



Understanding the College Application Process

Junior Guidance 2022



Steps in the College Application Process

- **Step 1:** Admissions Testing
- **Step 2:** Narrow Your List of Schools
- **Step 3:** Complete Applications
- **Step 4:** Request Teacher Rec Letters (and counselor letter if needed)
- **Step 5:** Request Transcripts
- **Step 6:** Complete FAFSA after October 1



**Before we
get
started...
Let's talk
timing!**

- Most college applications open August 1st, some as early as July 1st.
- Some deadlines to apply are as early as October!
- Check your schools' websites for deadlines.
- The earlier you apply the better - especially for competitive schools!
- Remember: we won't start sending transcripts until we return in late July.



STEP 1: Admissions Testing



- Take the ACT &/or SAT if you haven't already or if you need to improve your score.
- Register here:
ACT - www.act.org
SAT - www.collegeboard.org
- **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SEND TEST SCORES TO COLLEGES VIA THE TESTING COMPANY'S WEBSITE.**



Test Prep Resources

SAT: Khan Academy

(link through your College Board account)

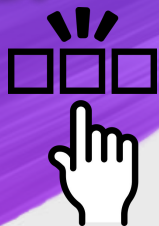
Fun Fact: 20 minutes of SAT practice with the Khan Academy 3 times per week for 6 weeks can improve your SAT score up to 39 points!

ACT: ACT Academy

(link through your ACT account)



STEP 2: Narrow Your Choices!



- College applications can be expensive - usually \$50-\$75 each!
- We recommend applying to 3-5 schools
 - **1-2 Safety schools**
 - you know you can get in
 - **2-4 Match schools**
 - you have a good chance of getting in
 - **1-2 Reach schools**
 - more of a challenge to get in
- Visit campuses (you get 2 excused absences for college visits with proper paperwork from the college)



STEP 3:

Apply!

Here are three common ways to apply...



1. **ApplyTexas**

www.applytexas.org (all 2 & 4 year Texas public schools and some private schools in Texas)

2. **Common Application**

www.commonapp.org (mostly private and out of state schools)

3. **Directly to College**

Apply directly through the school's website

You should use a personal email address for all college correspondence & applications. Do not use your NISD email.



Some colleges may require a written essay.

Writing Prompt Tips:

- Start over the summer.
- Have your English teacher proofread your essays.
- Use these links for more help with essays:
[College Essay Guy](#)
[Princeton Review](#)



Types of Application Deadlines

01

Regular Decision

- Response received on or around a specific date

02

Rolling Admission

- Applications processed and decisions received as applications come in

03

Early Action

- Response received earlier than regular decision - no commitment required

04

Early Decision

ALERT - Binding Agreement!

- Response received early- can only apply to one school ED! Check with counselor first!



STEP 4:

Request Letters of Recommendation



- First, check to see *if* the college requires a recommendation letter or form and the number required/allowed.
- Email or speak to the individual you are asking to write a letter at least **15 school days in advance.**
- Be professional and considerate with your request.
- Provide a *resume* to the recommender.
- Provide the name and email address of the person *receiving* the letter.
- Provide the *deadline* for completing and submitting the letter.
- Provide a stamped, pre-addressed envelope if the letter is to be mailed.




Requesting Letters in Common App




You will officially request recommendations for Common App schools **via your Common App account.**

NOTE: In addition to the request via Common App, send an email to the recommender just in case they don't receive the request - *Do not assume they know!*



How Do I Request a Transcript?

- You can request an official high school transcript through Parchment.
- You will be receiving an email with a registration code. Once you receive the code, you can set up your official Parchment account.
- You can later edit your Parchment profile and change your NISD email address to a personal email address.
- Make sure you have submitted your application to the college **BEFORE** requesting a transcript.
- There is no cost for current students to order/send transcripts.



Requesting Transcripts in Common App

The transcript request process for Common Application users is *different* from other types of applications.

Common Application Transcript Process:

- Request via the Common Application.
- Make sure you put in the correct email address for your counselor.
- Email your counselor to let them know to be on the lookout for the request.
- Counselors handle these requests.



Dual Credit, OnRamps, AP Scores

- **Dual credit transcripts** must be sent directly from TCC or NCTC.
- **OnRamps transcripts** must be sent from the UT Austin/OnRamps portal.
- **AP Scores** are sent from College Board.
- Request these official records to be sent directly to the college you will **attend**.



**STEP 6:
Complete
your
FAFSA**

- The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) opens **October 1!**
- The sooner you complete the application the better your chance of receiving aid.



**STEP 6:
Complete
your
FAFSA**

In accordance with the Texas Education Code, each student **MUST** do ONE of the following in order to graduate:

- 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



**Apply for
Scholarships
NOW!!!**

- Scholarships can come directly from your school or from private organizations. It is worth the time to research and fill out many applications!
- All of our local scholarships are listed in [Major Clarity](#) under the “Financial Resources” tab. It is a comprehensive website you can use to help in making decisions about careers, colleges, scholarships and goals. It can be accessed through your NISD Student Portal.



What Can I Do This Summer?

- ★ Narrow down colleges
- ★ Visit colleges/take virtual tours
- ★ Volunteer to earn service hours
- ★ SAT/ACT: Prep and test if needed
- ★ Begin thinking about your applications
- ★ Finalize resume
- ★ Work on college appl essay
- ★ Start applying for scholarships

**Questions?
Contact your counselor!
We are here to help!**

