- Applying early to a college just to avoid the paperwork and stress.
- Applying early because a friend is doing so.

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AUTOMATIC TOP 10% ADMISSIONS

According to legislation (HB 3826) passed by the Texas Legislature during their past session, there have been changes made in college admission requirements to Texas public four-year colleges effective for this year's senior class. Those changes are:

TOP 10 PERCENT: In addition to the top 10% rank requirement, eligibility for automatic admission will include the requirements that an applicant:

- Has completed the curriculum for the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation Plan.
- Demonstrates college readiness benchmarks on the ACT or SAT.
  - ACT – English & Reading combined = 40+, Math 22+ and Science 23+
  - SAT – Evidence-Based Reading and Writing 480 and Mathematics 530

In addition, an applicant must meet the college or university's deadlines and provide a high school transcript or diploma.

Students who ***are not*** in the top 10 percent of their class are considered for college admission under other criteria.

University of Texas at Austin has admissions requirements as per SENATE BILL 175.

- UT is not required to automatically admit more than 75% of available Texas spaces.
- UT must announce automatic percentile by September 15 to Junior Class (automatic admission for top 5% for the Class of 2027). Students can be admitted Summer or Fall.
- University of Texas Freshman Admission information. Confer with your guidance counselor or the college and career counselor if you have any questions or need help with admissions requirements.

PARENT GUIDE TO THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Relax - Your son or daughter will thank you.

Most of the stress that parents feel in the admissions process is self-induced. Choosing colleges, applying, getting admitted, and deciding where to enroll isn't easy. There's a lot of work involved, and it's drawn out over a long period of time. The best way to avoid stress is to play slowly and deliberately, using a calendar that builds in an ample cushion for time-sensitive endeavors.

Make a plan-of-action calendar and stick to it!

Together with your son or daughter and his or her college counselor, construct an outline for the entire college admissions process, from initial browsing for information to deciding where to attend. Create an itinerary for visiting colleges and gathering your financial information for filing aid forms. Post the calendar in a handy location, touching base periodically with your child to monitor progress.

Plan for admissions tests.

In this competitive admissions environment, standardized tests are becoming increasingly important. In addition to the SAT and ACT, the most important college admissions tests, there are other exams students should consider. The PSAT not only helps students practice for the SAT, it allows them to qualify for National Merit scholarships.

Advanced Placement exams are administered in a variety of subjects. Passing the AP test means that students may receive college credit or even pass out of certain college prerequisite courses. Students should take AP tests after they have taken AP courses.

Do not contact college admissions offices for your child.

Colleges track the contacts they have with prospective students and applicants. It doesn't look good if the college has spoken with you and has never had any contact with your child, the actual applicant. *(Sounds like Mrs. Smith really wants to come here!)*

Keep a record of everything.

Set up files for each college to which your child is applying. Keep all correspondence within these folders. Document phone calls as well - always get the names and titles of those with whom you have had contact. Quick and comprehensive access to all pertinent materials will pay off in the long run.

File all financial aid forms as soon as possible in October.

Do all tax forms promptly so you can complete the required financial aid applications. Have your taxes ready to be filed so that you can complete the FAFSA as soon as possible. Funds are disbursed until depleted, so it pays to apply for your FAFSA early.

Be on the lookout for scholarship opportunities for your son or daughter.

Many employers, social clubs, and religious organizations offer scholarships. Be sure to check with these organizations early, before your child's senior year. A lot of these programs have selection calendars that do not mesh with the college admissions calendar. Don't miss out due to lack of awareness.

The scholarship list on Naviance Student is a warehouse of scholarships. The list is updated as we receive new scholarship information. Applications may be downloaded from Naviance Student or you will be provided the link to the online application.

Visit your child's top college options.

If you can, visit all of the colleges where your child is applying. There is no substitute for a campus visit. And never stick strictly to a "packaged" admissions visit consisting of an information session/interview and a slide show or tour. Balance the experience by lunching on your own in the dining hall and browsing around campus. When you visit colleges, make sure that you allow enough time on campus for your son or daughter to explore on his or her own. You might find this the perfect time to meet with a financial aid officer.

Be aware of the application process.

Most colleges now have their application for admission on their website and students must apply online. Have your student sign up for an Application Help Session in the College and Career Center if help is needed.

Remember that you're not going to college; your child is.

There's no doubt that you should have some say in the matter, just remember to keep it in perspective. Parental input should focus on the mechanics of making a choice, not on the choice itself. Be frank and direct about any absolutes, such as financial limitations, but be low-key and reserved about the characteristics you think they want in a college. Remember that this will be your child's college experience, not yours.

STUDENT ATHLETES

Students planning to participate in Division I or Division II college athletics must be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse insures that each student meets certain academic standards in order to be eligible as a student athlete.

Student Responsibilities

Student athletes and their parents should sign a release form in the transcript clerk's office so records can be released to coaches for recruiting purposes.

When should a student register with the NCAA Eligibility Center?

Students should register with the Eligibility Center at the beginning of their junior year in high school. At the end of the student's junior year, a transcript, which includes six semesters of grades, should be sent to the Eligibility Center from the high school. Additionally, students should have their SAT or ACT scores forwarded directly to the Eligibility Center (by using code "9999") whenever they take the exam.

How do parents learn more about the recruiting process?

Free, reliable information is available to all student athletes and parents. Don't pay anyone for recruiting services! For more information, contact your high school coach, athletic director, or the NCAA Parent resources at web1.ncaa.org.

What if a student isn't attending a Division I-II university? Can they still be an athlete?

Regardless of size, most colleges offer athletic programs. Other non-NCAA programs include NCAA Division III schools, NAIA schools (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), and NJCAA schools (National Junior College Athletic Association). These smaller athletic associations have academic standards for student athletes, but they do not require participation in the NCAA Eligibility Center.

College Intramurals

College intramurals is another option for students who enjoy sports and friendly competition. Intramurals are open to all students with all ability levels, and intramurals do not require a commitment to a college or coach. Check out the student life and recreation centers during campus visits to learn more about intramural competition.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

The cost of attending college is increasing each year. However, there are various ways you can cut the cost of college.
While in high school, students can and should do the following:

Be well prepared for the college curriculum.

Even after a student gains acceptance at a college or university, the school can require the student take developmental or remedial courses. In order to take remedial courses, the student must pay regular tuition but the courses do not count toward degree programs.

Take advanced placement courses and exams.

A student can earn credit while in high school and avoid paying tuition and other fees and living costs. Information regarding the AP credit policy at various colleges and institutions can be found at www.collegeboard.org

Explore career options.

Most college students change majors several times during their college career. Oftentimes, coursework taken will not count in the new major.

Enroll in dual credit classes.

Dual credit classes count for both college and high school credit. Oftentimes, the student does not have to pay full tuition and fees at the college for the dual credit class. Students should be aware there are test requirements that students must either take or be exempted from before college courses may be taken.

Consider financial aid options.

Most financial aid is based on financial need, and students can earn merit scholarships as well. The middle of your junior year in high school is a good time to start asking about financial aid. One of your best sources of information is the financial aid office at the college you wish to attend.

Research programs that finance your education.

Look for organizations that will pay for your college education in return for service. This includes Teach America, US Health Service Corps, Nurses Corps, US National Guard, and ROTC.

FAFSA

What is FAFSA?

FAFSA stands for "Free Application for Federal Student Aid." As the name indicates, the application is free. No matter how many schools you are applying to, you only need to complete one FAFSA. Once your application is processed, you and the colleges you have selected will be notified of the results, and the college will determine the funding for which you are eligible.

To obtain financial aid, there are three very important things to understand:

1. You only have to complete one FAFSA form to start the financial aid process.
2. The financial aid office at the college you plan to attend will award your financial aid.
3. Deadlines matter. The earlier you submit your forms, the more likely you are to get a good financial aid package.

Who should apply?

Every college bound student should complete and submit the FAFSA. Students who are not eligible to apply for FAFSA may be able to receive financial aid from the Texas Application for State Financial Aid by completing the TASFA.

FAFSA Graduation Requirement in accordance with Texas Education Code

Login to Student Access to complete the Financial Aid Graduation Requirement by doing one of the following:

- Complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or
- Complete and submit a Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) or
- Submit a signed opt-out form.

When Should You Complete the FAFSA?

The FAFSA should be completed and processed as soon as possible after October 1st of your senior year. Complete the FAFSA online is the fastest way to apply. The processing time for forms submitted on-line is about two weeks. The processing time for paper applications is six to eight weeks. Remember, the financial aid for which you are applying has limits, so the sooner you complete your forms, the better your chances of getting a good financial aid package.

How Should You Complete the FAFSA?

To complete the form, you and your parents will need to share information relative to your family's financial condition (income, assets, savings, etc.). This is the same information you would be required to share with a bank or other lender when requesting a loan for a new car or home, or that you are required to put on your tax return each year. You will complete the FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov. ***It is FREE***.

What's Next?

Once you have completed the FAFSA, your next step is to contact the college financial aid office to determine if there is any other information you need to provide. Some colleges will require that you complete additional forms. Remember, you must have been admitted to the college before you will be considered for financial aid awards, so be certain to send in your application for admission.

TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

There are many different types of financial aid available to students and their families. Some are need-based, some are based on academic performance, and others are tied to a student's or family's ability to borrow. Not all colleges and universities participate in all programs.

Exemptions

Exemptions are a type of financial assistance allowing some Texas residents to attend a public college or university in Texas without paying tuition or, in some cases, tuition and fees. Examples of exemptions include:

- Exemption for Highest Ranking High School Graduate
- Exemption for Peace Officers Disabled in the Line of Duty
- Adopted Students Formerly in Foster or Other Residential Care
- Foster Care Students

Additional programs and information are available at www.mytexasfuture.org

State and Federal Grants and Scholarships

State and federal grants and scholarships provide financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Some grants and scholarships require the student to maintain a certain grade point average (GPA) to take certain courses. Many grants are awarded on the basis of financial need. Examples of state, federal grants, and scholarships include:

- Federal PELL Grant
- Vocational Nursing Scholarships

Private and Corporate Grants and Scholarships

Private and Corporate Grants and Scholarships provide financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Some grants and scholarships require the student to maintain a certain grade point average or take certain courses. Most grants are awarded on basis of financial need. Examples of Private and Corporate Grants and Scholarships available to students include:

- Best Buy Scholarship
- Ag Day Essay Contest
- Teagle Scholarship
- Coca Cola Scholars Program

Institutional Grants and Scholarships

Institutional Grants and Scholarships provide financial aid that does not have to be repaid. Some grants and scholarships require the student to maintain a certain grade point average or take certain courses. Most grants are awarded on the basis of financial need. Examples of Institutional Grants and Scholarships programs available to students at Texas colleges and universities include:

- Texas A&M University Merit Scholarships
- Terry Scholarship
- Midwestern State University Tuition Grant for First-Generation Students
- Texas Tech University Grant

Loans

Loans refer to financial aid that must be repaid. Examples of loans include:

- Texas B-on-Time Student Loan Program
- Consolidation Loans
- Perkins Loan
- Federal Family Education Loan Program: Subsidized Stafford Loan
- Federal Family Education Loan Program: Unsubsidized Stafford Loan

Loan Forgiveness Programs

Financial aid for individuals who agree to perform certain work or services after completing college. Examples include:

- Texas B-On-Time Student Loan Program
- Federal Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program

Loan Repayment Programs

Repayment of college loans for individuals employed in certain fields. Examples of Loan Repayments include:

- Teach for Texas Loan Repayment Assistance Program
- BHPR: Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program

Work-Study Programs

Jobs (usually on campus) that are offered by the college to help students pay for tuition or other college costs. Work-study jobs are awarded based on financial need.

MYTHS ABOUT PAYING FOR COLLEGE

There is a lot of misinformation about what type of aid is available and who is eligible.

College is just too expensive for our family.

A college education is more affordable than people think, especially when you consider that college graduates earn an average of $1 million more over the span of their careers than high school graduates. There are some expensive schools, but high tuition is not a requirement for a good education.

There's less aid available than there used to be.

Financial aid has risen to record levels. About two-thirds of full-time students receive some form of aid. Approximately 38 percent of financial aid dollars awarded to undergraduates are in the form of federal loans, and the rest are grants, scholarships, federal work study, and tax credits.

My family's income is too high to qualify for aid.

Aid is intended to make a college education available for students of families in many financial situations. College financial aid administrators often consider, not only income but also other family members in college, home mortgage costs, and other factors.

My parents saved for college, so we won't qualify for aid.

Saving for college is always a good idea. Some of your college financial aid package is likely to include loans, so if your family tucked away money, that could mean that you have fewer loans to repay. Having college funds saved will not make you ineligible for aid if you need it. A family's share of college costs is based mostly on income, not assets such as savings.

I'm not a straight-A student, so I won't get aid.

It's true that many scholarships reward merit, but most federal aid is based on financial need and does not consider grades. Remember, if you do receive need-based aid, you must remain in good academic standing to renew your aid annually.

Private schools are out of reach for my family.

Experts recommend deferring cost considerations until late in the college-selection process. Your most important consideration is to find a school that meets your academic, career, and personal needs. In fact, you might have a better chance of receiving aid from a private school. Private colleges often offer more financial aid to attract students from every income level. Higher college expenses also mean a better chance of demonstrating financial need.

There are some out of state colleges that allow you to go for in state tuition.

In state tuition is granted for state residents, not out of state residents. However, some colleges award Nonresident Scholarships for students who meet certain academic criteria. Colleges may also waive out of state tuition for certain scholarship recipients. It is a good idea to check with the college you plan to attend regarding nonresident scholarship requirements.

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AVOIDING SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS

Scholarship scams have been around for years. According to the Federal Trade Commission, if you hear these lines from a scholarship service, you may be getting duped:

- **Come to our free seminar.**
  Free financial aid seminars or "interviews" may provide some useful information, but often they are disguised sales pitches for professional companies with escalating prices for each meeting or service.
- **You can't get this information anywhere else.**
  There are many free lists of scholarships. Spend the time, not the money.
- **May I have your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship?**
  You should not have to pay anything to get a scholarship.
- **We do all the work.**
  Don't be fooled. You still must apply for scholarships and grants yourself.
- **There is a small application fee.**
  Never invest more than the cost of a postage stamp to get information.
- **You've been selected by a "national foundation" to receive a scholarship or "You're a finalist" in a contest you never entered.**
  This is simply a ploy for more information in order to sell a program.
- **The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.**
  No one can guarantee that they will get you a scholarship.

FINANCIAL AID GLOSSARY

Award Letter
A means of notifying students of the assistance the college/university has offered. The letter describes the type(s) and amount(s) of aid, and lists specific information on the student's responsibilities and the conditions that govern the award.

Cost of Attendance (also known as the cost of education or budget)
The student's cost of attendance, covering not only tuition and fees (including loan fees), books, and supplies, but also the student's living expenses while attending school. The cost of attendance is estimated by the school, within guidelines established by federal regulations. The difference between the cost of attendance and the student's expected family contribution determines the student's need for financial aid.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
The total amount students and their families are expected to pay toward college costs, from their income and assets, for one academic year. The amount is derived from a need analysis of the family's financial circumstances. The Federal Methodology is used to determine a student's eligibility for federal and state student aid. Colleges and private aid programs may use a different method to determine eligibility for nonfederal financial aid.

Financial Need
The amount by which your family's contribution falls short of covering your expenses. Assessments of need may differ, depending on the need-analysis method used. The Federal Methodology is used to determine the student's eligibility for federal and state financial aid.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
A form completed by all applicants for federal aid. The FAFSA is available online at www.fafsa.gov. There is no charge to students for completing the FAFSA. Forms may be filed any time after October 1 of the year for which the student is a graduating senior.

Need-Analysis Form
The starting point in applying for financial aid. Students must file the FAFSA to apply for federal financial aid programs. For many colleges, FAFSA may be the only need-analysis form a student must file. For other school, particularly private colleges, additional forms may be required.

Need-Based Financial Aid
Financial aid (scholarships, grants, loans, or work-study opportunities) given to students who have demonstrated financial need, calculated by subtracting the student's expected family contribution from a college's total cost.

Need-Blind Admissions
The policy of determining college admissions without regard to a student's financial need or financial aid status.

Need-Conscious Admissions
A policy that considers financial aid status for at least some of its applicants in making admission decisions.

Parent's Contribution
The amount the student's family is expected to pay toward college costs from its income and assets. The parents' contribution and the student's contribution together constitute the total family contribution, which, when subtracted from the college expense budget, equals financial need.

Student Aid Report (SAR)
A report produced by the Department of Education and sent to students who have filed the FAFSA. The SAR contains information the student provided on the FAFSA as well as the federally calculated result, which the financial aid office will use in determining the student's eligibility for a Pell Grant and other federal student aid programs.

Work-Study
An arrangement by which a student combines employment and college study. The employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education or internships) or simply a means of paying for college.

COLLEGE COSTS

College costs including Resident Tuition and Fees, Books and Supplies, Room and Board, Transportation and Personal Expenses for all Texas institutions can be found at College for All Texans.

REMEMBER: You must fill out the FAFSA in October of your senior year to maximize financial aid opportunities.

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