



Planning for College Begins Now--

Not Your Senior Year in High School

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Your Timeline for College Admissions

Through Eighth Grade

- Take the most rigorous courses offered. Taking the easiest courses accomplishes nothing. Yes, you might make a very good grade, but are you pushing yourself to learn the most you can? Eventually easy grades catch up with you; learning is what helps you earn a good score on college entrance exams and get into college.
- Read, read and read some more. While it may not be as much fun as playing video games and watching television, a well read person will do much better in high school and college and will earn a higher score on college entrance exams. The better vocabulary you have, the better you will do in the future. Reading also directly influences your writing ability because you learn how good writers write. College admission and success is not based on the latest video game or television show.
- Earn a good reputation with positive, college bound peers. Friends who do not take school seriously will only pull you down. Being smart is always in fashion no matter what others may say. Making the right kinds of friends is important.
- Earn a good reputation with your teachers, your counselor and your principal. Let them see that you are serious about school and learning. You never know when a good word from one of them could land you a great opportunity. Conversely, you never know when a negative report about you could really keep you from getting an opportunity that you really wanted and needed. You may need these people someday, and what they remember about you and will say about you really does matter.
- Begin volunteering now in your school, in your community and in your church. Find something that really interests you and make it your passion. Giving back and making your city, school and church better places is the American thing to do. Remember to keep a record of your hours or ask the agency to keep a record for you. You want to be able to document your hours.

Ninth Grade

- Again, take the most rigorous courses offered. Push yourself; don't take the easy route. Plan to graduate on the Distinguished Achievement Program plan. Earn the 25 credits you need to graduate plus complete four advanced measures— take dual credit classes and earn a 3.0 or higher in the class, earn a 4 or higher on AP exams, earn National Merit recognition, complete an original research project under the direction of a high school teacher and then have it judged by outside professionals. You can combine these measures to earn the four measures for the DAP diploma. About 10 percent of the senior class usually qualifies for this diploma.
- Find your niche in high school. Get involved in an extra-curricular activity and stay with it. Don't quit! If you are an athlete, pick a sport and play all four years. Band, choir, theatre, debate and drill team are excellent choices as are all UIL competitions; again, stay with it all four years. Don't get in the habit of quitting when things don't exactly go your way in the activity. If the coach benches you, practice harder; don't complain and then quit.

- Join high school clubs as soon as possible—the Science Club, Anchor Club, Z-Club, Interact Club, foreign language clubs, Student Council. Don't just become a member so you can have your name on the membership list. Become an active member and earn a leadership position in the club—president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, events chair—something to show a college that you have leadership and organizational ability. Scholarship applications always ask for this information. Show the sponsor that you are dependable and trustworthy.
- Begin a resumé—a list of all your school activities, community activities, church activities, honors, awards, volunteer hours and projects, work experience, technology skills, advanced courses you have taken. Don't leave out a thing. Then when you are ready your senior year to compile a professional resumé to attach to your scholarship applications, you won't need to try to recall all that information. You will have it at our fingertips.
- Again, watch the reputation you are earning in school with your teachers and the school staff. These are the very people you will need to call on for letters of recommendation for college admissions and scholarships your senior year. In fact, if other opportunities arise your freshman, sophomore and junior years, you will need those letters much sooner. Your behavior counts; school personnel will not write a favorable letter of recommendation for someone who has a discipline record. Your best behavior counts every day—not just when you want to look good to your teachers.
- Again, read, read, read and learn the vocabulary words your teachers are teaching you in class. A good vocabulary is essential for success in college and in the business world. Being able to write well is certainly essential in college. Being articulate when you speak and write is worth lots of money and respect in the future.
- Continue to volunteer for school, community and church projects. Record all of these experiences on your resumé. This is very important to colleges as some scholarships are based solely on volunteer and community experience. Almost all ask for your volunteer experiences as do college admission applications.
- Plan to attend College Night at Maude Cobb Activity Center on Monday, November 16, 2009, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Representatives from college/universities/technical institutions and the military will be there to visit with you and your parents.
- Look for summer academic or volunteer opportunities. If you are an identified gifted and talented student, Region VII Education Center in Kilgore, Texas, offers scholarships every year to academic camps at LeTourneau University, Texas A&M at College Station, Texas, and Galveston, Texas, and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Attending one of these camps would be a great academic experience and would look great on a college admissions or scholarship application.

Tenth Grade

- Continue to do everything listed for ninth grade.
- Begin thinking about colleges or technical schools you would like to attend. It's not too early to begin looking at websites to learn what the admission requirements are, what kinds of college admissions exams the college requires, what scores they require on those exams; what the costs are, what financial aid is available and when you might visit the college. Almost all colleges have visitation opportunities even if you are not a senior in high school yet.
- It is imperative that you register and take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test) in October of your 10th grade year. You will register at Longview High School and take the test there during the school day. Your score on the PSAT will not count this year, but the test will let you see what you have to do your junior year. Taking this test lets you see what a college admissions exam will be like, and it's not easy. It may be a wake-up opportunity for you if you are not working hard in school every day and retaining the information and skills you are learning.
- Update your résumé often—a list of all your school activities, community activities, church activities, honors, awards, volunteer hours and projects, work experience, technology skills, advanced courses you have taken. Don't leave out a thing. Then when you are ready your senior year to compile a professional résumé to attach to your scholarship applications, you won't need to try to recall all that information. You will have it at our fingertips.
- Visit the College Board website and register at www.collegeboard.org. There is a world of free college information here. You can also register for the SAT Question of the Day to be sent to your email box. This is great practice for the SAT, and it will only take you about five minutes per day to answer the question, but it will be five minutes toward a good score on the test.
- Plan to attend College Night at Maude Cobb Activity Center on Monday, November 16, 2009, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Representatives from college/universities/technical institutions and the military will be there to visit with you and your parents.
- Plan to attend the Lobo Scholars Academy during the summer after your sophomore year. This one-week academy is offered every summer during June at Longview High School and is taught by teachers who have received training specifically to get you ready for the PSAT your junior year when the score DOES count. By attending this academy, you will be ready to make a good score in October of your junior year. Remember the National Merit Corporation Scholarship Program begins with your Selection Index (SI=your score on the PSAT). If you want to be named a National Merit Scholar, a Commended Scholar, or a National Achievement Award winner and earn scholarship money, then you need to score well on the PSAT. The road to scholarship money starts in October of your junior year.
- Continue to look for summer academic or volunteer opportunities. Explore the possibility of job shadowing. Don't waste your summer doing nothing.

Eleventh Grade

- Continue to do everything listed for ninth and tenth grade.
- Review your high school courses and activities. Colleges look for challenging course work, strong grades and extracurricular activities.
- Now is the time to seriously begin thinking about what college or technical school you would like to attend. Check the website for visitation days and plan to attend one. It's the only way you can decide if the school is right for you. You will meet faculty, tour the school, learn about college campus life, and have an opportunity to meet with financial aid counselors to learn what financial aid is available through the college or technical school.
- It is imperative that you register and take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test) in October of your 11th grade year. You will register at Longview High School and take the test there during the school day. This test is the beginning of the National Merit Scholar Competition. The test is given on one day only, so don't miss it. From this one test, you will begin to receive information from colleges and have the opportunity to earn scholarship money. . Remember the National Merit Corporation Scholarship Program begins with your Selection Index (SI=your score on the PSAT). If you want to be named a National Merit Scholar, a Commended Scholar, or a National Achievement Award winner and earn scholarship money, then you need to score well on the PSAT. The road to scholarship money in your senior years starts in October of your junior year.
- If you missed the Lobo Scholars Academy the past summer, register for a PSAT prep course given at Longview High School at night and on Saturday prior to the PSAT. By knowing what's on the test, you definitely will improve your score, and your score is important!
- It is imperative that you register for and take either the ACT or SAT, whichever test your college or technical school requires, during the SPRING of your junior year. Do NOT wait until your senior year to take these tests, especially if you want to qualify for your school's early admissions. Colleges begin notifying prepared students of admissions in December but only if you have applied and have all the requirements in place during the first semester of your senior year.
- Don't take the ACT or SAT unprepared. Longview High School offers test prep classes at night and on Saturdays. Going to take one of these tests "cold turkey" guarantees you a poor score. These tests are not like the TAKS tests; they are unlike any test you have seen before! Good scores on these tests can also exempt you from the THEA test. (See next bullet.)
- Make a great score of the TAKS test your junior year. These scores can exempt you from taking the THEA test, Texas Higher Education Assessment, required by many colleges and technical institutes. You must take this test in order to enroll in dual credit classes through your high school. The test currently costs \$29.00, so if you can become exempt through TAKS, you save yourself the bother of another test and \$29.00. Check out the THEA website-www.thea.com.
- Update your resumé often—a list of all your school activities, community activities, church activities, honors, awards, volunteer hours and projects, work experience, technology skills, advanced courses you have taken. Don't leave out a thing. Then when you are ready your senior year to compile a professional

resumé to attach to your scholarship applications, you won't need to try to recall all that information. You will have it at our fingertips. Also, you will need to provide anyone who will write you a letter of recommendation for college or scholarships a copy of this resumé.

- Plan to attend College Night at Maude Cobb Activity Center on Monday, November 16, 2009, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Representatives from college/universities/technical institutions and the military will be there to visit with you and your parents.
- Learn about eligibility requirements for federal and private student loans. Talk as a family about how much you can afford to spend for your education.
- Visit the East Texas Educational Opportunity Center at 2009 Mobberly Avenue, 903-757-9660 for assistance to receive additional information about colleges and financial aid. Their services are free. Call for an appointment. You can access their website through the LHS counseling and guidance website. See "News You Can Use."
- Now it's very important to seek summer academic and volunteer opportunities. Time is running out. You will be a senior next year. Definitely don't waste the summer before your senior year. Do something productive.

Twelfth Grade

- Continue to do everything listed for ninth, tenth and eleventh grade.
- Now is the time to decide what college or technical school you will attend. Check the website for visitation days and plan to attend one. It's the only way you can decide if the school is right for you. You will meet faculty, tour the school, learn about college campus life, and have an opportunity to meet with financial aid counselors to learn what financial aid is available through the college or technical school.
- During the first semester of your senior year, decide which teachers, counselors, community members (not family members) you will ask to write you letters of recommendation for college admission, if required, for financial aid, and for scholarship applications. You will need them during the second semester for scholarship applications. Remember to give them a copy of your resumé.
- If you have not taken the ACT or SAT, you must do so first semester of your senior year if you are seeking early admission. Please don't wait until the second semester to take these tests. Colleges begin notifying prepared students of admissions in December but only if you have applied and have all the requirements in place during the first semester of your senior year.
- Don't take the ACT or SAT unprepared. Longview High School offers test prep classes at night and on Saturdays. Going to take one of these tests "cold turkey" guarantees you a poor score. These tests are not like the TAKS tests; they are unlike any test you have seen before!
- Determine if the college or university of your choice requires a THEA test score and register to take the test. Check the test dates at the THEA website at www.thea.nesinc.com. THEA assesses the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshman-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public

colleges or universities. You can also access practice THEA tests and other program information on the website.

- Finalize your resumé and get it perfect—a list of all your school activities, community activities, church activities, honors, awards, volunteer hours and projects, work experience, technology skills, advanced courses you have taken. Don't leave out a thing.
- Plan to attend College Night at Maude Cobb Activity Center on Monday, November 16, 2009, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Representatives from college/universities/technical institutions and the military will be there to visit with you and your parents.
- Listen carefully to the daily announcements at school because the school will announce the scholarship applications that are available in the counseling office. There are over 90 local scholarships given each year in addition to those available from colleges, universities and technical schools. Get them and apply; lots of scholarship money goes unused because no one applies. You will need copies of your high school transcript, proof of your ACT or SAT scores, letters of recommendation, and essays that you have written on the topic stated in the scholarship application. A good essay is essential, one that is well-written and interesting. Also, pay attention and complete all portions of the application.
- In December, gather the data needed for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- In early January, complete the FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, at www.fafsa.edu.gov to determine your eligibility for financial aid. Your parents will need their tax information in order to complete the application. Some scholarships require that you submit a FAFSA in order to be considered. Check with your college to see what their deadline is for submitting the FAFSA; colleges have different deadlines. Deadlines are listed on college websites under financial aid. Plan to submit your completed FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible. Expect to receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) from the FAFSA in the mail. Pay particular attention to the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and discuss it with your parents and family.
- Visit the East Texas Educational Opportunity Center at 2009 Mobberly Avenue, 903-757-9660 for assistance with the FAFSA or to receive additional information about colleges and financial aid. Their services are free. Call for an appointment. You can access their website through the LHS counseling and guidance website. See "News You Can Use."
- Call the college or technical institute you plan to attend and seek financial aid there. The high school is not aware of every scholarship at every college or technical school. Colleges offer a variety of scholarships, grants and work/study opportunities. They will work with you if you ask for their help.
- Make sure you pay your enrollment fees and dormitory fees on time as directed by the college to ensure your place in the freshman class.
- Write thank you notes to scholarship donors and to people who wrote letters of recommendation for you.
- End your senior year happy because you are headed for the college, university or technical school of your choice, ensuring yourself a bright future as an adult.