Newman Smith High School

Senior Guide

Graduating Class of 2026

A Senior's Guide to Life After High School

School Counselors

Dawn Mason (A-C)	**masond@cfbisd.edu**
Katina Boutte: Lead (D-Ha)	**bouttek@cfbisd.edu**
Lauren Ramirez (He-Mi)	**ramirezla@cfbisd.edu**
Jillian Simpson (Mo-Rod)	**simpsonj@cfbisd.edu**
Erika Welch (Roe-Z)	**welche@cfbisd.edu**
Tina Jain (CCMR Dean)	**jaint@cfbisd.edu**

Table of Contents

2: What you NEED to know…
3: Required Tests
4-6: Timeline & Checklist for Four Year Colleges
6: Newman Smith Senior Graduation Checklist
7: Military Info
8: Career Planning
9-10: Practical Life Skills
11: Definitions of Admissions Options/Sites to Check Out
12: College Application Process
13: College Application Checklist
14: How to Write a College Admissions Essay
15: Transcript and Fee Waiver Requests
16: Scholarships
17-18: Financial Aid
19-22: Immigrant College Information
23: College Visits
24: Recommendation Letters
25: NCAA Information

What you NEED to know…

Attendance:

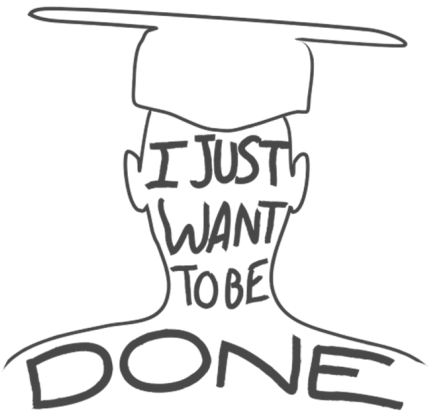
State and federal guidelines require that a student must be in attendance 90% of the time in a class in order to receive credit. Students can have no more than 4 absences in any class period and still gain credit. Students will be notified when credit has been denied due to attendance problems, but you still need to be aware of it yourself!! If you know you have accumulated more than 4, contact Ms. Gomez in senior attendance office at gomezmo@cfbisd.edu to discuss tutorials and ways to make up your absences.

Your Senior Assistant Principal is Mr. Fellbaum and you can reach him in the upstairs attendance office or at fellbaumj@cfbisd.edu

Surviving Senioritis:

Yes, it can (and probably will) happen to you!

- Your entire senior year is of particular importance to colleges.
- Many college applications (including the Common app) require you to list your senior courses, including information about course levels and credit hours. It will be very obvious to the admissions committee if you've decided to "take the year off".
- Many college acceptance letters include warnings to students such as "Your admission and/or scholarship offer is contingent on your continued successful performance." This means colleges reserve the right to change your status and deny you admission, should your senior year grades drop.
- Changing or dropping some of the more rigorous courses listed on the original application can also result in a college withdrawing their admission offer.
- We get it- it's hard and weird and you just want it to be over. Do your best to set yourself up for success and make sure you are presenting your best self this year, even if your remote performance last year didn't reflect that. Turn this unusual time into a positive for yourself- take time to learn independent study skills and show everyone you're ready to be an adult.



IMPORTANT TESTS: WHAT, WHEN, WHY, HOW

Credit by Exam (CBE): CFBISD students are allowed to test out of a number of high school credits by taking a CBE due to extenuating circumstances. The AVANT Foreign Language test will allow a student to test out of up to 4 years of a Foreign Language. Tests are free and will be only given in accordance with the district testing schedule, which you can get from your counselor. **A credit by exam does not meet NCAA clearinghouse requirements**.

STAAR EOC: These are **required** state of Texas tests that are taken after course completion for English I and II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. With very few exceptions, all of these tests must be passed as part of meeting graduation requirements. Re-tests are offered in the summer, winter, and spring.

SAT: This college entrance test will be offered at Newman Smith in October each year and can also be scheduled on your own for a Saturday testing date. Scores must be received by the college application deadline. The SAT uses a 1600-point scale with an optional essay that is scored separately.

To register visit this link https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/dates-deadlines

SAT Test Date	Registration Deadline	Deadline for changes, regular cancellation, and Late Registration
November 8, 2025	October 24, 2025	October 28, 2025
December 6, 2025	November 21, 2025	November 25, 202
March 14, 2026	February 27, 2026	March 3, 2026
May 2, 2026	April 17, 2026	April 21, 2026

ACT: This college entrance test may be taken through the senior year, but scores must be received by the college application deadline. The average score on the ACT is between 19 and 21, with 36 as a perfect score. However, keep in mind that different colleges may have different standards for what scores are typical for their campuses.

To register visit this link https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html

ACT Test Date	Deadline	Late Registration Deadline (late fee may apply)
October 18, 2025	September 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

TSIA (Texas Success Initiative): The TSI is a test to measure college readiness and is a state requirement for all students entering any Texas public college/university (i.e. Austin Community College, A&M, Texas State, Texas Tech, UT, etc.). You must satisfy this requirement prior to college enrollment. TSI scores of 350 in Math, 351 in Reading, and 340 in Writing qualify a student as being college-ready. You are exempt from the TSI if you meet one of the following two standards:

- ACT scores: combined English and Reading score of 40 or higher for reading & writing and Math score of 22 or higher.
- SAT scores: A score of 480 or higher on the Evidence-Based Reading and writing and score of 530+ on Math section.

ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery): The ASVAB is an optional career planning test offered free of charge on each high school campus. This test can help you in your career planning by helping you to identify your interests, clarify what is important to you, and better understand your abilities. **See Ms. Jain or your counselor**, if you are interested in taking the ASVAB.

TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST FOR 4-YEAR COLLEGES

Summer Senior Year

- **July**
  - Review college requirements, deadlines, etc. and begin narrowing down your choices.
  - Talk to people in the career fields you find interesting.
  - Gather application material from colleges.
  - Go to **https://www.applytexas.org/** to preview the applications. Begin application essays.
- **August**
  - Begin the application process now. (**Note: Most universities have Fall deadlines)**
  - The Apply Texas on-line application is available **August 1st.**
  - Take the TSIA2 if not exempt by SAT/ACT. For exemption information, see the information in this packet on testing. All students must meet the College Readiness Standards to attend a Texas public university or college without remedial classes.

Fall Senior Year

- **September/October**
  - Check your schedule for all course requirements so that you will graduate on your desired graduation plan.
  - Submit the FAFSA® electronically as quickly as possible. Write and store your login and your parents' login information. Login information is case sensitive.
  - Attend the **CFBISD College Fair.**
  - Prepare for SAT School Day, and make plans to retake SAT and/or ACT if necessary.
  - Talk with your counselor and or Ms. Jain to research colleges, scholarships, financial aid, and career information. Use SchooLinks!
  - Remind your parent(s) to attend all Senior Parent Information Nights. Check our campus website, daily Newsday with Dr. Jimenez and parent square for details.
  - Some scholarship and college applications require recommendation letters from adults who know you well. Give teachers, counselors and other adults the recommendation forms and or Senior Profile and attach your resume if applicable. **Allow two weeks for letter to be written.**
  - Order transcripts using the TREx system where available. Check the Counseling page to see Order Transcript tab. If your university is not listed there, order from https://www.parchment.com/ . Contact our Records department (972-968-5200) if you have questions or need troubleshooting help. ALL transcripts must be ordered online through one of these two systems. **Records does not print them for you anymore**.
  - Complete college applications and essays. Have trusted adults review and critique your writing.
  - Attend the **FAFSA® Night** at Newman Smith High School. Date TBD.
  - Make a college visit on a student holiday! For visits on school days, get a letter from the college while you are there, with your name and the date you visited, and bring it back to the attendance office when you return. Two visits are allowed during your junior year and two more during your senior year. These absences will not count against exam exemptions if proper procedures are followed.
  - Pay attention to deadlines from Jostens and order your cap and gown on time
  - Register for spring AP exams and make payment online or with Associate Principal Dr. Elliot.

- **November**
  - **The CFB Local Scholarship application** is a wonderful opportunity to apply for many scholarships with one application**.** Ms. Tomerlin will let you know when it is open for application.
  - Submit college applications and scholarship applications before Thanksgiving when possible. December 1st is the early deadline for many schools but we encourage you to do your research because dates and deadlines vary.
  - Check the Scholarship Information and the school website under "Counseling - Scholarships" frequently for updates.
  - Counselor recommendations and transcripts that are due the first two weeks of January must be requested by **December 1st** since school personnel are not available during Winter Break.
  - Attend Financial Aid Nights with parent(s).
  - If college is not in your plans, begin determining what career you'd like to enter. Begin preparing a resume and talking to appropriate people who can help you in your chosen field.

- **December**
  - Submit mid-year reports that are required by selective colleges and universities to the Registrar or Counselor.
  - Complete scholarship applications during winter break.
  - Check your student college portals to ensure that schools have received all required documentation and your application is complete.

- **January/February**
  - Continue applying for local, national and college scholarships.
  - Plan ahead for any spring college visits.
  - Pay close attention to housing deposits and or refund dates.

- **March/April**
  - Respond to college acceptance notices as specified in your acceptance letter.
  - Inform Ms. Tomerlin of ALL scholarship awards received, even if you do not plan to accept them all.
  - Continue applying for local, national and college scholarships.
  - Register for the TSIA, if needed.

- **May**
  - Take AP exams
  - Send a final transcript to the college of your choice. Check "hold for grades" to have your final one sent after exams.
  - Run through the following Senior Checklist and make sure all Smith items are taken care of, and that you're ready for graduation.

Seniors 2026 Newman Smith Grad Checklist

Fall: (dates TBD- watch cohort 2026 announcements and ParentSquare)

- ❑ Work on college applications
- ❑ Fill out your diploma order form
- ❑ Watch for announcements regarding cap and gown ordering. This will be done through Jostens and we will send the info as soon as we receive it.
- ❑ Graduation announcements can also be ordered through Jostens at that time, or you can create your own on your favorite photo website.
- ❑ Register for AP exams, the ASVAB, or SAT/ACT if needed
- ❑ Check in with Mrs. Tomerlin if you're interested in scholarships
- ❑ If you're not making college plans, work on creating another plan for after graduation!

Anytime:

- ❑ Order a class ring if you're interested

Spring:

- ❑ Pay fines, return overdue items, and make sure you are not on the unclear list (If you owe the school anything, it will prohibit you from buying a prom ticket or receiving your diploma after graduation)
- ❑ Get your prom tickets early to avoid paying higher prices (usually they go on sale the week after spring break)
- ❑ Graduation is TBD

What if I want to join the military?

If you're considering a service academy or military college, start planning early. Speak to recruiters, your school counselor and students at the school. Research the physical, academic, and post-graduate requirements expected of you. Apply for nomination in the spring of your junior year.

By attending a service academy, you have also committed to fulfilling a service requirement in that branch of the military. Your service time begins after graduation and varies among the armed forces branches.

United States Military Academy:	https://www.westpoint.edu/
United States Air Force Academy:	https://www.usafa.edu/
United States Coast Guard Academy:	https://uscga.edu/
United States Naval Academy:	https://www.usna.edu/homepage.php

If you are interested in general enlistment rather than an academy, be sure to take the ASVAB. Research which branch you feel would be the best fit for you. We have local reps for each branch who would be absolutely delighted to discuss plans with you. Reach out to your counselor or Ms. Jain if you'd like assistance in setting up a meeting with a military rep.

There are many different jobs you can do through the military as well- check https://www.military.com/join-armed-f6rces/military-jobs for information on what each branch specializes in and what they can offer you.

Career Planning

There are many alternatives after high school if you have determined a 4-year college program is not for you:

Apprenticeship--

An apprentice learns a skill by combining classroom instruction with on-the-job training. Most apprenticeship programs are conducted by labor unions or businesses and can be completed in two to six years. An apprentice earns while he learns under the supervision of a skilled craftsman. Carpenters, machinists, bricklayers, and electricians are some of the workers who may be trained through an apprenticeship program.

On-The-Job Training--

On-the-job training is provided for some jobs which require relatively short training periods. Workers who may be trained on the job include grocery store checkout clerks, shoe repair persons, waitresses, and sales workers.

Community, Junior, and Technical Colleges--

These two-year colleges offer a large number of programs designed to prepare students for many different careers. Costs vary a great deal from school to school. Community, junior, and technical colleges offer programs which train auto mechanics, computer programmers, commercial artists, medical assistants, nurses, and more. High school graduation or the equivalent is an admission requirement.

Business, Trade, and Technical Schools--

Programs at these schools usually train students for specialized jobs such as secretary, bookkeeper, welder, or cosmetologist. These programs can range from one month to two years in length.

Many students aren't sure what they want to do with their lives after graduation and it's okay to not know! Most people are not still working at the same job they first started after high school. Trial and error and a willingness to learn will get you far. If you have no idea where to start, consider www.texasgenuine.org , www.onetonline.org, www.texasrealitycheck.com , and www.mynextmove.org for career planning, or take the ASVAB here at Smith. It's not only for the military- it will show you the kinds of things you're good at and suggest possible careers you might not have considered. Keep in mind that you don't have to be IN LOVE with your job. Just decide on something you find interesting and that you can be good at, and will fulfill your financial needs. You can always change your mind as you focus your path!

Practical Life Skills for young Adulthood

There are a ton of practical life skills that aren't often taught anymore. There are students, graduates, young professionals, and even some adults who have missed on learning some basic life skills. Whether by taking a class, reading books or articles, asking someone for help, or watching YouTube tutorials or even TikTok, there are so many skills you should consider learning before launching into adulthood! How many of these can you do already? What can you spend some time this year learning?

HOME CARE-- How to:

- Sew a button
- Clean carpets, windows, toilets, countertops, etc
- Do laundry (nobody loves that all-pink load of clothes…)
- Iron
- Meal plan, prep, and/or cook the things you like
- Brew a good cup of coffee or tea (that Starbucks habit gets expensive!)

LIFE MANAGEMENT-- How to:

- Organize important documents, files, and papers
- Address a letter/package properly
- Create and maintain a budget
- Hunt for apartments
- Create your own appointments (do you have phone numbers for your dentist, doctor, etc? Once you turn 18, your parents cannot legally do this for you anymore.)
- Set up online bill pay and use a checking account
- Read legal documents such as leases, healthcare things, and phone contracts
- Search for jobs
- Responsibly use a credit card and know how it affects your credit score
- How to look for car/health insurance if you're not still covered by your parents

TRANSPORTATION-- How to:

- Change a tire
- Jumpstart a car
- Order a taxi/Uber/Lyft
- Utilize public transportation (bus, subway, etc)
- Read a map
- Arrange bus or air travel

PERSONAL STUFF-- How to:

- Balance class, work, and social life
- Keep in touch with friends and family
- Handle conflict.
- Apologize (even if, ESPECIALLY if, you don't think you were wrong)
- Be punctual!!
- Deal with emergencies
- Perform basic first aid
- Defend yourself
- Stay in shape

PROFESSIONAL STUFF-- How to:

- Write a professional letter or email
- Conduct yourself in an interview
- Build a business wardrobe
- Write thank you notes to bosses/interviewers
- Create a resume
- Have a good handshake (yes, seriously, this is very important)

STUDENT STUFF-- How to:

- Write an essay
- Be a strong member and work with others on group projects
- Form good study habits
- Write an email to a professor/advisor
- File for financial aid
- Take good notes
- Research for papers
- Create your class schedule, planning ahead for all four years
- Navigate a computer
- Use a library

DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS

(www.nacacnet.org)

Non-Restrictive Application Plans – Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Regular Decision – Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time. (Commitment: Non-binding)

Rolling Admission – Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle. (Commitment: Non-binding)

Early Action (EA) – Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date. (Commitment: Non-binding)

Restrictive Application Plans – Students are responsible for determining specific institution's policies and following restrictions.

Early Decision (ED) – Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted, they will definitely enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early. (Commitment: BINDING) **Do not apply for early decision at more than one college.**

Restrictive Early Action (REA) – Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm. (Commitment: Non=binding)

Great Sites to Check Out!

College Search:	www.collegeview.com www.anycollege.com www.collegeboard.org www.universities.com www.mymajors.com
Scholarships & Financial Aid:	www.fafsa.ed.gov www.ed.gov/studentaid www.collegeforalltexans.com www.finaid.org https://comptroller.texas.gov/programs/education/
Test Registration and Prep:	www.actstudent.org www.collegeforalltexans.com www.sat.collegeboard.org www.khanacademy.org
College Applications:	www.applytexas.org www.commonapp.org
Athletics:	www.ncaa.org

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

The process for applying for college admissions varies from one college to another. The application process requirements include submitting an application, high school transcripts, and SAT/ACT and exam scores to the college.

You can obtain an application for admission in a number of ways:

- Through www.applytexas.org
- Through www.commonapp.org
- By downloading from the college website
- From a college representative

Frequently Used Applications

There are two application forms available that allow the applicant to complete one single form for submission to a number of different schools. Most schools prefer the electronic application method. If you do not have internet access at home, please contact your counselor for assistance.

Apply Texas Application (www.applytexas.org)

This application may be used to apply to over 100 public and private four and two-year colleges/universities, as well as numerous technical schools in Texas. Some of the private colleges such as Baylor, Texas Christian, and Southern Methodist Universities also use this application. All students must submit their Apply Texas Application online.

The Common Application (www.commonapp.org)

This application may be used at almost 300 colleges across the United States. Universities in Texas that accept this application include Rice, Southwestern, and Trinity.

Completing the Application Forms

- Follow directions carefully.
- Each school will specify which parts of the application they require.
- Some colleges require a supplement which can be submitted online or by mail.
- Application fees vary by college.
- Read each question carefully. Do not leave anything blank. If a question does not apply to you, write "does not apply" or "N/A".
- Spend considerable time on essays and statements. Consult your English teacher for proofing. This is your chance to shine, and to show your creativity and uniqueness.
- Always be truthful on an application of any kind. Do not try to overcompensate for a weakness by inflating activities or leadership roles.
- Parts of the application that must be completed by counselors and or teachers should be distributed at least two weeks prior to the deadline.
- Make copies of ALL completed forms and set up a file system. Write and store your login information.
- Request and pay for transcripts for each school. Transcripts MUST be sent by the Registrar (sealed envelope) to be official if mailed.

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-checklist

Application Checklist	College:_____
Get the application	
Make a note of the regular application deadline	
Make a note of the early application deadline	
Request high school transcript sent	
Request midyear grade report sent	
Find out if an admission test is required	
Take an admission test, if required	
Take other required or recommended tests (e.g., SAT Subject Tests, AP Exams, IB exams, TSI)	
Send admission-test scores	
Send other test scores	
Request recommendation letters	
Send thank-you notes to recommendation writers	
Draft initial essay	
Proofread essay for spelling and grammar	
Have two people read your essay	
Revise your essay	
Proofread your revision	
Interview at college campus	
Have an alumni interview	
Send thank-you note to interviewer(s)	
Complete college application	
Make copies of all application materials	
Pay application fee	
Sign and send application	
Confirm receipt of application materials	
Send additional material, if needed	
Tell school counselor that you applied	
Make a note of both the priority and regular financial aid deadlines	
Submit FAFSA®	
Submit PROFILE, if needed	
Submit college aid form, if needed	
Submit state aid form, if needed	
Receive letter from office of admission	
Receive financial aid award letter	
Meet deadline to accept admission and send deposit	
Accept financial aid offer	

PREPARING YOUR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ESSAY

https://www.cappex.com/media/writingACollegeAdmissionEssay.pdf

APPLY

5½ Steps to Writing a College Admissions Essay

1. Write in Your Own Voice

No matter what the essay question is, you can express who you are by answering in your voice. Avoid common tactics of trying to sound overly intellectual. Simply showing that you can use the English language, follow directions and articulate who you are will go far.

1½. Know What Your Voice Is

Your voice is distinctly yours. Recognize the qualities that distinguish you from others. **What are three qualities that make you stand out from others?**

2. Don't Repeat Yourself: Don't Be Repetitive

Your essay should tell admission representatives something they haven't already read in your application. **What are three things the admission representatives won't know about you until they read your essay?**

If any of these three things match any of the qualities in section 1½, that should tell you what you need to get across to the admission representative!

3. Give Yourself Enough Time to Write, Revise and Repeat

The writing process takes time, so give yourself enough of it. Before you even write, just brainstorm ideas. From there, craft an outline, and from there write a draft. Have someone like a parent, teacher or friend edit your essay. Take your editor's suggestions, make changes and rework the piece. Here's a checklist for writing your college admission essay:

- ☐ Brainstorm
- ☐ Outline
- ☐ Draft
- ☐ Edit
- ☐ Revise

4. Are You Answering the Right Question?

With the stress of writing an essay, a lot of times the main point of the essay goes out the window. Remember, you need to answer the question the college asked. Even if you have the most beautifully written essay on your ability to talk to dogs, are you sure it answers the question? For every essay you write, re-read the question and double check that you have provided an appropriate response.

5. Get Some Mileage Out of It

Essay questions may be different for each school, but in many cases you can use what you already have toward another question. It's not as simple as copy and paste, but you can repurpose parts of your essay to make sense with a new question. Still, remember section 4! Make sure that your repurposed essay answers the question. Also, avoid at all costs accidentally leaving the wrong college's name in your essay.

All of these steps take time. Do yourself a favor and start your essays early!

© 2013. Cappex.com, LLC. Free to copy for educational use.

Requests for Transcripts

- Request your transcript through TREx or parchment.com.
- If a Texas college or university participates in the TREx program, you will be able to order an electronic transcript at no charge.
- If a college or university does not participate in the TREx program, or your college is out of state, you will need to request your transcript using **www.parchment.com**. Be aware that this service does **have a fee** attached for each transcript sent.
- College and scholarship applications usually require an **OFFICIAL** copy of a transcript. An official copy carries a special seal and is always given to a student in a sealed envelope if it is not sent directly to the college. The transcript should **stay sealed** in the envelope to be mailed on to its final destination.
- You can request an unofficial transcript to be emailed to you for free. This is just for you to look at and check over- it will not be accepted for applications.
- Some colleges require a transcript of second semester work. The final transcript is the most important.
- Transcript requests should be made 2+ weeks in advance.
- You must make your request online through one of the above systems. Our Records department is unable to print official transcripts to give to you.

SAT/ACT Fee waivers

- Fee waivers are available for students who qualify. Students can qualify in a range of ways, but typically students who participate in the free or reduced lunch program will always qualify for a fee waiver. Your family may not have applied or renewed your application- make sure your status is current if you want to obtain test waivers!! If you are unsure or need help with a fee waiver, see Ms. Jain or your counselor.

- SAT Fee waivers cover 2 SATs with or without essay.

- ACT Fee waivers cover 2 ACT tests.

- Using a fee waiver for tests will make you automatically eligible to receive four college application waivers.

Talk to Ms. Jain in our CCMR room NE127 for help with any application fee waivers. Begin by checking the websites for the colleges you are applying to and learn how they want the form submitted. Each one has a different procedure. She will help with faxing or giving you the forms, but it is your responsibility to know what your desired university wants.

SCHOLARSHIPS

There are several different avenues to search out.

- The CFB local scholarship package is a super convenient way to apply for many scholarships at once. It is an online application and once you fill it out, you are eligible for multiple scholarships. You can email Ms. Tomerlin at tomerlina@cfbisd.edu if you have any questions.
- Check the Newman Smith Counseling website for updated scholarship information also: https://smith.cfbisd.edu/campus-information/counseling-office
- Use the internet and research new ones yourself:
  - Remember you should not need to pay to apply
  - Read the fine print carefully- sometimes they phrase it as a "scholarship" but you're really applying for a loan
- Check with the companies that your parents and grandparents work for- sometimes there are scholarships available for family members
- Check with the university you're applying to and make sure you have submitted information for all the scholarships you're eligible for directly at that school
- Remember that if you are fortunate enough to receive scholarships that are good for more than one year, sometimes you have to re-accept them for each consecutive year. Don't lose your status by forgetting paperwork!

FINANCIAL AID

Types of financial aid (go to www.collegeforalltexans.com for explanations of each):

- ➢ Federal Aid
- ➢ TASFA
- ➢ State Aid
- ➢ Institutional Aid
- ➢ Grants
- ➢ Loans
- ➢ Employment Opportunities
- ➢ Scholarships
- ➢ Exemptions
- ➢ Tax Credits and Other Programs

Some financial aid is need based and some is merit based. Not all colleges and universities participate in all programs, but the more you know about financial aid, the better prepared you will be. College For All Texans (www.collegeforalltexans.com) will walk you through the various types of financial aid. **Most scholarships and grants from the college require the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) at www.FAFSA.ed.gov.**

Financial forms will have their own deadlines. Be careful!

- Many schools will not award financial aid until a student has been accepted.
- Be sure you make a note of the financial aid officer's name with whom you talk.
- Scholarship information can be obtained from the college of your choice.
- For local scholarships, check the campus website and the college and career center.
- By early fall, select colleges or universities in which you are seriously interested and to which you are likely to be accepted. Do NOT limit your choices only to those schools you can afford. Financial aid can and often does make it possible for students to have a chance for a choice of schools.
- Visit the websites of the college's office of admissions for financial aid application information.
- Submit applications by the schools' suggested deadline.
- Determine which family financial information form the schools require. Your college admissions and college financial aid offices can tell you.
- Investigate any scholarship or loan programs which may be offered through your school, church, your parent's employer, civic organizations, stores, etc.
- Stay in contact with the financial aid offices of the schools to which you are applying. Respond quickly to all requests for additional information.
- Usually by completing the FAFSA® and the college's financial aid application, you will be
- considered by the college financial aid office and all aid programs administered by the school, including scholarships, grants, student loans and part-time employment. At some schools, it may be necessary to contact the academic department of your major field of study.

Other Financial Aid Opportunities

Dallas County Promise

Through the Dallas County Promise, participating colleges provide "last-dollar scholarships" to students

who graduate from a Promise high school (Newman Smith included) with a high school diploma or associate degree. The Promise scholarship covers the gap between need-based financial aid and the cost of tuition for up to a time limit or the completion of a degree per institution.

The website www.CollegeForAllTexans.com explains many grants that colleges may offer to a student who has completed the FAFSA®. Grants are like scholarships in that the amount of money given does need to be paid back to the giver. Grants are different from scholarships in that no application is required for a grant. Sometimes colleges can offer a convenient job on campus to help a student finance college expense. A common method of financing college is through student loans. Most lenders allow up to 10 years for repayment of student loans. Be careful not to borrow more than you need!

The Top 10% Scholarship Program

The Top 10 Percent Scholarship Program was created by the 80th Texas Legislature to encourage high performing students who graduate in the top 10% of their class to attend a public college or university in Texas. Students with financial need who are ranked in the top 10% of their high school class are eligible to apply for the scholarship of up to $2,000.

To be considered for the scholarship, students who will graduate and plan to enroll as a full-time student in a Texas public university or college in fall will need to apply for financial aid at the public institution he/she will be attending. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) or the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) should be completed in time to produce results in a non-rejected status by deadline to have priority consideration for the scholarship. Applications completed after deadline will be considered to the extent that funding is available. For more information, log on to the website: www.collegeforalltexans.com, or call the Texas Financial Aid Information Center at 1-888-311-8881.

Financial Aid Steps for Seniors

Fall

- Keep a close watch on the counseling website for scholarships. Check with Ms. Tomerlin for any applications that are available. Check the qualifying criteria before picking up materials and be sure to follow all instructions carefully.
- Sign up for FREE web scholarship services – www.finaid.org, www.fastweb.com, and www.cashe.com. These services will match you with scholarships for which you may be eligible.
- Complete the Carrollton Farmers Branch ISD Local Scholarship form. The application must be completed online and a paper copy should be turned back in to the counseling office ASAP. All "local" scholarships are chosen from this pool of applications!
- Have your parents attend Financial Aid events at your school.
- Complete, with your parents, the FAFSA® form (**www.FAFSA.ed.gov**) during Dece. Starting with students entering college for the 2017-2018 school year, prior-prior year (PPY) submitted/filed tax returns can be used. This means you can use
- Create a FSA ID; this is a username and password that must be used to log in to certain U.S. Department of Education websites. Your FSA ID confirms your identity when you access your financial aid information and electronically sign Federal Student Aid documents. You can create your FSA by logging in to FAFSA®.gov. Write and store your login information. Your FSA ID information is something you will need for many years. Passwords are CASE SENSITIVE.

Spring

- When you will receive your financial aid notification letters. You and your parents may "pick & choose" what parts of an offer you want to accept. You will be expected to return some paperwork, so read your directions carefully.

IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND COLLEGE

If you are an immigrant student, or know someone who is, you can go to college regardless of your immigration status. Effective since Fall 2001, Texas law HB 1403 enables immigrant students, including *undocumented*, to qualify as Texas residents and pay in-state tuition. This tuition is much lower than the tuition paid by international students. In August 2005, the state Congress approved a new law SB 1528 that expands the benefits of HB 1403. To qualify under SB 1528, a student must meet the following four provisions:

1) Graduate from a public or private high school, or receive a GED, in Texas;
2) Reside in Texas for at least the 3 years leading up to high school graduation or receiving a GED;
3) Reside in Texas for the 12 consecutive months right before the semester you are enrolling in college; &
4) Provide the institution an affidavit stating that you will file an application to become a U.S. permanent resident as soon as you are eligible to do so.

- Immigrant students who do not meet the requirements above but who have filed an **I-130** (family petition) or **I-140** (work petition) with immigration services (USCIS), and have received a **Notice of Action** as a response from the USCIS, are also eligible to receive in-state tuition if they have been here for at least 12 months.
- People holding work visas (H1-B) and their dependents (H-4) can now also receive in-state tuition at state universities. The same rule applies for NACARA and TPS applicants, among others.

Students who are classified as Texas residents under this law, also qualify for state financial aid!
If you have completed the recommended high school program, you can receive the *TEXAS Grant* and the *Texas Public Education Grant* (TPEG) at public universities. There are several other financial aid programs you may receive at a community college, technical college or at a private university: the *Texas Educational Opportunity Grant* (TEOG), *Texas Equalization Grant* (TEG), or the *College Access Loan* (CAL). To apply you will need to fill out the **TAFSA or FAFSA®** (depending on the institution), even if you *do not have a social security number*, and submit it directly to the university/college that you are planning to attend. You can find the FAFSA® in your high school counselor's office or in the financial aid offices of colleges or universities. The TASFA can be downloaded electronically in English or Spanish from the following web address: www.collegeforalltexans.com.

- Most universities in Texas offer academic scholarships to which any student, regardless of his/her immigration status, can apply. If an immigrant student is awarded one these scholarships, and the amount is at least $1000 per year, he/she becomes eligible to pay in-state tuition.
- If you are in the top 10% of your graduating class, you will be offered automatic admission and, in some universities, you may automatically qualify for extra funds. Several universities also offer automatic admission if you are in the top 25% of your graduating class.
- Community and state technical colleges, such as the Austin Community College and the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) in Waco, offer admission to anybody that completes the application process and financial aid to enroll in short-term, technical and university transfer programs.

Estudiantes Immigrantes Pueden Ir a la Universidad

Si eres un estudiante inmigrante, o sabes de alguien que lo es, puedes ir a la universidad o al colegio comunitario sin importar tu estado inmigratorio. Desde el otoño del 2001, la ley de Texas "HB 1403" permite a los estudiantes inmigrantes, entre ellos los *indocumentados*, calificar para el pago de la matrícula como residentes del estado de Texas. Esta matrícula es mucho más baja que la matrícula que paga el estudiante internacional. En agosto del 2005 el congreso de Texas aprobó una nueva ley, **"SB 1528"**, que expande aún los beneficios de la HB 1403.

Para calificar bajo la ley **SB 1528** necesitas:

1. Graduarte de una escuela secundaria pública o privada, o recibir un GED, en Texas;
2. Residir en Texas por lo menos los 3 años consecutivos antes de graduarte de escuela secundaria o recibir el GED;
3. Residir en Texas los 12 meses consecutivos justo antes del semestre en que te matricules en una universidad o colegio; y
4. Proporcionar a la universidad una declaración jurada indicando que solicitarás la residencia permanente en los EE.UU tan pronto como reúnas los requisitos y puedas ser elegible.

- El estudiante inmigrante que no reúna los requisitos indicados arriba pero que haya presentado la solicitud **I-130** (petición familiar) o **I-140** (petición laboral) al servicio de inmigración (USCIS), y que haya recibido una **"carta de acción" (Notice of Action)** como respuesta del USCIS, podrá pagar la matrícula como residente del estado, si ha residido en el estado por lo menos 12 meses.
- Las personas que tengan visas de trabajo (H1-B) y sus dependientes (H-4) también pueden pagar la matrícula como residente del estado. La misma regla aplica para los favorecidos de NACARA o TPS, entre otros.
- ¡**Los estudiantes clasificados por la nueva ley como residentes del estado también pueden recibir ayuda económica estatal!** Si has cumplido el programa de estudios recomendados de la escuela secundaria, puedes recibir los subsidios conocidos como *TEXAS Grant* y *Texas Public Education Grant* (TPEG), para estudiar en universidades públicas. Hay varios otros programas de ayuda financiera que puedes recibir en colegios comunitarios, técnicos o en universidades privadas: el *Texas Educational Opportunity* Grant (TEOG), *Texas Equalization Grant* (TEG), o el préstamo *College Access Loan* (CAL) Para solicitar a todas estas ayudas,.debes llenar el formulario **FAFSA® o TASFA** (dependiendo de la institución) *aunque no tengas un número de.seguro social*, y tramitarlo directamente con la oficina de ayuda financiera de la universidad o colegio.comunitario a donde asistirás. Puedes encontrar el formulario FAFSA® en las oficinas de consejeros escolares o en las oficinas de ayuda financiera de universidades o colegios. El formulario TASFA puede ser bajadoelectrónicamente en inglés o español en el siguiente sitio del Internet: www.collegeforalltexans.com.

Por último, ¿sabías esto?:

- Todas las universidades estatales en Texas ofrecen becas académicas que cualquier estudiante, sin importar su estado inmigratorio, puede solicitar. Si un estudiante inmigrante es galardonado con una de estas becas, y la cantidad es de por lo menos $1000 por año, también obtiene el derecho a pagar la matrícula como residente.
- Si tu promedio académico está en el 10% más alto de tu clase graduanda, puedes ser admitido automáticamente a cualquier universidad en el estado de Texas y puedes calificar para recibir becas en muchas universidades. Varias universidades también ofrecen admisión automática si estás en el 25% más alto de tu clase graduanda.
- Los colegios comunitarios o colegios técnicos estatales, como el *Austin Community College* y el *Texas State Technical College (TSTC)* en Waco, ofrecen admisión a cualquier persona y ayuda económica para cursar programas cortos, técnicos, o programas de transferencia para una universidad.

Applying for Financial Aid for Immigrant Students

(Who qualify under SB1528, formerly HB1403) Undocumented immigrant students and those who are not permanent
U.S. residents do not qualify for federal financial assistance to pay for college. However, TX Senate Bill 1528, signed into law in August, 2005 makes it possible for undocumented students to be eligible for state-funded financial aid. Students can get state financial aid at public and private universities, and public community and technical colleges. SB 1528 students are eligible to receive the *TEXAS Grant*, the *Texas Public Education Grant* (TPEG), the *Texas Educational Opportunity Grant* (TEOG), the *Texas Equalization Grant* (TEG), and the *College Access Loan* (CAL). To qualify for financial aid, you and your parents must fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®), or depending on the university's preference, the Texas Application for Student Financial Aid (TASFA), providing important information about your family's income and expenses. Colleges and universities will use the FAFSA® or TASFA to determine how much state financial aid you are eligible for. This is how students receive money for going to college from the government and from the colleges and universities. You can get a copy of the FAFSA® or the TASFA at: www.collegfortexans.com/index.cfm?objectid=D465D848-EA0F.

Both applications become available on October 1st of each year. The *sooner after October 1st you fill out and submit the FAFSA® or TASFA, the greater your chances of getting good financial aid.* You can find out which application a university prefers by calling the financial aid office, or by looking at the list on the last page of the TASFA that includes the universities that accept the TASFA. If your college or university is not on that list, then they probably prefer that you submit a FAFSA® application. All RRISD high schools offer financial aid information sessions for students and parents. In the spring, RRISD offers a series of Financial Aid Saturdays at various district high schools. Please plan to attend an event so that you and your parents can receive assistance in completing and submitting the FAFSA® or the TASFA.

When filling out the FAFSA® or the TASFA, keep in mind:

1. You must make sure you qualify for Senate Bill 1528.
2. If the university asks you to fill out the FAFSA®, complete a paper FAFSA® by filling out with a black pen. You cannot do the online FAFSA® application because it requires a Social Security number. You can do it in either English or Spanish.
3. If the university prefers that you submit a TASFA, go to www.collegefortexans.org, to download the application, fill it out on the computer. The TASFA is also available in English or Spanish.
4. Remember that the FAFSA® and TASFA ask about income that you and your parents have earned. Even if your parents do not file an income tax return, these forms can be filled out by putting down estimates of your household income. If your parents do file an income tax return, urge them to file as soon as possible since you will need their income tax returns to complete these applications.
5. If you are submitting a TASFA application, and your parents are planning to file an income tax return, then the TASFA requires that you submit copies of the income tax returns with the application. If your parents will not be filing an income tax return, then you can put down estimates of the annual income. Make sure to check with the university about any additional forms or supporting documents they may require if your parents are nor filing an income tax return.
6. If submitting a FAFSA®, at the top of the first page, write your name, student ID and SB1528, so that your FAFSA® gets processed appropriately. You do not have to do this if submitting a TASFA.

Solicitar Ayuda Financiera Paso a Paso

(Para estudiantes inmigrantes que califican bajo SB1528 antes HB1403)

Los estudiantes inmigrantes indocumentados y a quienes no son residentes permanentes de Estados Unidos, no califican para ayuda financiera federal para pagar la universidad. Sin embargo, la Ley "SB 1528" de Texas, que se aprobó en agosto del 2005, hace posible que los estudiantes indocumentados sean elegibles para ayuda económica financiada por el estado. Los estudiantes pueden obtener ayuda financiera estatal en universidades públicas y privadas, la comunidad pública, y escuelas técnicas. Los estudiantes de SB 1528 son elegibles para recibir subsidios conocidos como *TEXAS Grant* y *Texas Public Education Grant* (TPEG), el *Texas Educational Opportunity Grant* (TEOG), *Texas Equalization Grant* (TEG), y el préstamo *College Access Loan* (CAL). Para poder recibir la ayuda financiera, usted y sus padres deben llenar la Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda Federal para Estudiantes (FAFSA®), o dependiendo de la Universidad de preferencia, la Solicitud de Asistencia Financiera Estudiantil de Texas (TASFA), proporcionando información importante acerca de los ingresos y gastos de su familia. Los colegios y universidades usan la FAFSA® o TASFA para determinar para cuanta ayuda financiera estatal usted es elegible. Esto es como los estudiantes reciben dinero para ir a la universidad, del gobierno, de los colegios y de las universidades. Puede obtener una copia de la FAFSA® o la TASFA en: www.collegefortexans.com.

Ambas aplicaciones están disponibles a partir del 1º de octubre de cada año, *entre más pronto complete y envíe la FAFSA® o TASFA, después del 1º de octubre, más grandes serán sus posibilidades de obtener una buena ayuda financiera.* Usted puede informarse cual aplicación prefiere la universidad llamando a la oficina de ayuda financiera, o mirando la lista en la última página del TASFA la cual incluye las universidades que aceptan el TASFA. Si el colegio o universidad que usted busca no está en esa lista, entonces probablemente prefieren que usted presente una aplicación FAFSA®. Todas las escuelas preparatorias del Distrito Escolar de Round Rock ofrecen sesiones de información de ayuda financiera para estudiantes y padres. En la primavera, el Distrito Escolar de Round Rock ofrece una serie de sesiones de Ayuda Financiera los Sábados en varias escuelas preparatorias del distrito. Por favor planee asistir a un evento para que usted y sus padres puedan recibir ayuda para completar y enviar la FAFSA® o la TASFA.

Al llenar la FAFSA® o la TASFA, tenga en cuenta:

1. Asegúrese de que usted califica bajo la Ley "SB 1528."
2. Si la universidad le pide llenar la FAFSA®, complete la FAFSA® en papel con una pluma de tinta negra, la solicitud puede ser en inglés o español. No podrá completar la solicitud de FAFSA® en la computadora porque se requiere un número de seguro social.
3. Si la universidad prefiere que envíe la TASFA, visite el sitio de Internet: www.collegfortexans.org, para bajar electrónicamente la aplicación y completar la solicitud en la computadora. La TASFA también está disponible en inglés o español.
4. Recuerde que la FAFSA® y TASFA preguntan sobre ingresos que usted y sus padres han ganado. Inclusive, si sus padres no presentan su declaración de impuestos, puede poner en estas formas las cantidades estimadas de los ingresos en su hogar. Si sus padres presentan su declaración de impuestos, insísteles que lo presenten tan pronto como sea posible ya que usted necesitara la declaración de impuestos para completar estas aplicaciones.
5. Si va a enviar una solicitud de TASFA, y sus padres planean presentar su declaración de impuestos, entonces la TASFA requiere que envíe copias de la declaración de impuestos junto con la aplicación. Si sus padres no van a presentar su declaración de impuestos, entonces puede poner en la aplicación cantidades estimadas de su ingreso anual. Asegúrese de verificar con la universidad si se requiere algunas formas o documentos adicionales en el caso de que sus padres no presenten su declaración de impuestos.
6. Si envía la aplicación de FAFSA®, en la parte superior de la primera pagina, escriba su nombre, identificación de estudiante y SB 1528, para que su aplicación de FAFSA® sea procesada correctamente. No tiene que hacer esto si está enviando una aplicación de TASFA.

COLLEGE VISITS

SENIORS: You are allowed 2 excused absences to visit a college campus that do not count against exemptions. Prior to your visit, inform your teachers of the intended absence and obtain a letter from the college stating that you were there during a school day. Proper documentation needs to be submitted to the Attendance Office upon your return to school.

Colleges often schedule "Welcome Weekends" specifically designed to show off their campus, experience the college culture, and help prospective students explore the advantages that they offer. Check the college website for possibilities. However, colleges also welcome prospective students to visit at any time, maybe during a family vacation, although the festive experience might not be quite as elaborate. Either way, it is helpful to visit the college campus to help make the choice on the right college setting for you and your interests. (**this year may be different, obviously, but check with your intended university on their current policies. If in-person visits are limited, the admissions counselors would likely be thrilled to meet with you virtually to discuss your options.)

Prepare for the visit by visiting the college's website and also check out the city where the college is located. Contact the admissions office to let them know when you plan to visit and request a tour of the campus (classrooms, libraries, rec. centers, residence halls, student union, etc.). Make an appointment to meet with an admissions counselor, taking an unofficial transcript with you, and an appointment with a financial aid counselor. Visualize yourself as a student on that campus, maybe sitting in on a class in your intended major. Eat in the dining hall, if possible. Talk to students and ask them what they like and don't like about the college. Keep notes of the college's negative and positive aspects. Have a great visit!

Checklist for a College Campus Visit

Campus visits are highly recommended. Before you visit the campus, consider some of the options below. It is also important to develop a list of questions and plan specific activities in order to accomplish your goals.

___Meet with an admission counselor.
___Verify admission requirements (tests, high school preparation, etc.).
___Discuss your chances for success in certain programs.
___Find out how to apply.
___Determine college costs.
___Ask about financial aid opportunities, as well as deadlines, required forms, etc.
___Meet with faculty in the department of your intended major.
___Ask questions about academic requirements / offerings.
___Attend a class to get an idea of typical size, teaching style, and academic atmosphere.
___Ask about the placement record for graduates in the field you might study.
___Identify career planning services for undergraduates.
___Tour the campus (be sure to check out the residence halls, library, etc.).
___Talk to students about the general academic environment and the amount and kind of studying necessary for success.
___Find out what student activities (clubs, organizations, intramurals, etc.) are available and about campus life in terms of dating and social activities.
___Investigate transportation options.

Letters of Recommendation

Do you need them?

Not all colleges require letters of recommendation. There are three typical situations when you may need to request a letter.

1. The college/university asks for a letter of recommendation.
2. You do not meet the stated admissions guidelines and could use a letter to "boost" your image.
3. You are applying for a scholarship.

Steps for obtaining a letter of recommendation

- If you need a letter of recommendation, please fill out a senior profile and make sure to share document with your professor or counselor. You can locate the senior profile on the counseling website.
- You will need to email your resume to your counselor. If you need help with a resume you can ask your teacher or counselor for assistance.
- Your counselor will upload your letter of recommendation to the application website or mail your letter. Please provide clear instructions to your counselor if the college/university wants the counselor to return it any other way.

****If your school wants a recommendation mailed via USPS, please provide your counselor/recommender with an envelope addressed to the college/university and a stamp.****

If the college or university provides a form:

- If the college or university provides a form, be sure that you have filled out all the portions that you are required to complete (name, address, etc.). A blank form will never end up where you want it to go!
- Many of those forms may ask whether you "waive" your rights to view the recommendation after it has been completed. Most colleges state that it is better to check "yes." Admissions staff members feel that a teacher or counselor will respond more honestly if the student will not see the finished product. Help your recommender to provide the BEST information for you, and then trust them.

REMEMBER

- Allow plenty of time! TWO WEEKS or 10 working days is the minimum acceptable time period for a request
- Keep your resume updated and make sure you use a professional email address
- Give your teachers time and be the student teachers want to write about.
- Parents **cannot** ask for a recommendation letter. This request must come from you!
- If a college requires a recommendation letter, you will be asked to input your counselor's information into the application portal and they will be notified to upload the letter directly to the school. You do not need to get a paper copy.
- Remember. We are out of school for winter break. You must plan ahead. Recommendations with a January deadline need to be requested before December 1st to be processed in time. We do not return to school by most January deadlines.

NCAA INFORMATION

Students wishing to play a sport at a Division I, II or III college or university must go through the NCAA eligibility process. **Student athletes need to be aware that NCAA does not accept any courses that are taught through distance learning, online, and/or credit recovery. The course must be four-year college preparatory; therefore, credit-by-exam courses do not meet core course requirements.**
It is important to remember that all courses need to be rigorous and four-year college preparatory in nature. Students should be encouraged to take courses that are quantitatively and qualitatively the same as courses offered through traditional means, and to take courses that will prepare them for the academic rigors they will face at a four-year college or university.

Helpful Hints:

- Visit NCAA.org/playcollegesports to learn more about opportunities available at NCAA schools.
- Know current and future academic standards for Division I and Division II.
- Complete NCAA-approved courses throughout high school. Your high school counselor can help.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center at eligibilitycenter.org during your sophomore year if you are interested in Division I or II sports participation.
- After six semesters, send official transcripts from all high schools attended to the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- Make sure you are still on course to meet core-course requirements (verify you have the correct number of core courses & that the core courses are on your high school's 48-H with the eligibility center).
- Send a copy of your transcript to the NCAA. If you have attended any other high schools, make sure a transcript is sent to the eligibility center from each high school.
- When taking the ACT or SAT, request test scores to be sent to the eligibility center (the code is "9999").
- Begin your amateurism questionnaire. Complete amateurism questionnaire and sign the final authorization signature online on or after April 1st if you are expecting to enroll in college in the fall semester.
- Send a final transcript with proof of graduation to the eligibility center.

Register/learn more with the NCAA eligibility center at https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter

Have a great year Class of 2026!

MISSION

Newman Smith High School
CARROLLTON-FARMERS BRANCH ISD
Our mission is to graduate all scholars to be college, career or military ready WITHOUT REMEDIATION.