



JUNIOR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



CLASSROOM VISIT – FALL 2011

1. How do I begin preparing for college? (Handout-Junior Checklist)

- ★ Start the year off strong, aim to get good grades, ask for help/tutorial when needed. College admission is based on your junior year transcript meaning that everything from freshman year counts towards college admissions. This also includes any community service, activities, and leadership you have participated in since the summer before freshman year.
- ★ Take a college entrance exam this year. Take the SAT/ACT for 4 year colleges and universities and/or Accuplacer/THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment) for community colleges, TECH, and TRADE schools. REMEMBER to send your scores when you register to the schools you think you will attend.
- ★ Update your Activity Sheet/resume as you accomplish things. Stay active & involved in your community!
- ★ Start researching colleges/programs online, go to college fairs, sign-up for college visits to SVHS at the College/Career Center, and visit campuses with your family (you get two college days Jr & Sr year, form in Counseling office).
- ★ Begin asking for letters of recommendation from teachers/coaches/employers.
- ★ Complete the APPLYTEXAS @ www.applytexas.org summer/fall of your senior year and submit it online for Texas public colleges/universities. Out of state/Private colleges have their own application or use www.commonapp.org (Ms. Pedroza & Mr. Hofer will help!)
 - Request and send your HS transcript.
 - Pay the application fee online.
 - Wait for the letter of acceptance and further instructions from your school.

2. What are colleges looking for? (Handout)

Rank - Your class rank is determined by the 8.0 point rank scale located on pages 12 and 13 of our 2012 Course Guide. Only the courses on page 13 count for the rank calculation. This is an indicator of where you stand in the class of 2013. This indicator allows automatic admission (top 10%) so it is very important if you want to go to A&M and UT. It is **not** a definer of you and you can go to a community college or to another university and do well and apply and still graduate from your 1st choice.

GPA - Your GPA (grade point average) is un-weighted on your transcript on the 4.0 scale. All your courses are calculated into your GPA.

Level of courses work - Colleges are looking for your ability to take and succeed in the most rigorous curriculum that SVHS has to offer. This helps them determine if you will possibly be successful at their level. If you have taken all regular courses and done very well, this also tells them you can possibly succeed at the next level. It may also show you might have to adjust to the higher rigor at the college level.

Participation - It is extremely important that you are a participant in as much as you can be. This includes extracurricular activities, community service, etc. Keep track of everything you are involved in this year and take some time to sit down and write down everything you have been involved in since summer before freshman year (handout).

SAT/ACT/ACCUPLACER/THEA - These college entrance exams are also great indicators of your aptitude. Remember, they are not definers of success.

TRANSCRIPT IMPROVEMENT - If you had a rough beginning to SVHS your 9th grade year, you can show a college your maturity level has increased with a stronger 10th, 11th, and 12th grade transcript. Sometimes circumstances show up on your transcript within a

semester or a year. This can be explained when you write your essays that are also included in your college application. My letter of recommendation or a letter from someone else can also be taken in to consideration.

How do I get noticed? - All of the above items go into you getting noticed by the school of your choice! If High School was not the place that you excelled, remember you have a clean slate at the college level and you have the opportunity to graduate with a college degree that reflects who you are! It is never too late to be all you can be! (Handout)

3. SAT/ACT (Handout)

Dates- You may sign up now for any date it is given. Do not wait; especially if you want to test at SVHS, space is limited. It is wise to have Algebra 2 either finished or almost finished before taking it.

How do I sign up? - Sign up online if at all possible using a credit card or waiver if you qualify. You may use our computers in the Career Center if you do not have access at home. SAT- www.collegeboard.com ACT- www.actstudent.org

What is our school code?- 445056

How high does my score have to be, to be automatically admitted? - The top 10% of the Class of 2013 will automatically be admitted into public colleges and universities in Texas based on rank (UT-Austin will announce their rank cutoff after 9/15). This means to be admitted you do not need to have a minimum score. If your rank is less than the top 10%, the higher you score the better. For the SAT, 1600 is the highest possible score without the writing component (the writing component is used for other purposes but not admission at this time). 800 is the perfect score on each of the 3 sections. For the ACT, 36 is the highest possible score. College scholarships revolve around these scores as well. Remember, these scores are indicators of your potential success at the college level but they are not definers of your success.

Do I have to take a SAT/ACT to start at a community college? No, you do not if you are beginning at a Community College, Tech School, or Trade School. You may need to take the THEA instead. When you are through with your Associates degree you may apply to a 4 year college or university with your community college transcript. However, many scholarships revolve around a SAT/ACT score-especially local scholarships spring semester of senior year!

4. COLLEGE/CAREER CENTER- Advisor- Mr. Hofer - dean.hofer@comalisd.org

How can I find the best college for my chosen career? (Game design, Modeling, RN, Acting, Pre-Law, etc) - Stop by the Career Center or e-mail Mr. Hofer/Ms. Pedroza! There are numerous programs that research this for you. You can sort the colleges by: distance from home, cost etc.

What are the closest Technical & Trade schools and Community Colleges? North East Lake View, Northwest Vista, San Antonio Community College (SAC), St. Philips, Palo Alto, Austin CC (ACC) and CTTC (New Braunfels) to name a few.

How do I know what college is presenting at SVHS and how do I attend? Stop by the College/Career Center anytime to check and listen for announcements. There is a bulletin board inside the center that shows who is coming and a sign-up sheet. You may pull a pass to show your teacher where you are going. After the presentation, Mr. Hofer will take the sign-in sheet to the Attendance Office.

How do I get brochures and catalogues from colleges? Attending the College and Career Fair (9/28/11) is a great way to pick up information as well as to speak to a

representative from this school. Another way is to Google the school of your choice and check out their website. Follow the link to request information or join their mailing lists.

How can I go on a college visit? Each junior and senior has 2 days each year that they can visit a college campus without it being counted against you for attendance, exemptions, etc. You must go to the counseling office and pick up a form and turn it into Ms. Schaal. Call your chosen school and set up an appointment or sign up on their website. When you are at your visit, have a representative either officially stamp this form OR give you something on letterhead to bring back as official proof of your attendance. Return this form to Ms. Schaal the day you return.

5. SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

National/State - The vast majority of scholarships are for Seniors. Mr. Hofer in the Career Center is constantly updating a list of scholarship opportunities. He gets information out on the announcements, on a 1-1 basis and on e-mails. Sign up to be put on his List Serve to receive all of his information!!!!

<http://staff.comalisd.org/Kristy.Castilleja/> go to SUBSCRIBE at the bottom of the page and click the link to sign up.

Local - Each year the entire Senior class receives instructions on how to apply for local scholarships. You will have a set period of time to fill in the applications and turn it in to the Counseling office. These are then given to all of the local contributors. There is a Senior Award ceremony in May where everyone sees who has won these scholarships.

College - Many scholarships are given at the college/university of your choice. It is up to you to check online or in their catalogue to see the qualifications. This is a time your SAT/ACT can really help. We will help you research this if needed. Also, some scholarships are tied to the FAFSA as well.

Specific scholarships (athletics) - Many college specific scholarships require a tryout to participate. Let me know if you are unable to e-mail or call the school you are interested in participating at. Timelines are crucial. Other sport related scholarships require you to be registered with the **NCAA**. This is done by you and is done online and completed with a registration fee. Notify me so we can send a transcript the end of the Junior/beginning of senior year to complete the **NCAA** application process. There is a special form for this.

6. FINANCIAL AID

Loans - All financial aid revolves around you and your family filling in the **FAFSA** after January 1 of your senior year. This online form uses your parent's income tax filing to determine the amount of need you have. Colleges look at this and determine how much money they can help you with. We hold workshops at SVHS to help. The quicker you get the **FAFSA** done the quicker your school can tell you how much money they can loan you. Loans do not have to be paid back until you finish school (unsubsidized loans do have interest that starts before you graduate).

Grants - Grants are called free money. Usually they are need based. This money does not have to be paid back. The **FAFSA** must be filled out to receive this money.

Work-Study - Colleges also allow students to work for them in trade for books, tuition, etc. **FAFSA** is required.

*Many families feel they will not get any help or money due to their family's income. I feel it is important to follow the process of applying just in case a school sees something that they can help you with financially. Some schools use the **FAFSA** for scholarships (merit and need based) as well!*

7. GENERAL QUESTIONS

- ★ **When is the next TAKS test?** The next round of TAKS starts in March (ELA-March 7th, Math-Apr 25th, Science-Apr 26th, SS- Apr 27th)
- ★ **How much does college cost?** This varies from place to place so stop by the Career Center and Mr. Hofer can look this up or show you how.
- ★ **How do I enter the Military?** You can ask to speak to a recruiter and if you and your parent give permission you may meet with them at school and we can share your transcript with them.
- ★ **How do I apply to a Service Academy?** - See Mr. Hofer or Ms. Pedroza and she will give you the instructions you need to apply or you can check out the following website <http://www.jamarsmith.house.gov/ConstituentServices/serviceacademynominations.htm>
- ★ **Will my Dual credit transfer to the college of my choice?** That can only be answered by the college. We can tell you what is accepted today BUT the college has the final say!
- ★ **Can my HS tell me everything I need to know about my college?** NO! It is up to you to speak to the school of your choice via e-mail or phone contact for all specific questions and answers. KEEP A LOG of all contact and keep it together in a safe place. You may need it down the road to graduate at the next level...!
- ★ **What is the difference between a HS credit and college hours?** At the HS level, you can earn .5 credits per semester per course. By the end of the year you can earn 1.0 credit for this same course if you pass. In college, they operate on the semester as well but for each successful semester you earn 3 hours per course (or 4 hours if it is a lab course). Each semester at the college level stands alone. Example- At SVHS you need 26 credits to graduate. At a college you will need approximately 120 or so hours to graduate.
- ★ **What is an Associate's degree?** - This is a 2 year degree.
- ★ **What is a Bachelor's degree?** - This is a 4 year degree.
- ★ **What is a Master's degree?** - This is additional degree for certification in certain fields. You must finish your Bachelor's degree before you start this usually.

Stop by, call, or email with any questions! We look forward to a great school year!

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