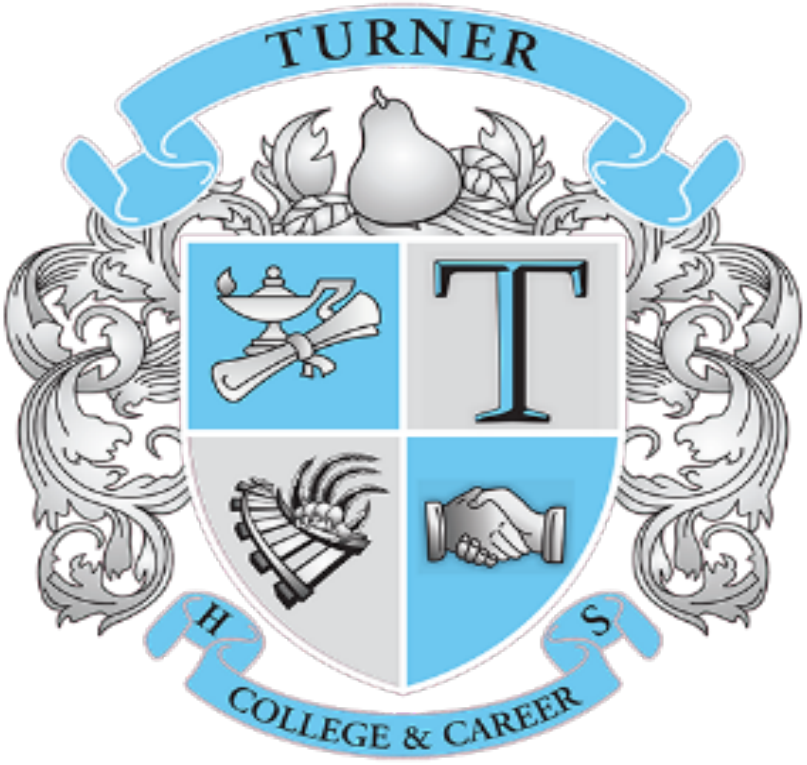
Robert Turner College & Career High School



Senior Year Guidebook

Introduction

Did you know that School Counselors...

- are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests and talents as these traits relate to career awareness and development?
- partner with parents to further the education, personal and social growth of students?
- work with teachers and other educators to help students explore their potential and set realistic goals for themselves?
- seek to identify and utilize community resources that can enhance and compliment comprehensive school counseling programs and help students become productive members of society?

The mission of the Counseling Staff at Robert Turner College & Career High School is to empower all learners to lead satisfying and productive lives by assisting them in identifying and achieving educational, career, personal and social goals. This involves a cooperative effort among students, staff members, parents and the community.

This guide was designed specifically to assist high school seniors moving into the next chapter of their life. It was created with all the hope and excitement that comes from applying to college or technical school, joining the military or entering the work force. With so much to accomplish in this final year of high school, **our expectation is that you will read through this guidebook now, and then plan to revisit it throughout the school year**; consider it a place to come for advice when your counselor is not available.

Finish strong!

Can a School Counselor help you? Absolutely!

Comprehensive school counseling programs like the one at TCCHS are considered an integral part of the educational process that enables all student to achieve success in school.

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Post-High School Options

There are a number of different options available to students after high school. These opportunities can include:

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES

Your options for 4-year colleges are many, including private and public schools. These types of schools offer bachelor's degrees, which are usually completed in four years of full-time study. Some 4-year colleges also have graduate schools that offer master and doctoral degrees. *Examples: University of Houston, Rice University, etc.*

TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

Two-year colleges can also be private or public schools. The most common types of 2-year colleges are community and junior colleges. Typically a 2-year college is less expensive than a 4-year college. Two-year diplomas, certificates and associate's degrees are offered through these schools. Many students will begin at a 2-year college and then transfer to a 4-year university to pursue an advanced degree. Examples: Alvin Community College, San Jacinto College, etc.

WANT TO PLAY SPORTS?

- For NCAA information, go to https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/. Choose to create an account (Division I or II) or a Profile Page (Division III or Undecided) and follow directions.
- For even more AMAZING opportunities to play sports in college! Check out the www.naia.org or www.njcaa.org.

TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Most technical colleges offer certificates, diplomas and associate's degrees in many fields. Your typical length at a technical college will depend on your program choice and if you choose to be a full-time student. Most students attend technical colleges for two years. The programs and degrees offered at a technical college are very specific and are great options for those students who want to enter the work force quickly. *Examples: Texas State Technical College, Brazosport College.*

MILITARY

The military offers many educational opportunities for students in return for their service to their country. Once you have decided the military is something you may want to pursue, you must meet all the requirements at the Military Entrance Processing Station. Your counselor can connect you with the recruitment officers who can ensure you meet all the necessary requirements before high school graduation. *See pages 25-27 for more information.*

EMPLOYMENT

Students may choose to go directly into the work force after high school graduation. If you know you would like to pursue a career that requires no further education or have been offered a job within a company that will provide you the training you need, this may be an option for you. *Turn to pg. 28 or talk to your counselor for tips on entering the work force.*

GAP YEAR

When deciding to take a year off between high school and college (gap year), students should consider what they would be doing to advance or enrich themselves both personally and professionally. Students can choose from an array of opportunities, including things like learning a trade, volunteer work, travel, internships and sports. Gap year opportunities should assist in improving students' knowledge, maturity, decision-making, leadership, independence and self-sufficiency. *For more information about this option, go to www.americangap.org or search online for 'college gap year' or 'high school gap year'.*

Choosing the Best Fit for You

Choosing what to do after high school is often the first big decision in a young person's life. Not surprisingly, this can lead to some distress and anxiety. If you know college is where you're headed, then you need to determine which campus is the best fit for you. Start by creating a list of priorities. These questions will get you thinking:

- What values are most important to you?
- What is your favorite thing to do?
- What inspires you? What makes you happy?
- What are the first words that come to mind when asked to describe yourself?
- Are you a morning or night person?
- Do you like peace and quiet or hustle and bustle?
- What are you known for in your family?
- What has been your greatest challenge in high school?
- What are your weaknesses academically? What subjects have you excelled in?
- Do you prefer a large lecture class or a small discussion group?
- Is it important for you to have close relationships with your teachers?
- Why are you going to college?
- Is there a career you are intent on pursuing?
- If you took a year off before college, what would you do?
- What balance of study, activities and social life are you looking for?
- Is there an activity you insist on pursuing in college?
- Are you ready to live far from home?
- Do you like being around people like yourself or do you prefer a more diverse community?

SEARCH TIPS

Think about the "why" for each of your answers. Example: "I'm a morning person."... WHY do you like mornings best?

Actually write out your responses to the questions: distinguish between wants and needs; notice the trends in your responses. Then, search for schools that match those priorities.

Specific factors to consider in the college search process include:

LOCATION: Do I want to live at home? If not, how far away from home do I want to go?

SIZE: Do I find a large school exciting – or frightening? Do I find a small school comfortable – or confining? Larger schools can usually provide a wider range of experiences. Smaller schools can usually provide more personal support.

PROGRAMS: Am I looking for a wide-ranging liberal arts experience, or am I more focused on a specific course of professional study? Does the school offer special programs that interest me – honors, special seminars, internships, study abroad? Can this school provide the academic experiences I'm looking for?

ATMOSPHERE: It's not just about academic studies – a great deal of the college experience is what happens outside of the classroom. Some campuses are very social. Some emphasize religion and morality. Some campuses are more politically active than others and may be liberal or conservative. Some campuses emphasize sports and other extracurricular involvement. What vibe do I want my college to have?

COMPETITIVENESS: Students often ask "Can I get into [College X]?" This is the wrong question. The correct question is "Would I be successful in [College X]?" People respond differently to challenge. Do I want to start off as one of the smartest students in my class? Do I rise to a challenge and seek to be surrounded by students who find learning easier than I do? Do I do my best work when I start off near the middle of my class?

PUBLIC or PRIVATE: Public schools tend to be larger and less expensive. Private schools tend to be smaller, with smaller class sizes and more personal support. The expense difference can become a complicated calculation, depending on individual family circumstances.

ADMISSIONS: Though not the most important factor, at some point a student needs to be realistic about admission standards. Don't give up on a school automatically because you don't think you will be admitted. If the school meets all your other criteria, but you think you won't be admitted, discuss it with your counselor.

Junior (Spring/Summer) Timeline

Below are some activities to keep in mind to prepare for your post-secondary plans:

SPRING

- ☐ Select classes for your senior year that are academically challenging and meet college entrance requirements
- ☐ Register with NCAA Eligibility Center if you plan to continue playing a sport in college https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/
- ☐ Register for SAT/ACT/TSI
- ☐ Request fee waivers, if you qualify
- ☐ Consider test prep tutoring
- ☐ Create/revise your college list – Dream/Match/Safe schools
- ☐ Review admissions information for selected schools
- ☐ Start learning the basics of financial aid and scholarship options
- ☐ Start thinking of who you want to ask to write letters of recommendation for you

SUMMER

- ☐ Review college essay questions and begin to brainstorm ideas campustours.com
- ☐ Create folder to organize information for colleges of interest
- ☐ Determine application requirements and deadlines for selected schools
- ☐ Visit college campuses
- ☐ Create your FSA ID to apply for federal student aid studentaid.gov
- ☐ Volunteer, work, travel or do a summer enrichment program – be productive
- ☐ Decide if you should re-take the SAT/ACT or SAT Subject Tests
- ☐ Edit your high school résumé

Helpful Websites

College Planning and Exploration
www.collegeforalltexans.com
www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org
www.cappex.com
www.collegeaffordabilityguide.org
www.collegegreenlight.com/
www.collegexpress.com
www.collegedata.com
www.ctcl.org
www.unigo.com

College Entrance Exams
www.actstudent.org
www.collegeboard.org

Test Preparation
www.khanacademy.org/sat
www.number2.com
www.prepfactory.com

College Rankings
www.kiplinger.com/college-rankings
www.usnews.com/best-colleges
www.collegeconfidential.com

Virtual College Tours
www.campustours.com

Volunteer Opportunities
https://www.pearlandtx.gov/residents/get-connected/volunteer-opportunities

Financial Aid and Scholarships
www.aie.org
studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa
www.fastweb.com
www.finaid.org
www.accessandequity.org/goodcall-studentaid.gov
https://www.raise.me/

Career Information
www.upskillhouston.org
www.bls.gov/ooh
www.careeronestop.org/

Automatic Admission: Top 10%-25%

There are two ways to be admitted to most public, 4-year universities in Texas. The first is by **automatic admission**, which is based on class ranking. The second is through **admissions review**. *This is how the majority of students are admitted!* Students not ranked in the top 10% can and should still plan on attending college, but must complete additional steps (i.e. academic résumé, letters of recommendation, essay) in order to be considered for admissions.

TOP 10%

In accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC), §51.803, a student is eligible for automatic admission to a college or university as an undergraduate student if the applicant earned a grade point average in the **top 10 percent** of the student's high school graduating class, or the **top 5 percent** of eligible 2026 summer/fall freshman applicants for admission to the University of Texas at Austin, and the applicant:

- Earned the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program; or
- Satisfied ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks on the ACT assessment or earned on the SAT assessment a score of at least 1500 out of 1600 or the equivalent.

In accordance with Title 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), §5.5(e), high school rank for students seeking automatic admission to a general academic teaching institution on the basis of class rank is determined and reported as follows.

- Class rank shall be based on the end of the 11th grade, middle of the 12th grade, or at high school graduation, whichever is most recent at the application deadline.
- The top 10 percent of a high school class shall not contain more than 10 percent of the total class size.
- The student's rank shall be reported by the applicant's high school or school district as a specific number out of a specific number total class size.
- Class rank shall be determined by the school or school district from which the student graduated or is expected to graduate.

TO COMPLETE THE AUTOMATIC ADMISSION PROCESS AN APPLICANT MUST:

1. Submit an application before the deadline established by the college or university to which the student seeks admission;
2. Meet all curriculum requirements for admission established by the college or university to which the student seeks admission; and
3. Provide a high school transcript or diploma that indicates whether the student has satisfied or is on schedule to satisfy the requirements of the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program or the portion of the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program that was available to the student.

Colleges and universities are also required to admit an applicant for admission as an undergraduate student if the applicant is the child of a public servant who was killed or sustained a fatal injury in the line of duty. If you think you qualify for automatic admissions due to this circumstance, be sure to meet with your counselor for more information.

Top 25% Automatic Admission

Not in the top 10% of your graduating class? Don't give up! You might still qualify for automatic admission. Some universities in Texas will automatically admit students who rank in the top quarter (25%) of their graduating class and meet a minimum ACT or SAT score, as determined by the college. Take time to research the colleges you'd like to attend to see if this option is available and what minimum standards are needed to qualify.

Please keep in mind that admission to a university does not guarantee acceptance into a particular program of study or academic department.

Fast Facts: The College Admission Process

There are a number of factors that colleges take into consideration in the admission process. Grades and test scores are important, but admissions officers are also looking for curious and engaged candidates who will round out a diverse first year class. If grades aren't your strength, don't worry! These other factors can have an impact, too.

ACADEMICS

The high school courses a student take, and their grade point average are top factors in college admission decisions. The high school transcript shows a college whether a student is likely to succeed if admitted. The basic requirements for admission to college include:

- 4 years of English
- 4 years of Math
- 4 years of Science
- 3 years of Social Studies
- 2 years of a single Foreign Language

The more selective the college you are considering, the higher the admission requirements will be and the more rigorous the curriculum the college will expect you to have taken.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

Like most things in life, earlier planning for a college entrance exam will pay off in higher test scores. Don't wait until college applications are due in senior year to take your first SAT, ACT or TSI.

Not sure which one to take? If your plan is to attend a...

4-year university → you'll take the SAT and/or ACT

2-year college → you'll take the TSI

Need more information about testing? Keep reading!

ESSAY

The college application essay is your chance to make a personal impression – make it a good one!

- Write about what's important to you.
- Don't just recount - reflect!
- Being funny is tough...be careful!
- Start early and write several drafts.
- No repeats - no awards, grades or test scores here.
- Answer the question being asked.
- Have at least one other person edit your essay.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Colleges value them because they:

- Reveal things about you that grades and test scores can't!;
- Provide examples of your character and personal qualities;
- Shows who is willing to speak on your behalf.

Choose people who can describe your skills, accomplishments and personality ... *and give them lots of advance notice!*

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Colleges do not require a specific amount of community service hours or that you belong to a set number of student clubs - there is no perfect mix.

What colleges want to see in your extracurricular activities is:

- Consistency
- Time commitment/management
- Leadership
- Willingness to engage

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF HIGH SCHOOL

Admission decisions by colleges are contingent upon successful completion of senior year. *You must maintain your GPA and continue to challenge yourself through graduation in May.* When admission decisions are made, they take your senior year courses into consideration. Making changes can lead to your admission being rescinded...so plan your senior schedule wisely!

COLLEGE

Entrance Exams: SAT vs. ACT (4-year colleges)

The **ACT** and the **SAT** tests attempt to measure college readiness and predict future academic success. Most 4-year colleges and universities accept both tests equally, so the choice is yours to make!

	SAT	ACT
What it is	An aptitude test measuring reasoning and verbal abilities	An achievement test measuring what a student learned
Why Take it	Scores used for college admissions and merit-based scholarships	
Test Structure	Reading, Writing & Language, Math	English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, Essay (optional)
Length	3 hours	2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay) 3 hours, 30 minutes (with essay)
Reading	5 passages	4 passages
Science	None	1 section testing your critical thinking skills (not your science knowledge)
Math	Covers Algebra, Advanced Math, Problem-solving & Data Analysis, Geometry & Trig	Covers Number & Quantity, Algebra, Functions, Geometry, Stats & Probability
Calculator Policy	You can use a calculator on all math questions	You can use a calculator on all math questions
Essays (Optional)	Will test your comprehension of a source text	Will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues
Scored	On a scale of 400-1600	On a scale of 1-36
Register/ Fees*	www.collegeboard.org $68	www.actstudent.org $70 (without essay), $93 (with essay)

SAT vs. ACT	
1600	36
1560	35
1510	34
1460	33
1420	32
1380	30
1340	29
1300	28
1260	27
1220	25
1190	24
1150	23
1110	22
1070	21
1030	20
990	19
950	17
910	16
870	15
830	15
790	14
740	13
690	12

SAT Test Dates	Registration Deadline	Late Registration	ACT Test Dates	Registration Deadline	Late Registration
Aug 22, 2026	Aug 7, 2026	Aug 11, 2026	**Sep 19, 2026**	Aug 14, 2026	Sep 1, 2026
Sep 12, 2026	Aug 28, 2026	Sep 1, 2026	**Oct 17, 2026**	Sep 11, 2026	Sep 29, 2026
Oct 3, 2026	Sep 18, 2026	Sep 22, 2026	**Dec 12, 2026**	Nov 6, 2026	Nov 29, 2026
Nov 7, 2026	Oct 23, 2026	Oct 27, 2026	**Feb 27, 2027**	Jan 22, 2027	Feb 9, 2027
Dec 5, 2026	Nov 20, 2026	Nov 24, 2026	**Apr 10, 2027**	Mar 5, 2027	Mar 23, 2027
Mar 6, 2027	Feb 19, 2027	Feb 23, 2027	**June 12, 2027**	May 7, 2027	May 25, 2027
May 1, 2027	Apr 16, 2027	Apr 20, 2027	**Jul 10, 2027**	June 4, 2027	June 22, 2027
June 5, 2027	May 21, 2027	May 25, 2027			

****Do you qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch at school?***
If so, ask your counselor about ACT, SAT, and college application fee waivers.

NO MATTER WHICH ONE YOU TAKE…

- Plan to test at least twice - maybe three - times!
- When choosing test dates, consider college application deadlines - Is there enough time to get scores back?

SCORE REPORTS

When you register to take either the SAT or ACT, you are allowed **4 free score reports** (for a limited amount of time). Make sure you take advantage of this opportunity or you will have to pay an additional fee to send your scores to schools.

Assessment Exam: TSI (2-year colleges)

The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment is designed to help 2-year colleges determine if you are ready for college level course work in the areas of reading/writing, essay and mathematics. **Test scores are used to place students in appropriate courses and not to deny admission*.** All students must have TSI scores on file prior to registration at a junior college. Test early so you'll have time to meet with a college advisor before course registration.

	TSI
What it is	An assessment to determine your readiness for college level work
Why Take it	Scores used for college admission and placement in appropriate courses
Test Structure	Reading/Writing (multiple choice), Essay, Math
Length	Average time to complete all 3 sections is 3-5 hours
Reading	4-5 passages
Science	None
Math	Covers Elementary and Intermediate Algebra, Geometry and Measurement, Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability
Calculator Policy	Personal handheld calculators are not allowed. Instead, a built-in, pop-up calculator is automatically provided on screen for specific questions during the math section of the test.
Essays	A five-paragraph persuasive essay (300-600 words) on a controversial issue or current interest
Scored*	Math: 950 or Diagnostic Score of 6 Reading/Writing (multiple choice): 945 or Diagnostic Score of 5 Essay: 5
Registration Information/ Fees	*Through Pearland ISD, please visit the TCCHS website:* $39 (all subject areas); $15 (individual subject area) *Through Alvin Community College:* https://www.alvincollege.edu/admissions/testing/tsi.html $30 (all subject areas – Online Only (TSIA2); $15 (individual subject area) *If student opt to test online using measure learning, there will be an additional fee.

MANDATORY Pre-Assessment Activity

You are REQUIRED to complete the Pre-Assessment Activity (PAA) before you can take the TSI. You can find a link to the PAA on our school website.

You will not be allowed to take the TSI assessment until you have completed this activity.

TESTING EXEMPTIONS

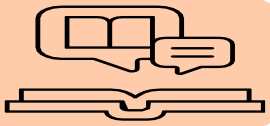
- Have already scored 23 or higher on ACT (composite), and earned individual scores of 19 or higher on English and math tests; or
- Earned 480 or higher on SAT Reading/Writing test; SAT Math score must be 530 or higher

**If you do not pass one or all parts of the TSI assessment (reading/writing and math), you may be required to enroll in developmental education coursework or accelerated intervention classes before you can enroll in a college credit course for the subject in which you did not pass. You may retake any or all parts of the TSI at any time to determine your college readiness.*

7 STEPS TO ENROLL WITH ALVIN COLLEGE

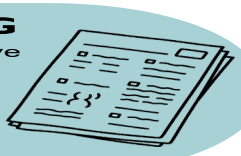
01.APPLY TO ALVIN COLLEGE

Complete the Online Application at the Apply Texas website. (Chrome is recommended.)



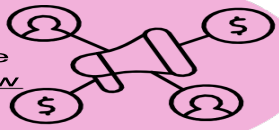
02.COMPLETE PLACEMENT TESTING

Submit qualifying SAT or ACT scores for Texas Success Initiative (TSI) exemptions. Students need to submit qualifying scores through College Board or ACT. Reports should be sent to admissions@alvincollege.edu.
If you need TSIA2 placement testing, the TSI Pre-Assessment Activity (PAA) is required prior to testing.



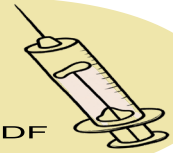
03.APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

All students are encouraged to submit FAFSA regardless of financial status. Having a FAFSA on file helps to satisfy scholarship requirements also. Review Financial Aid Steps. For assistance, email FA@alvincollege.edu



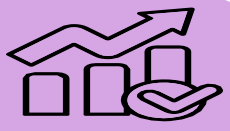
04.SATISFY BACTERIAL MENINGITIS VACCINATION

Scan and email proof of vaccination to welcome@alvincollege.edu
Note: Immunization records sent via email should be sent in PDF format. Please do NOT send in an actual photo.



05.COMPLETE NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION & TITLE IX TRAINING

New Student Orientation is required for first-time college students and must be completed prior to registration.



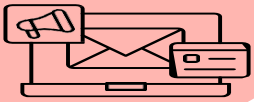
06.MEET WITH YOUR PATHWAYS ADVISOR

Before scheduling an appointment with your Pathways Advisor, please make sure you have completed all of the steps for admissions.



07.APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Once you have an ACCess ID and student email, you can then log in to apply for scholarships using the following link:
https://alvincollege.academicworks.com/opportunities



DON'T FORGET TO GET CONNECTED!

Activate your POD account, explore Accessibility and Counseling Services, get academic support through the Learning Lab & Tutoring, and make the most of Student Life and the Student Center. Your success starts with staying connected!



CONTINUING WITH ALVIN COLLEGE?

JUST A FEW STEPS TO BE FULLY ADMITTED!

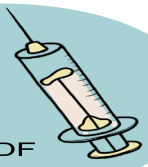
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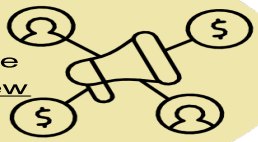
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04.APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

All students are encouraged to submit FAFSA regardless of financial status. Having a FAFSA on file helps to satisfy scholarship requirements also. Review Financial Aid Steps. For assistance, email FA@alvincollege.edu



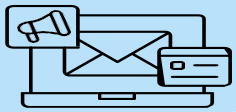
05.MEET WITH YOUR PATHWAYS ADVISOR

Before scheduling an appointment with your Pathways Advisor, please make sure you have completed all of the steps for admissions.



06.APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Once you have an ACCess ID and student email, you can then log in to apply for scholarships using the following link: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.



DON'T FORGET TO GET CONNECTED!

Activate your POD account, explore Accessibility and Counseling Services, get academic support through the Learning Lab & Tutoring, and make the most of Student Life and the Student Center. Your success starts with staying connected!



Accessibility and Counseling Services

Learning Lab & Tutoring

Student Life

Building Your High School Resume

A high school (or academic) résumé is required by most colleges and will help you highlight the accomplishments that don't show up on your high school transcript. It's also another document to share with people writing letters of recommendation for you. Besides that, you'll need it when applying for jobs. Creating your résumé may seem scary, but really it's just a matter of compiling all of your activities from your high school years in a logical order.

Suggested Sections to Include

- Heading – your name, address, phone number and professional email address
- Academic profile – your school name, GPA, class rank, and standardized test scores
- Academic honors and awards
- Work experience (if any)
- Volunteer activities
- Specialized coursework
- Specialized skills (languages, programming, etc.)
- Summer programs (internships, college enrichment, athletic camps, etc.)

CONSIDER THESE TIPS

- Be honest.
- Do not use the word "I"
- Do not include school contact information, mission statement, or other information about your high school. The résumé is about you.
- Do not use abbreviations. Assume that your reader will NOT know what your acronyms stand for and spell them out.
- Do not use multiple fonts and styles. Stay consistent in style and font to make it easier to read. It will also look more cohesive and professional rather than a cut and paste, slapped-together document.
- Do not lose your focus by jumping around from date to date and back again. Organize your information in sections and dates to show continual involvement and growth. Emphasize your *most significant* achievements. Put your "best stuff" first in each section.

- Do not submit your first draft. Remember that this résumé is a reflection of you. Edit, revise, rewrite and seek advice from teachers about how to make a great impression through this document.
- Do not write a novel; keep the information brief and concise. Expanding on personal experiences is best saved for your essays. Also, it's better to emphasize a few areas of major importance than a long list of insignificant activities.
- Middle school does not need to be included. Colleges are interested in your accomplishments during high school. The only exception to this rule would be activities of long-standing involvement such as martial arts, girl/boy scouts, etc. that you have consistently participated in over a long period of time.
- Think about leadership positions, service projects, and other activities you have done where you gained valuable skills. Most students simply describe what anyone in their position did, as opposed to exactly what they accomplished. Be specific, offering examples when appropriate.

Example:

President, *Student Council*
Increased meeting attendance by 25% by overhauling content and format as president of student council. Created the first-ever "After Hours" Prom party that decreased accidents by 30%. Organized a faculty-student basketball game attended by 450 students.

Still unsure of where to start? Google High School Academic Résumés to review some samples.

High School/ Academic Résumé is a general list of activities, events, facts and figures; one page in length; submitted with application

Senior Profile provides deeper insight about you as a person through short answer questions; multiple pages; only for your recommenders

Both Documents
- Highlight your accomplishments and activities
- Are shared with people writing letters of recommendation for you

Senior Timeline

GENERAL REMINDERS

- Listen to the announcements for information about college recruiting visits and other important news for seniors
- Monitor your grades through Skyward regularly; take action if you don't like what you see!
- Communicate with teachers and attend tutorials when you need extra help in class
- Check the THS Counseling Center webpage frequently for college, military and employment updates

AUGUST

- ☐ Meet with counselor to review remaining credits
- ☐ Take August SAT/ACT and TSI if necessary
- ☐ Request fee waivers for SAT/ACT if eligible
- ☐ Start the rough draft of college application essay
- ☐ Sign up for Scholarships https://tcchs.pearlandisd.org/our-school/counselors/scholarships

SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Establish a *professional* email account
- ☐ Narrow your college list (3-5 schools)
- ☐ Ask personally for Letters of Recommendation
- ☐ Create account(s) on college application website(s) *(see pg. 15 for details)*
- ☐ Submit request for official transcripts *(see pg. 16)*
- ☐ Take ACT if necessary

OCTOBER

- ☐ Complete FAFSA (Opens October 1st)
- ☐ Attend the PISD College Fair to explore colleges (October 1st 6:00pm – 8:00pm) at Friendswood High School)
- ☐ Free College Application Week (Oct. 12-18th)
- ☐ Finalize your college application essay
- ☐ Take the SAT/ACT tests if necessary
- ☐ Submit early decision/early action college applications

NOVEMBER

- ☐ Submit *at least* one college application by Thanksgiving
- ☐ Continue researching scholarship opportunities

DECEMBER

- ☐ Finalize and submit remaining college applications
- ☐ Complete scholarship applications
- ☐ Start Local Scholarship Packet https://tcchs.pearlandisd.org/our-school/counselors/scholarships

JANUARY

- ☐ Meet with your counselor to ensure you will graduate in May
- ☐ Submit Local Scholarship Packet https://tcchs.pearlandisd.org/our-school/counselors/scholarships
- ☐ Submit Mid-Year Report if required
- ☐ Take TSI (if you are not exempt and plan to attend a community college)
- ☐ Take required tests to meet licensing/certification requirements for apprenticeships.

FEBRUARY/MARCH

- ☐ Stay involved in extracurricular activities

APRIL

☐ Write thank you notes to anyone who helped you in the college admissions process

MAY

- ☐ Make your final decision!
- ☐ Notify schools you did not choose
- ☐ Request final transcript be sent to the university you have chosen to attend
- ☐ Determine if your college hosts a spring Open House for incoming freshmen
- ☐ Attend THS Senior Awards Program if you were notified to
- ☐ Verify your financial aid
- ☐ Send your deposit to the university you selected
- ☐ Graduate!

SUMMER

- ☐ Attend your college summer/freshman orientation
- ☐ Research student organizations to join

Note: In order to be eligible for federal financial aid (student loans and/or grants), male students (18 or older) must register for the Selective Service

Writing a Great Essay

The college essay matters!

It reveals something important about you that your grades and test scores can't – your personality. It can give admissions officers a sense of who you are, as well as showcase your writing skills. Try these tips to craft a great college essay.

GET STARTED BY BRAINSTORMING
Starting the essay can be the hardest part. Brainstorming about your personality traits and defining your strengths is a good place to begin.

LET YOUR FIRST DRAFT FLOW
After you've gathered your notes, create an outline to organize your essay and decide where you want examples to appear. Then write your first draft. Don't worry about making it perfect. Just get your ideas flowing and your thoughts down on paper. You'll fix mistakes and improve the writing in later drafts.

DEVELOP THREE ESSAY PARTS
1. Introduction: One paragraph that introduces your essay
2. Body: Several paragraphs explaining the main idea with examples
3. Conclusion: One paragraph that summarizes and ends the essay

BE SPECIFIC
Give your essay focus by figuring out how the question relates to your personal qualities and then taking a specific angle. Make sure everything you write supports that viewpoint.

FIND A CREATIVE ANGLE
Beau, a college freshman, had to describe why he would make a good student at Texas State University. "I am a huge fan of southwestern writers and Texas State is home to many of them," he says. "So I related my connection with western fiction to why I would be a great fit for the school."

BE HONEST
The essay question might ask you about your best quality, an experience that shaped you or the reason you want to attend a certain college. Don't be tempted to write what you think the admissions officers want to hear; answer the question honestly. They CAN tell the difference.

GET FEEDBACK
Show your draft to family, friends or teachers. Ask if it makes sense and sounds like you. Consider their feedback and make changes, but keep your voice - figuratively and literally. At some point read your essay out loud. If something feels or sounds awkward, it needs to be fixed!

PROOFREAD AND MAKE CORRECTIONS
Read your essay over carefully to check for typos and spelling and grammar errors. It's best to ask someone who hasn't seen it yet to take a look as well. They're likely to see mistakes you won't catch.

More Researching & Finally…Applying!

"I still don't know where I want to apply

No problem! Here are some ways to learn more about what's out there waiting for you…

Spend Lunch with College Representatives

Turner College & Career High School works diligently to expose students to universities across the state. On occasion, we will host college admissions representatives during both lunch periods to answer questions about campus life and academics. Students are highly encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities. (See pg. 19 so you know what questions to ask.)

Want to see a particular school visit our campus? Talk to you Counselor. We'll see what we can do!

How Do I Know When Colleges are Visiting TCCHS?

- *Read the scrolling announcements during passing periods and lunches*
- *Listen to announcements*

Visit a National College Fair

- *Access the www.gotocollegefairs.com website*
- *Click the "Students Register Now" button*
- *Select the state where you'll attend the fair*
- *Choose the specific fair you'll attend*
- *Complete required fields and submit*
- *Print out barcode and bring it to fair – colleges you're interested in will scan it to get your contact information*

Don't forget to write the date of the college fair in your planner or set a reminder in your phone!

Attend Area College Fairs

Pearland ISD hosts a district-wide college fair each year in the fall at one of the area high schools (location alternates from year-to-year between Turner, Dawson, Pearland or Friendswood HS). Students of all ages and parents are encouraged to attend to learn about the various college opportunities available to them, and build relationships with college representatives. Information regarding financial aid is also available at this event.

Many other national college fairs are also hosted in the Houston area throughout the year. Go to www.gotocollegefairs.com to find one near you!

Pay a Quick Visit to Local College Campuses

The Houston area is home to 100-plus colleges, community colleges, technical and trade schools, including 14 major institutes of higher learning. Even if you are hoping to attend a university outside of Houston, visiting a local campus is an easy way to gain a better understanding of the basics of college. You can learn a lot about the different college options (i.e., which size school is the best fit for you) just by driving around campuses.

"I know where I want to apply to"

Awesome! Let's get started. The process isn't hard, but it can be long. Getting started earlier is better so you'll be prepared long before any deadlines.

Application Options

The two applications listed below are important ones to know because most 4-year colleges/universities in Texas accept them. *However, there are always exceptions. Be sure to check specific college websites for other and additional application requirements.*

APPLY TEXAS

Apply Texas will help you apply for admission to any Texas public university, as well as participating community and private colleges. On this centralized site, you will also be able to submit application essays, apply for scholarships from participating universities, and search for general and university specific information. BONUS: You can also copy a submitted application to another institution, so you don't have to repeat the process.

1. Go to www.applytexas.org website.
2. Use the "Sample Application" as a preview.
3. Get started - be sure to READ EACH SECTION carefully!

COMMON APPLICATION

This application is used by almost 700 colleges and universities across the country, including public, private, large, small, secular, and religious schools. Colleges request a large amount of information from applicants; the Common Application *(Common App*) simplifies the process by collecting much of that information all in one place.

1. Go to www.commonapp.org and click on "Members" to find out which schools utilize this application and to familiarize yourself with the application.
2. When you're ready, create an account, add schools to your list and start your application.

Information you'll need to complete ANY application

- ☐ High school transcript *(request instructions on pg. 16)*
- ☐ A list of your extracurricular activities both inside and outside of school (i.e. academic résumé)
- ☐ Test scores and test dates from your college entrance exams
- ☐ Parent/legal guardian information (educational background, occupational information, employer information, etc.)

What is the difference between *Apply Texas* and *Common App*?
The one main difference between the two applications is which schools use them. Of course, this is a huge difference, but apart from this, the sets of applications are pretty similar in terms of required documents. One catch is that since *Apply Texas* is a different system than *Common App*, if you plan on applying to both Texas schools and other schools, you'll have to submit both an *Apply Texas* and a *Common App* application, along with letters of recommendation, test scores, and transcripts to both.

Which schools use *Apply Texas*?
Most schools located in Texas, public or private, use *Apply Texas*, but Rice University is a notable exception, as it uses the *Common App*.

Strategies for Success

Applying to college is a big job, but you can make it easier by breaking it down into a series of small steps. While the paperwork itself will require careful management, the creative energy that must be given to develop compelling information about yourself can be all-consuming. But don't fret. Your counselor is here to help!

During the first weeks of your senior year, counselors will meet with you to answer questions you may have about the application process. We'll also review the important information you must collect, like your high school transcript and letters of recommendation. *(Parents – We'll host a parent night to share the same information with you.)*

Until then, **you need to spend your time getting organized, finalizing your list of college choices** (3-5 is ideal and won't break the bank in application fees!), **and making note of important application deadlines** – from the college and high school side. Colleges rarely make exceptions for late applications, and the Registrar requires 48 hours to process your transcript request.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Complete your own application. You are the one applying to college. (But ask someone to proofread your application before hitting the 'submit' button!)
- Fill out the application completely; do not leave questions blank.
- Avoid missing important due dates by making a list of schools and their deadlines. *(See pg. 17 for help with this.)* Set an alert on your phone to remind you about approaching important dates!
- Use a professional or appropriate email address. Colleges will notice ImtheGOAT@yahoo.com ...but for all the wrong reasons.
- Save, save, save. Sure, online applications often auto-save when you move on to another page, but that isn't something you should count on. Hit the 'save' button every time you add information.
- Don't forget to have your test scores sent directly from ACT/SAT.
- Avoid abbreviations (like info. for information or NHS for National Honor Society). Your application should sound like you – but a professional version of yourself.
- Always 'print preview' your application before submitting. You'll see what the colleges will see (and what needs to be fixed)!
- Remember to write a thank you note afterward to those individuals who wrote letters of recommendation on your behalf. A little kindness goes a long way!

Confused? Questions?
Stop by the Counseling Suite and we will help!

REQUESTING OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS

To have a transcript sent to the college or training program you're applying to, you will need to fill out the online request form https://tcchs.pearlandisd.org/our-school-turner/registrar-s-office/transcript-requests. **Must be turned into the Registrar's office (1526) before requests will be processed.** Remember, the Registrar requires 48 hours to process your transcript request so plan accordingly!

In a nutshell, here's how you apply for college:

- ☐ Take college entrance exam (SAT, ACT, TSI); ensure scores are sent to school directly from testing company.
- ☐ Submit request for official high school transcript - will be uploaded directly to your college application.
- ☐ Ask early for letters of recommendation *(Advice on whom to ask on pg. 20)*.
- ☐ Complete the application and submit to university/college; pay any application fees.
- ☐ Meet all deadlines; the college application process makes exceptions for no one!

Organizing Your Top Choices

Narrow your DREAM/MATCH/SAFE list down to 3-5 colleges. List the important details of the admission requirements for your top choices here.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

College Name			
Website			
Deadline to Apply*			
Average GPA			
Average ACT Score			
Average SAT Score			

**Deadlines may differ depending on the Admissions Plan you choose. Pay attention to all dates!*

Admissions Plans

Early Decision - An admission decision is made as early as December of senior year. There's a catch! An early decision plan is *binding*—if you're accepted, you agree to attend the college & withdraw all other applications.

Early Action - Admission decisions are made earlier than a regular application due date, but are non-binding.

Rolling Admissions - Admission decisions are made as applications are received instead of waiting until after a particular deadline.

Regular Admissions - No admission decisions are made until after the set deadline.

Once you've decided which college(s) to apply to, use this chart to keep track of important dates in the application process.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

College Name			
Submit application			
Pay application fee†			
Submit test scores			
Request official transcript			
Counselor recommendation††			
Teacher recommendation††			

†Not every college requires an application fee *††Not every college requires recommendations*

Official Campus Visits

Being on a college campus, even for a few hours, can tell you a lot about the college and how well you might fit in at that institution. Below are some tips for how to get the most out of visiting college campuses.

PLAN AHEAD

- While it is tempting to visit only the most prestigious schools on your list, you should make sure you visit colleges that are within the realm of possibility for you.
- Good times to visit:
  - Any school breaks you may have during 11th and 12th grade
  - Summer before senior year – remember that campuses may not seem lively over the summer because the student body is not there. Try not to let this sway your opinion.
- Visit the admissions office website to look at different opportunities for prospective students.

WHILE YOU'RE THERE

- Campus Tours/Information Sessions – Take in the scenery on a tour while you gather important campus-specific information.
- Class Visits/Overnight Visits – Check with the admissions office to see if you can sit in on a class or two, or even stay overnight in the dorm with a student host. Great way to experience what college life is all about!
- Meetings with College Staff – Learn more about your major, the school's academic expectations and even talk money. Set up a meeting with someone in the specific academic department, a professor or even the financial aid office to get your questions answered. Make arrangements in advance.

OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

- **Don't be overly influenced by your tour guide.** These students love their college and are trained by the admissions office to be honest, but to say positive things about the school. Their view may not be the most objective.
- **Pay close attention and ask questions of the tour guide.** Why did you choose College X? What do you like best about the college? What do you like least? What courses have you enjoyed the most and why? What are the big issues on campus right now?
- **Things to consider and observe while you are on tour:** The appearance of the campus; student dress – casual or sophisticated; friendliness of the community; hot topics – pick up a student newspaper to see what's happening on campus; how are students getting around campus; library; residential options; amenities; access to computers; food.
- **Dress neatly.** Do not wear tattered jeans, cut-offs, tank tops or sweatshirts – you will look irresponsible. WEAR COMFORTABLE SHOES. You walk a lot when you visit a college campus.
- **Scan the bulletin boards around campus.** Bulletin boards show what is really happening on campus on a daily basis. Everything will be there – plays, parties, where to buy used textbooks, etc. They'll also indicate what the students do on the weekends.
- **Take notes or keep a notebook**. Since you will probably visit many campuses, it's easy to forget the good and bad points of each, particularly if it comes down to a choice between two alternatives. *(Keep reading for a list of suggested questions and a place to write your notes.)*
- **Notice these off-campus options while visiting**: Grocery stores, on and off campus medical/health facilities, nearest mall, movie theatre, restaurants, religious institutions and public transportation.

Questions to Ask Campus Representatives

Whether you meet them at a college fair or on a campus visit, college representatives genuinely enjoy talking to high school students and answering questions about their college. The following questions will get you thinking.

College: _____

City, State: _____

CAMPUS	
What makes your college unique?	NOTES:
What are the housing options for freshmen? *(Where you live affects how much college will cost.)* Is housing guaranteed?	
What activities and services do you have specifically for freshmen to help with the transition into college?	
What's the security like on campus?	
Are there opportunities for internships?	
Is there job placement help for graduates?	

ACADEMIC	
What academic programs are most popular on your campus?	NOTES:
Does your school give credit for AP tests and/or dual credit courses?	
Will this school accept transfer credits if I start out at a 2-year community or technical college?	
How would you describe the academic pressure and workload on your campus?	

SOCIAL LIFE	
Are fraternities and sororities a big part of campus life?	NOTES:
What's the surrounding area like? Is it easy to get around?	
What types of extracurricular activities does your college offer?	
What do students do for fun? What do students do on the weekends?	

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS
On a scale of 1-10, this school scores: _____
OTHER THOUGHTS:

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are usually required when applying to colleges and/or scholarships. You will want to choose someone who knows you well and has time to write about who you are as a student and an individual.

Here are some tips for choosing and asking people to write letters of recommendation:

ASK SOMEONE WHO KNOWS YOU WELL

Along with your college essay, your letters of recommendation should help **personalize your application and tell a story about who you are** as a student and person. A good recommendation letter can speak to your academic potential, character traits, and personality, as well as about how you've connected with others in the school community over the past few years. For these reasons, you should choose someone who knows you well and can give specific anecdotes about you.

ASK EARLY

Don't wait until the last minute. Many teachers are flooded with requests when school starts and requests increase as admissions deadlines loom closer. If you don't want a quickly authored letter, then you need to ask early – a good rule of thumb is **at least 2 weeks in advance**. (Some teachers may need more time; check with them personally!) This gives your recommender plenty of time to reflect on your accomplishments and compose a letter that shows you in the best possible light. A gentle reminder to your recommender just prior to the deadline is also appropriate if needed.

> I really enjoyed your class. I've learned a lot from you and feel like you've gotten to know me well. I'm applying to College X and would be really flattered if you could write me a strong letter of recommendation for my application(s).
>
> – Confident Senior requesting a letter

ASK PERSONALLY

You should ask for your letter of recommendation face to face. Requesting this important letter solely over email could be interpreted as impersonal, distant, and less mature; an impression you don't want to make in the mind of a recommender. Also be mindful of the right time to ask. **Find time during a free period, after school, or whenever the teacher has time to meet**, *not during class***.** While it can feel scary and vulnerable to ask a teacher for this favor, remember that teachers expect this**.** Phrasing your request simply and directly is the best.

PROVIDE ALL NECESSARY MATERIALS AND INFORMATION

Be sure to bring your **academic résumé and completed senior profile** (p. 21 and online). These documents will help your teacher add further dimension to your recommendation, as well as help differentiate you from other students they're writing about. Perhaps more importantly, your teachers also need to know the **logistics for your letters**. When are your college deadlines? How do they submit the letter of rec? Typically, writers upload their recommendations through the application systems, but you'll want to make sure that's what's best in your case.

WAIVE YOUR RIGHT TO READ THE LETTER

Federal law grants you access to your letters of recommendation, but many forms ask you to waive the right to read the letters. It is highly recommended that you do this, thereby allowing your recommender to be candid about who you are. Studies have shown that **confidential letters carry far more weight** with admissions committees. If you fear the letter writer might not do justice to your achievements or might include negative information — well, that's a good sign you should not be asking that person for a letter of recommendation.

SAY THANK YOU

Be sure to follow up with anyone who helped you out with the college admissions process, especially those who wrote letters of recommendation. A **personal thank-you note, or kind gesture** can be a nice way to show gratitude for teachers and others who took the time to write about why you should be accepted into college. Plus, your teachers will want to know the outcome so this could be a fun way to share your final decision with them.

TURNER COLLEGE & CAREER HIGH SCHOOL
SENIOR PROFILE PAGE

*Use this form as a **rough draft**.* Then, go to our TCCHS Counselor webpage > Class Information, and download the electronic version. Type your answers into the form and save it on your computer. You'll want to **share the typed document (and your high school résumé)** with anyone writing a letter of recommendation for you.

Student Name:	ID#	
Your Email:	Your Phone #:	
Current GPA:	Current Class Rank:	
Highest SAT (if taken):	Highest ACT (if taken):	
Are you a Dual Degree Candidate?	Yes ☐	No ☐

List ALL known deadlines: (Colleges, scholarships, internships, etc.)
What are you most proud of?
Besides your grades/academics, what else are you known for or want to be known for? What are your personal strengths?
In which areas have you noticed the most growth since you have been in high school?
What has been your favorite subject? Why?
If you have completed an internship, volunteered or worked, what did you gain from this experience?
What has been your greatest academic or personal challenge? How did you overcome the problem?
What is your passion or hobby? What role might it play in your future?

What college majors are you considering? Why?
What do you feel is the ideal college environment for you? (Size, location, social climate, quality of life, etc.) Why?
What are your current career goals? What do you hope to accomplish?
In reviewing your transcript, have there been any extenuating circumstances that may have affected your grades or school performance?
Do you have words you live by, a personal motto or quote that means a lot to you? Explain its meaning to you. *(If not, leave blank.)*

Choose 2-4 traits/adjectives in which you excel. These traits are your most distinguishing or admirable qualities. Write a few sentences giving examples of how you exhibit that particular trait.

Examples: Intelligent, competitive, self-confident, responsible, creative, humble, organized, resilient, has initiative, commitment to service, ability to handle conflict, leader, strong vocational skills, imagination, goal achievement, flexible, strong interpersonal skills. YOU CAN ADD OTHER TRAITS or ADJECTIVES.	
Trait 1:	Trait 3:
Example:	Example:
Trait 2:	Trait 4:
Example:	Example:
<u>Self-Summary:</u> What do you think makes you stand out from your peers? Why should a college/university select you to be in their freshman class? Think about your potential regarding academic and personal qualities (Character, maturity, integrity, values, special talents, etc.)	

Introduction to Scholarships

Scholarships are the most talked about form of financial aid. Colleges often provide the most financial support, but scholarships can also be awarded on the local, state and national levels.

LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Local scholarship providers like to see people from their community succeed so they offer financial rewards only to residents of a particular geographic region. Since the number of students who qualify is limited based on location, the chances of winning local scholarships are often greater than winning those at the national level. This can make local scholarships an attractive and easy option for funding your education.

A complete list of local scholarships will be published in December on the TCCHS Counselor's website.
Packets include detailed information about each scholarship, instructions for applying and important deadlines. **Students should evaluate their academic credentials, talents, and school and community involvement carefully to determine which scholarships to apply for.** In order to be considered for local scholarships, students must meet all eligibility requirements and posted deadlines.

Scholarship recipients will be announced in the spring at the TCCHS Senior Awards Program.

State Scholarships

Almost every state has a scholarship program for residents; awards are usually limited to students who will attend college in that same state.

National Scholarships

There are lots of national scholarships to choose from – whether you were raised by a single mom, have strong religious convictions, a passion for thinking "green" or love to dance, chances are there is at least one scholarship out there for you! – but all are open to people across the country, so expect lots of competition.

College Scholarships

Scholarships given by colleges are the most common form of financial aid. Check out a college's website, catalog and financial aid materials for information on the available scholarships. Awards can be offered on a university-wide basis or within a particular college or major.

Need help searching for national and state scholarships? Visit the TCCHS Counselor webpage > Scholarships tab at https://tcchs.pearlandisd.org/our-school-turner/counselors/scholarships

Common Categories of Scholarships

Academic Scholarships – Eligibility criteria is usually based on grade point average, class rank, and test scores. In addition, scholarship committees often look for involvement in school, community, and volunteer activities.

Athletic Scholarships – Outstanding athletes are often offered large scholarships but there are a limited number of these scholarships and competition is very tough.

Talent Scholarships (music, drama, art, dance, etc.) – In order to receive this type of scholarship, the student needs to be truly outstanding because like athletics, competition is tough.

Minority Scholarships – Many colleges offer these scholarships in order to attract qualified minority students to their campuses. Interested students should ask colleges they are considering for information about campus scholarships in this area.

Financial Aid: The Basics

The majority of financial aid is based on demonstrated financial need. Financial aid is awarded by the college you choose to attend, and may include a combination of the following:

Scholarships and Grants – Money that does not have to be repaid *(Note: not all scholarships/grants are created equal. Some are given as a "one-time" gift, while others are renewable if students meet certain criteria.)*

Loans – Money that can be borrowed by students and/or parents *(Note: not all loans are created equal. Some loans are subsidized by federal or state programs, which can reduce the interest rate and/or defer payments for a length of time (Compare the total costs of each loan.)*

Work-Study – School-based job or work as a type of financial aid *(Note: not all work-study is created equal. A job in the food service may pay the same as assisting in a laboratory, but students should consider that work on campus could provide career-related experiences.)*

Other – Additional opportunities to supplement educational finances; for example, participation in the military, ROTC, AmeriCorps, and other programs can provide funds or forgiveness of educational loans. *(Note: Many of these "other" sources will provide financial assistance… but there could be obligations. It is always important to read the fine print!)*

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

All colleges and universities require that you file the FAFSA in order to be considered for financial aid. Students planning to enroll in college for Fall 2026 should fill out the 2026-2027 School Year Application. You can begin filing your FAFSA after October 1. Each college and university has a different deadline, so contact the school to find out their exact date. The FAFSA can be found by visiting www.studentaid.gov.

Before Beginning your FAFSA

- Gather the documents you need. Start with your Social Security number, driver's license, and your parents' income tax return, bank statements and investment records.
- Print a FAFSA on the Web worksheet. Write in your answers and gather your parent(s) information then transfer the data to FAFSA on the Web.
- Note important deadlines.

Want to learn more about FAFSA before applying? Go to www.studentaid.gov.

Counselors at Turner College & Career High School will be hosting an informational night for parents in the fall about FAFSA and the financial aid process. Please be sure to check the TCCHS website and Counselor webpage at the beginning of the school year for meeting details.

Military Service Information

The Military is comprised of 12 branches: five Active Duty and seven part-time duty.

	SERVICE	OFFICIAL SERVICE WEBSITE	PHONE NUMBER
ACTIVE DUTY (Full Time)	Army	www.goarmy.com	800-550-ARMY
	Marine Corps	www.marines.com	800-MARINES
	Navy	www.navy.com	800-USA-NAVY
	Air Force	www.airforce.com	800-423-USAF
	Coast Guard	www.gocoastguard.com	800-424-8883
RESERVE/ NATIONAL GUARD (Part Time)	Army Reserve Army National Guard	www.goarmy.com/reserve www.nationalguard.com	888-550-ARMY 800-GO-GUARD
	Marine Corps Reserve	www.marines.com	800-255-5082
	Navy Reserve	www.navy.com	800-USA-USNR
	Air Force Reserve Air National Guard	www.afreserve.com www.goANG.com	800-257-1212 800-TO-GO-ANG
	Coast Guard Reserve	www.gocoastguard.com	Local recruiting office

TYPES OF MILITARY SERVICE

Active Duty (Full Time) – As the most time-intensive service commitment, Active Duty is similar to working at a full-time civilian job. After attending boot camp, you will be stationed at a base either domestically or overseas. Active-duty terms typically last two to six years.

Reserve (Part Time) – Reservists are part-time service members, allowing them time to pursue a civilian career or college education while also serving their country. Members of the Reserve attend boot camp and are required to participate in training drills one weekend a month and a two-week program in the summer.

National Guard (Part Time) – The National Guard consists of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. Its main focus is on homeland security and humanitarian relief. In addition to training drills one weekend a month and two weeks per year, these units assist communities in their state during emergencies like storms, floods, fires and other natural disasters.

GENERAL ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Age - Each branch of the Service has different requirements. Minimum entrance-age requirements are 17 with parental consent or 18 without parental consent. Keep in mind almost all male U.S. citizens, and male aliens living in the U.S., who are 18 through 25, are required to register with the Selective Service.

Physical - Because of the varying physical demands on service members in each branch, physical requirements vary greatly. These differences can vary even within each branch of the Service. Generally speaking, potential service members should be in good physical condition, of appropriate weight and able to pass a standard physical screening prior to entry. For more specific information, please contact a recruiter.

Educational - Success in any branch of the military depends on a good education, and a high school diploma is most desirable. It is very difficult to be considered a serious candidate without either a high school diploma or accepted alternative credential. In any case, staying in school is important for entering the military.

Citizenship - U.S. citizens or Permanent Resident Aliens (people who have an INS I-151/I-551 "Green Card") may join the U.S. Military. Properly documented non-citizens may enlist. However, opportunities may be limited. Contact a recruiter for more advice on a specific situation.

Things to Know Before Joining the Military

Every year, thousands of Americans consider serving in the military. You can make the military a very rewarding growth experience if you prepare yourself before joining. Here are ten things you need to understand and consider while you prepare to meet with a recruiter:

Identify Your Motivation

Before you start this process, ask yourself: Why do I want to join the military? If you have a hard time answering this question, then you need to do some more research. Your motivation to serve in the military should be a calling to join a profession that's greater than you and offers invaluable experiences and skills. Joining just because you have nothing better to do can lead to a miserable experience.

Build a Strong Fitness Foundation

Because of the varying physical demands on service members in each branch, physical requirements vary greatly. These differences can vary even within each branch of the Service. Generally speaking, potential service members should be in good physical condition, of appropriate weight and able to pass a standard physical screening prior to entry.

Determine Your Path

In the military, as in life, you may be asked to do things you know nothing about, but you'll have to figure it out. You may also have to do things without people telling you to do them. That is called taking initiative, and it's an important component of service in the military. Practice this skill now by researching the different branches of service and determine which one might be the best fit for you. With that information in mind, it's time to talk to a recruiter.

Find a Recruiter

It is a recruiter's job to address concerns and provide useful information to those interested in serving. Meeting with a recruiter can help you determine what and whether service is the right choice for you. See your TCCHS counselor for help locating a local office with recruiters from multiple service branches. Developing specific questions prior to the meeting is an excellent and recommended way to prepare.

Know Your Medical Records

It's important to know that some medical conditions can keep you out of the military. Most conditions do not result in permanent disqualification from active service, but they can be red flags. If you have had a medical complication at any time in your life, you need to tell your recruiter. S/he will file the proper paperwork for a medical waiver. *Not disclosing this information up front could result in being dishonorably discharged later for fraudulent enlistment.*

Military Entrance Exam: Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

The ASVAB is a timed multiple-aptitude test (subject areas include science, mathematics knowledge and reasoning, verbal composite, and electronics, automotive and mechanical information) that measures strengths, weaknesses and potential for future success. Scores can help you determine your career field or military occupation. The better the score, the more opportunities you have. Practice tests and study techniques are highly recommended and can be found online.

Expect to Gain Discipline

Life in the military will teach you valuable skills, traits and habits. First and foremost is discipline, which is much more than blind obedience and punishment. It involves placing group goals above your own, being willing to accept orders from higher authority, and carrying out those orders effectively. Before joining the military, acknowledge and address any issues you have dealing with authority for your best chance at success.

Be Prepared for Travel and Time Away

Travel is an expected part of active duty military life. Plan on being away from home and family while in training and during deployment; it's part of the job.

Stay Out of Trouble

Every person joining the military is subject to a background check, including your criminal records. Inform your recruiters of any issues or arrests you may have had in the past; you could be granted a waiver depending on the charges. There is no penalty for talking about your past, but an omission on your part may be detrimental to progressing further.

Continuing Education is Encouraged

The military offers a tremendous array of education benefits that can be used while you are on active duty or after you leave the service. From financial aid and college funds to programs that convert military training into college credit, continuing your education after high school is possible in the military.

Questions to Ask Recruiters

Whether you meet them at a recruiting office or on campus, military representatives genuinely enjoy talking to high school students and answering questions about their branch of service. The following questions will get you thinking.

Branch of Service: _____

Recruiter Name/Contact Info: _____

GENERAL QUESTIONS	
How is your service branch different from the others?	NOTES:
What is the recruiting process like from beginning to end?	
Why should I join this branch of service?	
Do you have any special incentives to join?	

BASIC TRAINING	
What really goes on in basic training?	NOTES:
What's the balance of classroom and physical training?	
What kind of condition do you need to be in at the start?	
What are the physical standards candidates have to meet?	
What are training and drill instructors like today?	
What percent of people who start basic training complete it?	
Can two friends got through basic training at the same time?	
Do women receive "military haircuts" too?	

THE FIRST TERM	
How long does the first term last?	NOTES:
Do I get to choose the military job I want? How are job assignments made?	
Can you describe a couple of jobs?	
Can a trainee choose to serve overseas?	
How much does a new recruit get paid?	
How often are service members promoted?	

EDUCATION	
What kind of training comes after basic training?	NOTES:
How good are your military job-training schools?	
What are all the ways a service member can earn college credits during enlistment?	
What are your tuition support programs? How do I qualify for them?	

Entering the Work Force

If you've made the decision to go right to work after graduation, congratulations! There are endless opportunities out there waiting for you. Here are some tips to consider as you prepare for and endure the interview process. Good luck!

- ☐ Decide **what type of work you would like to pursue** – for a closer look at job areas that are growing rapidly and have seen an increase in demand, go to www.mynextmove.org.
- ☐ Need more training? Visit these helpful websites *(box at right)* to learn more about **free and low-cost education and training programs**.
- ☐ **Find references** to include on your résumé. Make sure you ask permission to share personal contact information before listing a person as a reference.
- ☐ **Look** for job openings and internships on www.careerbuilder.com, **attend** area career and job fairs, and **search** want ads and websites like www.workintexas.com.
- ☐ Complete and submit applications. **Include a résumé** *(if you don't have one, see pg. 11 on how to build one).*
- ☐ Prepare for interviews by researching potential employers. Be prepared to **ask 3 questions** during the interview.
- ☐ Interview. Before the big day, **plan** what you'll wear, **arrive** early, be prepared to pay for parking (cash) and **bring** extra copies of your résumé. Don't leave the interview without asking about the next steps in the hiring process.

TRAINING PROGRAMS

www.jobcorps.gov

www.careeronestop.org

www.texasworks.com

INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP TIPS

- ☐ **Don't** harass your future employer with annoying questions ("Did I get the job?", "Did you make a decision?")
- ☐ **Do** check-in by calling within a week or ten days. **Do** continue to build rapport and sell your strengths during the phone call.
- ☐ **Don't** stop job hunting, even if you feel confident, you'll get the job offer.
- ☐ **Do** continue following-up especially if the employer asks you to, but…**don't** go overboard or bother the employer.
- ☐ **Do** use other job offers as leverage in your follow-up – to get the offer you really want.
- ☐ **Don't** place too much importance on one job or one interview; there will be other opportunities for you if your first one doesn't work out!

☐ Be sure to send **a handwritten thank you note or professional email** immediately after the interview. (Proofread for misspelled words or typos before sending.)

☐ If things drag out, **check in periodically.**

Social Media: Making it Work FOR You!

We live in a digital age and high school students today document much of their lives online. When applying to college, joining the military or entering the work force, all aspects of an applicant are taken into consideration; often times this can include your online presence.

As you put yourself out there in a professional way, you need to be careful about what you post. Decide if you need to clean up your social media accounts (including past and current posts and pictures).

Next, change the way you think about social media. Consider using your accounts to your advantage by highlighting your many strengths and accomplishments. Think about social media as your own personal ad space: How will you use your platform responsibly?

College Admissions Officers are searching…

- 27 % of college admissions officers said they had Googled prospective students
- 26 % had looked up applicants on Facebook
- 35 % said they found something that negatively impacted an applicant's chances of getting in

Here are some tips on how to make social media work for you:

- Follow the Grandparent Rule: "If you wouldn't want your grandparents to see it, don't post it."
- It might seem like admissions officers might be looking at your online profiles to find red flags. But what they really want is to get a better sense of your personality or put a face to a name. They know that your online presence is just an extension of yourself; make sure it's an accurate reflection of your character.
- Follow the schools to which you are applying in order to stay informed about campus events and any news that may be relevant to your application or admission decision. This is also a simple way to demonstrate your interest, and that interest quotient is taken into consideration when reading applications.
- Post photos from your community service projects, share relevant articles about news events you're following, and engage with people and organizations that interest you.
- Use Twitter to show how creative you can be in 140 characters or less. "Quick take" essays that range from a couple of words to one or two sentences are becoming more common on application supplements, and staying active on Twitter is a great way to practice.
- If you have a hobby or favorite past time (for example, photography or chess), use your Instagram account to display some of your work or competition. It's another outlet that often comes up in online searches and is a great tool to highlight your talents and interests on the web.
- If you keep a blog, use your social media profiles to promote it! It's a great way to gain exposure for your work and show admissions officers another example of your writing style.

Just because admissions officers are looking at your online profiles doesn't mean they're searching for red flags.

…Future Employers too!

- 37 % of employers said they used social media to screen applicants
- 65 % checked out applicants' Facebook profiles

Remember that social media outlets are tools to stay connected and informed; be careful not to let it become something that can be used against you. Stay smart online when going through the application process – use your social media to your advantage!

Thoughts, Notes, Ideas, Things to Do