Graduation Planning & College Readiness – Parent FAQ

1. When should my student begin planning for graduation and post-secondary options?
Graduation planning begins in middle school and becomes more detailed each year of high school. Early planning helps ensure students meet graduation requirements and remain eligible for college, career, or military pathways.

2. Who helps my student plan courses and graduation requirements?
Your student's school counselor is the primary resource for course planning, graduation requirements, endorsements, and post-secondary preparation.

3. How often should my student and I meet with the school counselor?
At least once per year, and more often during key transition years (8th grade, 10th grade, and senior year).

4. Where can I find official graduation requirements for CFISD?
Graduation requirements are outlined in the CFISD Course Description Booklet, available on the district "Academics" webpage.

5. What graduation plans are available in Texas and CFISD?
Most students graduate under the Foundation High School Program with one or more endorsements. Additional distinctions include Performance Acknowledgments and Distinguished Level of Achievement.

6. What is the Distinguished Level of Achievement, and why is it important?
This designation requires specific coursework, including Algebra II, and is required for automatic admission consideration to Texas public universities under the Top 10% rule.

7. Can a student change their graduation plan or endorsement?
Yes. Changes can be made with parent approval and counselor guidance, as long as graduation requirements can still be met on time.

8. What happens if my student falls behind in credits?
Counselors will work with families to explore credit recovery, summer school, online courses, or alternative options.

9. What are endorsements?
Endorsements are career-focused pathways students choose to personalize their high school experience.

10. What endorsement options are available?
CFISD offers:

- STEM
- Business & Industry
- Public Services
- Arts & Humanities
- Multidisciplinary Studies

11. Does choosing an endorsement limit college options?
No. Endorsements help students build focus and skills while still meeting college-readiness requirements.

12. Does my student have to earn an endorsement?
CFISD strongly encourages all students to earn at least one endorsement to maximize opportunities after graduation.

13. Where can I find course descriptions and prerequisites?
Course information is located in the CFISD Course Description Booklet on the district's website.

14. Are AP and Dual Credit courses right for every student?
These courses offer rigor but should align with a student's academic readiness, goals, and well-being. Counselors and teachers can help guide these decisions.

16. How many advanced courses should my student take?
There is no single correct number. Balance academic challenge with success, mental health, and extracurricular commitments.

17. Why are grades so important beginning in 9th grade?
High school grades affect GPA, class rank, college admission, scholarships, and financial aid eligibility.

18. How is GPA calculated in CFISD?
CFISD uses a weighted GPA system, giving additional weight to advanced courses.

19. What is class rank and why does it matter?
Class rank compares a student's GPA to peers and can impact college admission and scholarship opportunities.

20. How often are GPA and class rank updated?
GPA and class rank updates occur typically at the end of each semester for our high school students who are upper classmen.

21. Do colleges only look at GPA and class rank?
No. Colleges may also consider course rigor, test scores, essays, extracurriculars, leadership, and recommendations.

22. Are SAT or ACT scores required?
Requirements vary by institution. Families should check each college's admissions website.

23. Where can I find scholarship information for CFISD students?
Scholarships are posted on the CFISD Guidance & Counseling webpage under the Scholarships section.

24. When should students start applying for scholarships?
Students should begin applying for scholarships as early as junior year, with the majority occurring during senior year.

25. Are scholarships only for top-ranked students?
No. Scholarships exist for academics, leadership, service, talents, career interests, and financial need.

26. Should students apply for multiple scholarships?
Yes. Applying broadly increases the likelihood of receiving awards.

27. What is financial aid?
Financial aid includes grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans to help pay for college.

28. What forms are required for financial aid?
Families complete either the FAFSA or TASFA, depending on eligibility.

29. Why should every family attend Financial Aid Night?
The event provides step-by-step guidance, updates, and expert support to help families complete forms accurately and on time.

30. When is Financial Aid Night held?
The Financial Aid Night occurs annually at the Berry Center. Dates are shared through campuses, district website, and on social media.

31. What is College Night at the Berry Center?
College Night is an annual event where families can meet representatives from colleges, universities, military branches, and career programs. It takes place in the month of October.

32. Who should attend College Night?
All high school students and parents should consider attending College Night every year, not just seniors.

33. Why attend more than once?
Each year, College Night provides new information, changing options, and deeper understanding as students' goals evolve.

34. Why are deadlines so important?
Missing deadlines can affect graduation eligibility, college admission, scholarships, and financial aid.

35. How can families stay informed about deadlines?
Check:

- Campus counseling pages
- CFISD Guidance & Counseling webpage
- School newsletters and emails

36. What deadlines should seniors pay special attention to?
College applications, FAFSA/TASFA, scholarship deadlines, transcript requests, and graduation requirements.

37. What if my student is unsure about college?
CFISD supports college, career, military, and workforce pathways. Counselors help students explore all options.

38. How can parents best support their student?
Stay informed, attend events, communicate with counselors, encourage organization, and support balance.

39. What if my student is struggling academically or emotionally?
Contact the school counselor immediately. Support services and interventions are available.

40. Who should I contact if I still have questions?
Your student's campus school counselor is the best first point of contact.

41. Will this information be covered during the virtual parent presentation?
Yes. The presentation will review graduation planning, endorsements, GPA, scholarships, financial aid, and key events in detail.

42. Will the presentation be recorded?
Yes. It will be available on the CFISD You Tube Channel after the presentation.

43. Where can I find updated information throughout the year?
Visit the CFISD Guidance & Counseling webpage regularly for updates and resources.