

## I Want my Child to go to College Tips for the Senior Year

1. Make sure your child signs up for, pays, and takes either the SAT, the ACT, or both. Students receiving free/reduced lunch benefits receive one fee waiver for each of these tests. Please have your student visit with his/her counselor well before the application deadline to receive the fee waiver.
  - a. The SAT and ACT are given on Saturdays only, at schools across the area. Stevens High School is not currently a testing location, but the other schools in NISD are.
  - b. Students must register directly with the companies who sponsor the tests. Stevens provides registration bulletins and free practice guides, but does not take registration money. (Bulletins can be found in the GO Center.)
  - c. You may register on-line with a credit card payment. The addresses are [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) and [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).
2. Applications for colleges are also available on their web-sites. For those colleges who still use a paper application, a student can request one by going to his/her college's web-site. Students wanting to apply to a Texas Public 4-yr. University can apply at [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org). All colleges have application deadlines. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that the application, test scores, other paperwork, and any application fees arrive on time.
  - a. Students who receive an SAT waiver may also receive 2 college application fee waivers at the same time. Just ask your counselor.
3. If your child will be going away to college, make sure you know about housing. Many universities require that their freshmen live in dormitories, but not all. Housing applications often are separate from entrance applications. Some colleges will not allow your child to apply for housing until he/she is accepted, but others want the housing application even BEFORE the entrance deadline.
4. All students should submit a Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) unless their parents have set aside enough money to pay for college. This application cannot be submitted before January 1<sup>st</sup>, but should be completed as soon as possible thereafter. All forms of student financial aid are handled through the FAFSA including student loans, parent loans, and college work-study.
5. The FAFSA is available on-line at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Students and parents completing their FAFSA on-line must also have a Personal Identification Number (PIN). You and your child may create your PIN's at any time. Paper FAFSA's will be available in the GO Center as they are made available to us by the US Government.
6. Some private schools require the College Board PROFILE for financial aid in addition to the FAFSA. Some private schools have their own financial aid application in addition to the FAFSA. These are IN ADDITION to the FAFSA, not INSTEAD of the FAFSA.
7. You must designate which schools receive your FAFSA information.
8. If UTSA or one of our ACCD junior colleges is your child's "fall-back" school, they still need to apply for admission and financial aid as early as possible. Just because a person is accepted to a school and receives a financial aid package does not mean that person has to attend that school. Comparing college costs also means comparing their financial aid packages.
9. Your child needs to let the college financial aid office know what scholarships he/she is receiving. A person is more likely to get institutional grants (free money) if he/she already has a scholarship, even if it's not from the school.

10. Scholarship applications take time. A student who is serious about receiving scholarships would have a proof-reader double check their applications and essays before submitting.
11. Transcripts need to be requested at least 2 weeks in advance.
12. Letters of recommendation and recommendation forms need to be requested at least 2 weeks in advance. A stamped, addressed envelope is a nice touch to show your appreciation for the help. Counselors and others who write recommendations prefer to mail the recommendation directly whenever possible. This gives the recommendation more credibility. If the application must be sent as a “package,” please let the people writing recommendations know this.
13. Continue to search out unusual and unadvertised scholarships. Again, the rule of thumb is – the more difficult a scholarship is to find, the fewer students will be applying for it. Scholarship deadlines occur through out the school year; some are as early as September, and some as late as May.
14. Utilize the GO Center for internet access, application forms, and college information. The College and Career Center Technician is available for both students and parents to help in the college and scholarship search.
15. If you want to attend a public college or university in Texas, you must meet the TSI requirement. This can be met through SAT or ACT scores, the THEA, or a test administered at the college or university. This must be completed before the student will be allowed to register for classes.

#### Steps to take the senior year

- \_\_\_\_\_1. Register for the SAT/ACT. At registration request that scores are sent to at least 4 colleges (SAT) or 3 colleges (ACT) because you will pay extra to have scores sent once the student has tested. Take the test as early in the fall semester as possible.
- \_\_\_\_\_2. Apply to college(s) of choice.
- \_\_\_\_\_3. Request that transcripts be sent to college(s) where applied. (Transcripts can be requested in the GO Center. The first one is free; all others cost \$2.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_4. Apply for housing at 1<sup>st</sup> choice college as soon as the opportunity arrives.
- \_\_\_\_\_5. Search for and apply for scholarships. Request transcripts as needed for scholarship applications. Get letters of recommendation as needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_6. If your SAT/ACT scores do not waive the THEA, consider taking it in the spring of your senior year. You can register on-line at [www.thea.nesinc.com](http://www.thea.nesinc.com).
- \_\_\_\_\_7. Get a FAFSA Pin if you don't already have one.
- \_\_\_\_\_8. Complete the FAFSA as soon after January 1<sup>st</sup> as possible. Request that the results be sent to all of the colleges you are seriously considering, including “fall-back” schools.
- \_\_\_\_\_9. Choose which college you will attend, and let them know.
- \_\_\_\_\_10. If you did not take the THEA, contact your college about testing requirements.
- \_\_\_\_\_11. In May, request that a FINAL TRANSCRIPT is sent to the college you will attend.