The background is a dark, textured surface resembling a chalkboard, filled with faint, white mathematical notations and diagrams. Visible elements include the trigonometric function  $\arcsin(z)$  in the upper right, a geometric diagram of a triangle with internal lines and labels in the center, and the recursive formula  $x_{n+1} =$  in the lower right. Other scattered formulas include  $\tan$ ,  $\cos$ , and  $\sin$ .

# High School in a Flash

By: Dr. Malloy  
(Counselor for last names A-CHI)

This slide show offers a brief overview for parents and students in grades 9-12 that indicates what they should be focusing on each year.

# Freshman year (9<sup>th</sup> grade)

---

## 🎓 1. Build Strong Academic Habits

---

### LEARN TO BALANCE AND DO NOT COMPARE

---

Take **challenging, but appropriate classes** and do your best in them

---

Develop good **study habits, time management, and organization**

---

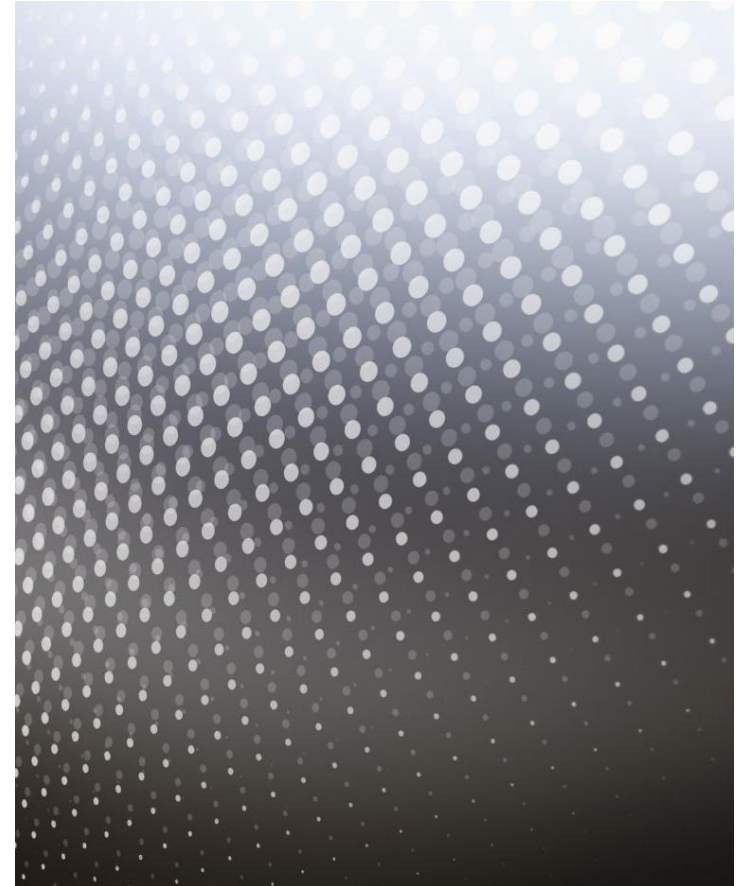
Understand that your **GPA starts now** and matters long-term

---

Counselors meet with their 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the first 9 weeks of school to inquire about how they are adjusting to high school...and again in the spring semester to help them select classes for 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

---

👉 Big idea: *Freshman year sets your academic foundation.*



# 9<sup>th</sup> grade continued



## 🎯 2. Start Exploring Interests & Careers



Take career or interest quizzes



Think about what **subjects or careers excite you**



Begin connecting interests to possible **majors or career paths**



👉 You don't need answers yet—just curiosity.



*Commonly used career inventory/assessments are Collegeboard's Big Future quizzes, ASVAB, and the Interest Profiler on Texas Career Check's website.*

# 9<sup>th</sup> grade cont.

- 
- 🏠 **3. Get Involved in Activities**
  - Join clubs, sports, fine arts, or organizations
  - Try different things to discover what you enjoy
  - Look for **consistency over time**, not just participation
  - 👉 **Colleges value involvement and growth, not just grades.**

# Sophomore year – 10<sup>th</sup> grade

---

## 1. Keep Building Academic Strength

---

Continue taking rigorous courses, if appropriate

---

**(PreAP/AP/Dual credit, when appropriate)**

---

Focus on improving or maintaining GPA

---

Identify **any weak areas and get help early: talk to your teachers often and attend EAGLE HOUR tutoring**

---

**Counselors meet with all 10<sup>th</sup> graders in the spring to help them select courses for the upcoming year.**

---

 Big idea: *Sophomore year is about consistency and upward growth.*

# 10<sup>th</sup> grade continued

---

- 🗺️ **2. Narrow Down Interests & Career Ideas**
- Start defining what you **like and dislike** with regards to **colleges, majors, potential career options**
- Connect interests to possible **career clusters or majors**
- **Start a very basic college list to explore with your family**
- Use career exploration tools to dig a little deeper
- 👉 You're moving from "trying everything" → **"starting to focus."**
- **Attend the college fairs on campus and talk to the admissions representatives.**

# 10<sup>th</sup> grade cont.



## 3. Deepen Involvement in Activities

- Stick with a few activities you actually enjoy
- Begin showing **commitment and growth**
- Look for small leadership opportunities (even informal ones)
- Have early conversations about the costs of college, financial aid, community college, any alternative paths that may interest you – military, trade, work, etc.
- You will take the **PSAT this year**. Use **KHAN ACADEMY** to study or prep so you are familiar with the format. This does not have to be intense...only exposure.



BigFuture emphasizes *depth over randomness*.

# Junior year – 11<sup>th</sup> grade



1. Arguably the most important year...



Enroll in **AP, dual credit, or advanced courses**, if that makes sense for your student's **academic performance/ability, and future goals**



Prioritize strong performance—**junior year grades matter most**



Show academic growth and challenge



**Counselors meet with all juniors in the spring to discuss post secondary plans and steps for senior year.**

# 11<sup>th</sup> grade continued

---

## 2. Take Entrance Exams

- You can take the **SAT and/or TSI on campus this year** (spring is ideal)
- You can also sign up for the **ASVAB** on campus, if interested. **A military commitment is not required to take the ASVAB. Overall, it is a great tool.**
- You can also sign up for SAT/ACT test dates outside of Dawson, if needed.
- Use **PSAT/NMSQT** results for practice and scholarship opportunities
- **Consider retesting if needed. Yes- some colleges are test optional, but you will need to determine if this route is best for you based on rank, gpa, intended major, etc.**

# 11<sup>th</sup> grade cont.



## 3. Start Your College List

- Build a **balanced** list: safety, match, reach schools
- **Everyone will NOT get into flagship colleges like UT & TAMU.**  
**That is okay.**
- Take time to research majors, campus culture, size, and location
- **Visit campuses** (in-person or virtual)
- **Build a resume, review your transcript, talk to your family about financial expectations, and search for scholarships.**
- **At the end of junior year, you should identify 1-2 teachers/coaches/sponsors that can write a letter of recommendation for you, in addition to your school counselor, if applicable.**

# Senior year – 12<sup>th</sup> grade



## 1. Complete College Applications



**Starting August 1** (before school resumes) create application accounts for platforms that suit you (**ApplyTexas, Common App, Common Black College App, etc**)



**Order your transcripts** online through PISD website or F2F on campus with registrar's office



Pay close attention to your application deadlines. (early action, early decision, regular, etc.)



Write and polish essays – **do not procrastinate**

# 12<sup>th</sup> grade continued



**2. Double check! Have you...**



**Sent your transcripts**, test scores (AP/SAT/ACT/TSI, etc.) ?



Requested letters of recommendation ?



Applied for scholarships and/or financial aid ? (FAFSA = Oct. of senior year)



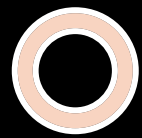
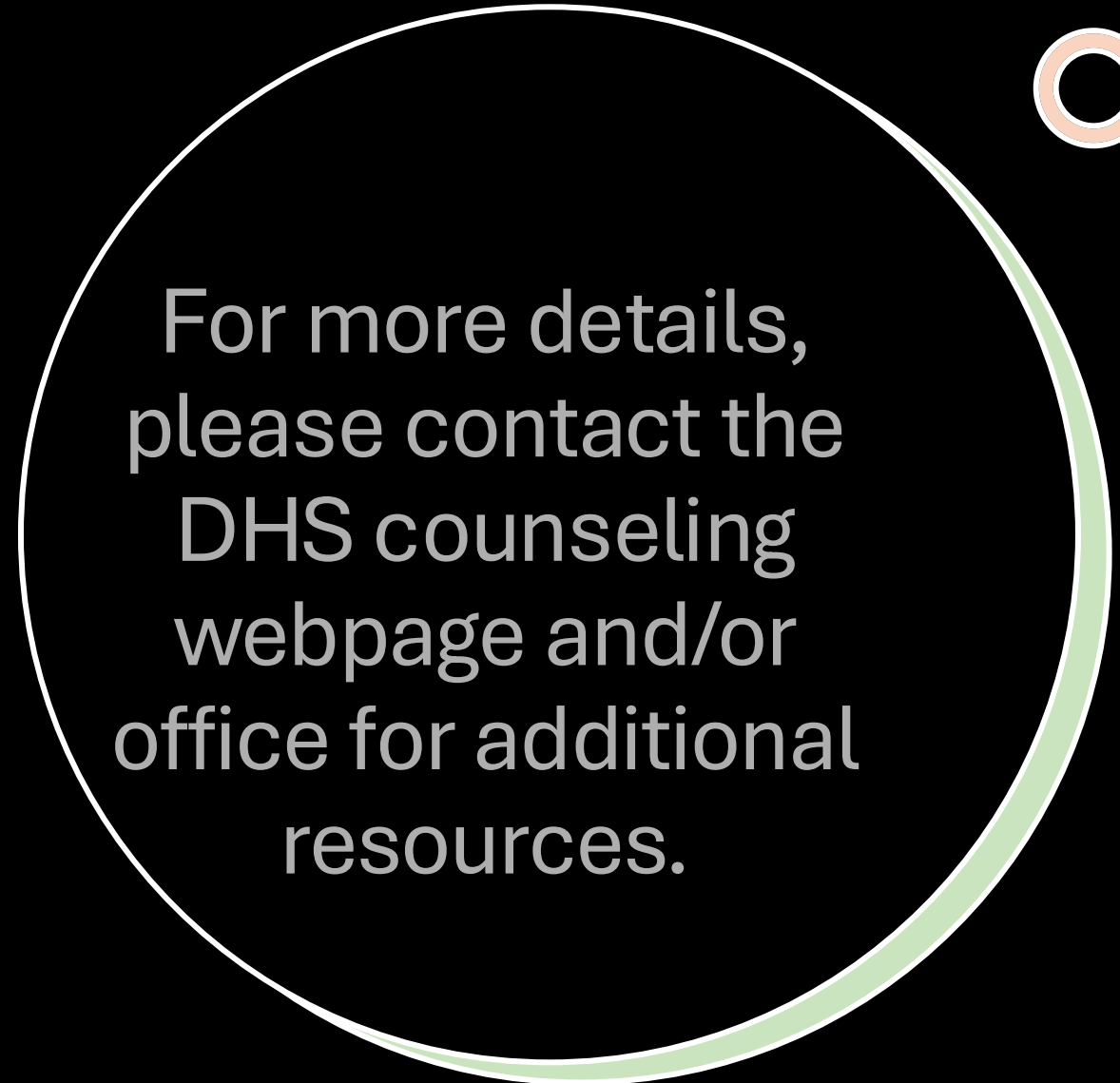
**Avoided senioritis?** (keep your grades up)



Attended the senior class meeting ? (ordered items from Balfour, if needed)



**Met all graduation requirements ? (Counselors will meet with all seniors in fall of 12<sup>th</sup> grade to review for clarifications)**



For more details,  
please contact the  
DHS counseling  
webpage and/or  
office for additional  
resources.

We're happy  
to help.

