

FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE HANDBOOK:



Preparing for Graduation

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is being provided in an effort to help SVHS students and parents in plan for high school and for the years that follow. We hope that the handbook will be a helpful resource tool and provide you with information as you make post-secondary plans.



COUNSELOR CONTACT INFORMATION



| | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------|
| Karen Lauderdale | k.lauderdale@comalisd.org | Class of 2015 |
| Christine Rostedt | christine.rostedt@comalisd.org | Class of 2014 |
| Amanda Pedroza | amanda.pedroza@comalisd.org | Class of 2013 |
| Joni Woodchick | joni.woodhick@comalisd.org | Class of 2012 |
| Marcia Murphy | marcia.murphy@comalid.org | Lead Counselor |

CISD GUIDANCE & COUNSELING MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Comal ISD school guidance and counseling program is to provide all students comprehensive developmental guidance and counseling services that address academic, career and personal/social skills necessary to foster personal responsibility to become contributing members of our society.

Beliefs & Philosophy

The school counselors in Comal ISD believe:

- All students have dignity and worth and have the right to be served by a comprehensive guidance and counseling program
- All students have a capacity to learn and to be supported academically
- All students' ethnic, cultural, sexual, and racial differences and special needs are considered in planning and implementing the guidance and counseling program
- All students shall have access to a certified, master's degree level school counselor

The school guidance and counseling program:

- *Is comprehensive in scope*
- *Is preventative in design*
- *Is developmental in nature*
- *Provides academic, career, personal and social development for every student*
- *Has a delivery system that includes school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support*

- Uses data to drive the program and development and evaluation, and actively monitor student results

All counselors in Comal ISD:

- *Abide by the professional school counseling ethics as advocated by the American School Counselor Association*
- *Participate in professional development activities essential to maintain a quality school guidance and counseling program.*

Class of 2014 Graduation Requirements

| Curriculum Area | Recommended Program | Distinguished Achievement Program |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| English | 4 credits | 4 credits |
| Math | 4 credits | 4 credits |
| Science | 4 credits | 4 credits |
| Social Studies | 4 credits | 4 credits |
| Foreign Languages | 2 credits (same language) | 3 credits (same language) |
| Physical Education | 1 credit | 1 credit |
| Speech/Health | 1 credit | 1 credit |
| Fine Arts | 1 credit | 1 credit |
| Technology Class | 1 credit | 1 credit |
| Electives | 4 credits | 3 credits |
| Advanced Measures | None | 4 advanced Measures** |
| Total Credits | 26 | 26 |
| <i>State Exams</i> | EXIT LEVEL TAKS | EXIT LEVEL TAKS |

Class of 2015 Graduation Requirements

| Curriculum Area | Recommended Program | Distinguished Achievement Program |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| English | 4 credits | 4 credits |
| Math | 4 credits | 4 credits |
| Science | 4 credits | 4 credits |
| Social Studies | 4 credits | 4 credits |
| Foreign Languages | 2 credits (same language) | 3 credits (same language) |
| Physical Education | 1 credit | 1 credit |
| Speech | .5 credit | .5 credit |
| Fine Arts | 1 credit | 1 credit |

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Electives | 5.5 credits | 4.5 credits |
| Advanced Measures | None | 4 advanced Measures** |
| Total Credits | 26 | 26 |
| State Exams | 12 EOCs (End of Course Exams) | 12 EOCs (End of Course Exams) |

EOC REQUIREMENT

IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY, STUDENTS MUST MEET ALL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS; INCLUDING PASSING ALL AREAS OF THE EOC AND EARNING REQUIRED CREDITS.

**** Advanced Measures** Any combination of four of the following: AP exams with a grade of 3 or higher; a dual credit class with a grade of 80 or higher; a PSAT score qualifying for Commended or National recognition.

SHOULD I SIGN UP FOR A PRE-AP/AP OR DUAL CREDIT (DC) COURSE???

Advanced placement and Dual Credit courses provide a college-level curriculum. They are usually taken during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades and are taught by teachers who have been trained to teach the course. Students in AP/DC classes spend more time outside the classroom reading, writing, and problem solving. AP Students are required to take the College Board AP Exam for each class. Exams are given in May of each year.

In Pre-Advanced Placement Classes (Pre-AP) classes, the required knowledge and skills are aligned with the AP courses. Emphasis is given to the skills and strategies needed to succeed in AP courses.

How do you know if you should take a Pre-AP/AP/DC course?

Consider these guidelines...

1. Pre-AP/AP/DC courses are demanding with an advanced level of skills. Not all students are academically mature enough to do the work.
2. A Pre-AP/AP/DC student should be able to learn independently as well as through teacher instruction, and, with the exception of an extended absence, should not require an outside tutor to succeed.
3. Success in these courses requires critical thinking and independent study skills, creating a level of difficulty greater than that of other classes.
4. A Pre-AP/AP/DC student must be willing to spend considerable time outside class completing research, projects, and supplemental reading.
5. A Pre-AP/AP/DC student should be primarily concerned with learning, not only the grade.
6. Success in these courses requires a high mastery of content level skills prior to beginning the course.
7. Students should limit themselves to manageable number of Pre-AP/AP/DC courses taken in one school year, as they are quite time consuming. If you are involved in extracurricular

activities, signing up for too many challenging courses may be too stressful. We highly recommend that you consider the global picture when choosing your courses.

DUAL CREDIT (ST. PHILLIP'S COLLEGE)

SVHS sophomores, juniors, and seniors can enroll in college courses to accumulate college hours and/or satisfy high school graduation requirements. Dual credit and concurrent courses may be used to meet the advanced measures on the Distinguished Achievement Program. A grade of a "C" or higher is required to receive high school credit in a dual credit course and a grade of a "B" or higher is required to earn an advanced measure on the Distinguished Achievement Program in any college or academic course.

Enrolling at a community college

SVHS students may enroll for two courses per semester, up to a total of four per year. St. Phillip's courses taken at SVHS on campus are free of cost to our students. To enroll, students must complete Dual Credit registration packets and apply to St. Phillip's college at www.applytexas.org (more detailed instructions are in the registration packet). Students must also be ACCUPLACER exempt or take the Accuplacer. SAT/ACT scores may also exempt students (500 on math/reading, 1070 total for SAT, 19 on English/Math and 23 total for ACT).

If a student is not exempt by SAT/ACT scores, students must take the Accuplacer. Students are tested the semester before the intended Dual Credit Class. The passing scores for the Accuplacer are: Reading: 78 Sentence Structure: 6 Math: 109

Students should check with colleges and universities for policies about dual enrollment courses and transfer of credits.

FOUR YEAR PLANNING CALENDAR

Freshman Year

- Challenge yourself to take the hardest classes in which you can be successful. Consider a Pre-Advanced Placement (PAP) class if offered.
- Take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) in October (\$14) to prepare for college-admissions exams and identify your academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Plan your Four-Year graduation with your counselor. Complete your plan and discuss it with your family, teachers, and friends.
- Research career possibilities and required schooling.
- Study, work hard, and earn the best grades you can.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities and service in your community. Start a portfolio of your best work and a record of achievement, activities, & community service
- Use Career Cruising (www.careercruising.com, username: SVHS, password: comal, create mew portfolio) at home and school to continue to investigate careers. Discuss results with parents, teachers, and peers.

Sophomore Year

- When registering for this year's classes, take the most challenging classes in which you can be successful. Consider taking pre-AP classes in your best subject areas.
- Use Career Cruising (www.careercruising.com, username: SVHS, password: comal, create new portfolio) at home and school to continue to investigate careers. Discuss results with parents, teachers, and peers.
- Take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) in October (free for sophomores) to prepare for college-admissions exams and identify your academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Attend college fairs in your area and plan campus visits to colleges and technical schools.
- If you have an after-school or summer job, consider saving part of your paycheck for college expenses.
- Stay involved in school and community activities and keep adding to your record of achievement, activities, & community service.
- Save copies of report cards, awards and honors, and items for your portfolio.
- Consider Dual Credit classes to earn both high school and college credit next year.

Junior Year

- Continue to give your best efforts in the classroom.
- The rigorous classes you registered for in the spring will help you develop the knowledge and skills you'll need for college.
- Register to take the PSAT in October (\$14). The junior year PSAT is REQUIRED to qualify for National Merit Scholarship competition and recognition programs.
- Continue to use websites like www.careercruising.com to research careers.
- Attend college fairs. Request information from colleges that interest you. Look for scholarship opportunities open to juniors. Consider visiting colleges with your family during breaks from school.
- Try out the FAFSA4caster— an online tool that allows you to get an early estimate of your federal aid eligibility. You'll find it at www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov.
- Register for and take the SAT and/or ACT (college-admissions exams) in the fall and spring of this year.
- Take one or both of the tests again in May/June if you need or want to raise your scores.
- Meet with your counselor to review your status toward graduation and to discuss your plans for postsecondary education or training after high school.
- Stay involved in extracurricular activities. Apply for leadership positions and add those to your record of achievement.
- Register for NCAA Eligibility at the beginning of junior year if you want to be a college athlete at a Division I or Division II school. www.eligibilitycenter.org
- Begin the application process for a military academy appointment, if interested. In the fall, request a recommendation from your U.S. senator or representative.
- Use your summer wisely— work, volunteer, or take a summer course.
- Continue adding to your college savings.
- Write some of those college application essays during the summer before your senior year. Collect writing samples and assemble portfolios or make audition tapes.

Senior Year

- Don't let up! Maintain an academically rigorous course of study. Colleges look at your senior schedule during the application process and may take back an offer of admissions if your grades slip second semester.
- Stay involved in extracurricular activities and pursue leadership opportunities.
- Meet with your counselor to confirm eligibility for on-time graduation and coursework still needed.
- Retake SAT or ACT in fall (if needed)
- If attending a technical or two-year college, ask when you should take the Accuplacer/THEA for class placement.
- Attend college fairs and visit colleges as you narrow your choices, and familiarize yourself with financial aid information. During the summer before and fall of your senior year, make contacts with your top-choice schools to show your level of interest.
- Know the difference between early action, early decision, and other admissions programs with early fall

deadlines. If you feel strongly about a particular school, talk to your counselor and consider whether one of these admission programs is right for you. •Meet all deadlines.

- For regular admission, select colleges or postsecondary schools and apply for admission in the fall. Some honors programs require separate applications or earlier deadlines. Meet all deadlines to ensure that your applications will be considered.
- Use the record of achievement you've been updating to help you fill out your college applications. Your teachers, counselor, and coaches also may find this information to be helpful as they write recommendations for you.
- Request letters of recommendation and transcripts well in advance of deadlines.
- Provide stamped and addressed envelopes to your teachers, counselors, and coaches who are writing recommendations for colleges and scholarships.
- Apply for scholarships and keep an eye on deadlines. Many are due in early spring, but some are due in the fall of your senior year.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form as soon as possible after January 1.
- Be aware of financial aid deadlines for schools in which you are interested. The FAFSA is required for a student to be eligible for postsecondary grants, loans, and scholarships. www.fafsa.ed.gov
- If applicable, complete the NCAA eligibility process, including sending final transcript.



HIGH SCHOOL TESTING & COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS



A. End of Course Exams (EOCs)

Texas law mandates that students, starting with the class of 2015, pass all sections of the EOC in order to qualify for a diploma. IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY, STUDENTS MUST MEET ALL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS; INCLUDING PASSING ALL AREAS OF TEXAS STATE MANDATED TESTS AND EARNING REQUIRED CREDITS.

B. PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT is the best preparation for the SAT Reasoning Test. Students in the 11th grade who take the test and meet other program entry requirements may enter the National Merit Scholarship Competitions. The PSAT/NMSC is a comprehensive tool that gives valuable feedback to the both the student and school on how to improve academically. The PSAT tests in the areas of critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills.

Why take the PSAT?

- Compare yourself with other college-bound students around the country.
- Find out what the SAT is like (the PSAT includes actual SAT questions)
- Assess your reading, math, and writing skills.
- Participate in the Student Search Service to receive mail from colleges.
- Enter NMSC Scholarship competitions in the 11th grade.

Who can take the PSAT?

*9th grade- \$14 (limited spots available)

*10th grade- all students required to take exam, state pays fees

*11th grade- \$14, must take PSAT junior year to participate in the National Merit Scholarship Competition

PSAT/NMSQT Facts:

1. Critical reading, math, and writing skills are reported on a 20-to-80 scale.
2. Average scores are near the midpoint of (50) on the scale.

**Score reports are mailed to the high schools and are usually available to students in January. The score report is full of information to help students get academically ready for college and test wise for the SAT. The score report also offers information about test-taking skills.*

C. SAT

The SAT Reasoning Test attempts to measure your ability to do college-level work in the verbal/math/writing areas. Each section of the test is scored from a 200-800 scale. The highest possible score is a 2400.

D. ACT

The ACT attempts to measure skills closely related to the content of courses in the high school curriculum in four subject areas: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. All four scores are averaged together to form a composite score. Each of the four scores as well as the composite score can range from 0-36, with approximately 21 being the national average last year.

E. SAT SUBJECT TESTS

The SAT SUBJECT TESTS are required by some colleges as a second step in testing and are generally used not for admissions but for placement in a proper level. Check with your college to determine whether an SAT subject test is required. An SAT SUBJECT TEST measures specific knowledge from a specific course taken in high school.

F. THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment)

Since the fall of 1998, all students must take the THEA prior to enrolling in a Texas public university or college unless they are exempt. Students with below passing scores on any section of the test are required to enroll at a developmental/remedial program each semester until they pass the THEA in all three areas. Students may exempt based on the scores on the SAT or ACT. Check with your college and inquire about specifics for exemptions since they differ from college to college.

G. ASVAB

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery is one of the best aptitudes available. This test is recommended for considering any branch of the military as a possible career. Taking the test does not commit you to joining the military service. It offers you great information about your abilities. Speak to our NJROTC sponsors for more information and available testing centers.

Smithson Valley High School Code: 445056

Taking the College Entrance Exams

There are two major tests used for college entrance, the SAT and ACT. All colleges in Texas will accept either the SAT or ACT. Students should plan to take the SAT or the ACT in the spring semester of their junior year.

The SAT includes:

Critical Reading: This section will include shorter reading passages along with the existing long reading passages. Analogies have been eliminated, but sentence completion questions will remain. The SAT will still measure the kind of reasoning skills needed for college by assessing how students apply what they have learned in school.

Math: The math section will include Algebra II topics, such as exponential growth, absolute value, and functional notation, and will place greater emphasis on other topics such as linear functions, manipulations with exponents, and properties of tangent lines.

Writing: Students will be asked to write an essay that requires them to take a position on an issue and use examples to support their positions. Questions similar to the multiple choice questions on the SAT Writing Subject Test will be included to see how well students use standard written English.

Colleges and universities use the SAT/ACT as one of the many factors in admission decisions. Another important factor is the high school grades earned in challenging courses. The best preparation for the SAT/ACT and for college is for students to take challenging academic courses and to read and write as often as possible.

SAT VS. ACT

| | SAT | ACT |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| When is it administered? | Seven times a year | Six times a year |
| What is the test structure? | Ten section exam: Three critical reading, three Math, three Writing, and one Experimental. The Experimental is masked to look like a regular section. | Four section exam: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. An Experimental section is added to tests on certain dates only, and is clearly experimental. |
| What is the test content? | Math: Up to 9th grade basic geometry and Algebra II. Science: NONE Reading: sentence completions, short and long critical reading passages, reading comprehension Writing: an essay, and questions testing grammar, usage, and word choice. | Math: up to trigonometry. Science: charts, experiments. Reading: four passages, one each of Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science. English: Stresses grammar |
| Is there a penalty for wrong answers? | YES | NO |
| How is the test scored? | 200-800 per section, added together for a combined score. A 2400 is the highest possible score. | 1-36 for each subject averaged for a composite score. A 36 is the highest possible score. |
| Are all scores sent to schools? | YES if the student requests a score report to be sent to specific colleges, the report will include the scores the student received on every SAT taken | NO. There is a "score choice" option. Students can choose which schools will receive scores AND which scores the school will see |
| Are there other uses for exams? | Scholarship purposes. | Scholarship purposes. Certain statewide testing programs |
| Best time to register? | At least six weeks before the test date | At least four weeks before the test date |
| Need more information? | The College Board www.collegeboard.com | ACT, Inc. 319-337-1000 www.actstudent.org |



HIGHER EDUCATION- WHERE TO BEGIN



College is just around the corner, *let Career Cruising help!*

- * Interest Skills and Inventory
- * Find a suitable career
- * Much needed college information provided
- * Career information from real people
- * Create a resume

All of this and it's easy to use and FREE!

Access: www.careercruising.com

Username: SVHS

Password: Comal ISD

You can create your own account and your own portfolio that will reside at the career cruising site. *For questions contact your counselor.*

What are your plans after graduating from High School?

Things to consider....

A. What type of education?

- * Four year college
 - * Community College
 - * Technical School
 - * Vocational Program
 - * Military

B. Area of study offered

- * major/minors
- * career pathways

C. Location

- * in-state vs. out-of-state
- * urban, suburban, rural

- * campus size
- * transportation
- * cultural & social facilities
- * tuition and fees
- * room & board

D. Admissions Requirements

- * Class rank
- * GPA
- * SAT/ACT scores
- * essays
- * letters of recommendation
- * resume
- * top 10% rule

POST SECONDARY PREPARATION

It is important that you consider all the options that are available for you after you graduate from high school. These include attending a college or university, a junior or community college, a technical school, enlisting in the military, or getting a job. Universities/Colleges offer many degree programs. Check the catalog to decide what each offers and what the admission procedure is for each. Large universities offer both advantages and disadvantages. Their size generally enables them to offer a more comprehensive curriculum, a greater degree of

flexibility and a choice of courses and a greater research opportunity. However, to some students, the size may be overwhelming and often there is less opportunity for close association with professors. Small colleges/ universities have their professors devote more time to undergraduates, classes are more intimate, and students get to know each other more easily.

Junior or Community Colleges offer two basic programs:

- ◆ One type of program is designed to prepare the student to transfer after two years to a four-year college or university. Good academic standing and frequent advisement with the transfer college/university enables the student to make this transfer without loss of credit.
- ◆ Another type of program is for students who want specialized training that leads to career opportunities at the completion of two years or an associate's degree.



MILITARY CAREER

Recruiters from various military branches will help you as you investigate your military career. Many schedule visits to our campus. Learn about the different branches of the military, what they each have to offer, and about your obligation to them.

**** Inquire about scholarships within the military. *NROTC scholarships are usually full-ride scholarships!***

SERVICE ACADEMIES

The application process usually begins in the spring semester of the **junior year**. To request a pre-candidate questionnaire, contact a local recruiter or the individual academy directly. A nomination is mandatory for any young person before he or she can be appointed to any of the following Department of Defense academies: US Military Academy at West Point, NY., U.S. Naval Academy of Annapolis, MD., U.S. Air Force Academy of Colorado Springs, CO., and the Department of Transportation's U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Specific requirements must be met.

CAREER/TRADE/TECHNICAL TRAINING

Career/Trade/Technical Training is available through junior or community colleges, such as San Antonio College, St. Phillip's Community College, Palo Alto, and Northwest Vista and specialized vocational/technical/business schools, such as Texas State Technical College. Many programs at local community colleges can lead to certifications in as little as six to twelve months. Generally, you will receive hands-on training in learning the skills needed to seek a well paying job.

FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT

Things to Do:

1. Research NOW about job opportunities in the community which you would like to work.
2. Talk to your counselor about your strengths, plans for additional training, etc.
3. Use career materials available in the Counseling Office and School Library.
4. Be alert to newspaper and magazine articles about your career choice and future trends in employment.
5. Compile a resume.
6. Check the classified ads and the Texas Employment Commission for current employment information and opportunities.
7. Check with various employers to see if they provide apprenticeships or on-the-job training programs.
8. Take courses in high school that will make you more marketable.
9. Attend job fairs whenever possible.



THE COLLEGE PROCESS

Academic Considerations:

Academic considerations should be the primary factors in college selections, yet we know that a balance of all requirements is needed: academic, social, and personal. Without an understanding of the academic atmosphere, a subjective decision is difficult. We urge you to read carefully these considerations and weigh their importance in your decision making. Gathering information and choosing several likely schools is a good start.

- ★ *Know yourself as an individual*
- ★ *Prioritize the things that are most important to you. Consider such things as two-year or four year colleges, courses of study offered and degree given, entrance requirements, location, size, type, and lifestyle of student body, environment around the college, and cost.*
- ★ *The counseling office offers numerous guides to help you: college catalogs and websites. The College Handbook: describes many colleges briefly and generally. The Index of majors and Graduate Degrees: categorizes colleges according to the majors or degrees offered at those colleges.*
- ★ *College Visits are most helpful in making the final decision about which college is best for you.*
- ★ *Write or call the admissions office to set up an appointment*
- ★ *Write down questions before your visits (the counseling office has a list of important questions to ask on a college visit)*
- ★ *Tour the campus- visit with the financial aid officer, admissions counselor, department of interest.*
- ★ *Check the environment around the college. Do you want to be in a big/small city? Quiet or busy? Etc...*

APPLYING TO COLLEGE



*You can start applying for college the fall of your senior year. Texas applications open up August 1st the summer before senior year. There are several things you **must** send the college along with applying for admission.*

1. College entrance test scores need to be sent directly from the SAT/ACT websites to the colleges you specify. This can be done for free at the time of the test registration. Colleges receive scores about three weeks after you have taken the test. You can send these scores before you apply to the college/university.
2. Application- be sure to apply for admission. Most colleges prefer students to register on-line. Public universities and community college applications can be found online at www.applytexas.org. Some private schools and/or out-of-state schools use www.commonapp.org. If the application is not found on either of these websites, look up the college/universities website to find out their application process.
3. High School Transcript- This shows the college every class you have taken along with the grades. It includes your state test scores, GPA, and your rank in your class. Transcript request forms are available in the counseling office.
4. Some colleges also require letters of recommendation, personal interviews, or other materials; but for most colleges the first three items above will begin the process satisfactorily.

****Note on Class Rank & Top 10% rule-** Your position in the graduating class is based on your grade average. For college applications, admission officers look at your class rank from the end of your **junior year**. Your ranking places you in the first, second, third, or fourth quartile (ex: class ranking of 60 out of 600 is in the top 10% of the class). Rank and grade average are included on the transcript sent to colleges and to scholarship committees. Under current Texas law, if you rank in the top 10% of your class, you can be automatically admitted to any state-supported public college or university in Texas (UT at Austin has different requirements, for the class of 2012, it is the top 9% that receive automatic admission privileges) as long as you submit all required documents by their deadline.



SEEKING FINANCIAL AID

The first step is to calculate the cost of attending a particular institution. Add up all the following.

- Tuition and fees- listed in the college catalog (Compendium of Texas Colleges http://www.everychanceeverytexas.org/schools_info/schools/)
- Room and Board (for on-campus living) listed in the Compendium
- Room and Board (for living at home) check with parents
- Books and Supplies – varies greatly among colleges (renting textbooks can be a cheaper option)
- Transportation- both to and from class/home, especially if going away to school
- Miscellaneous- clothing, entertainment, medical insurance, etc...

All these equal the cost of attending a particular college.

It is important to check the college/universities' website for the required financial aid form(s). Many schools require that their own financial aid application be mailed back to them. At this time the FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA) is the form used to apply for federal financial aid (<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>) Some schools use the COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP SERVICE/FINANCIAL AID PROFILE to apply for non-federal financial aid. In many cases a copy of the parent's income tax return is requested. It is very important to contact the financial aid officer at your college for information on required applications and deadlines. Do this as early as possible. You may apply for financial aid at more than one school.

The FAFSA form must be filled out and submitted (www.fafsa.ed.gov) as soon as possible after January 1st. The CSS/FINANCIAL AID PROFILE may be filed during the spring of the senior year.

Types of Financial Assistance

There are essentially four basic types of financial aid for which a student may qualify:

1. **Scholarship**- no repayment; often based on talent, ability, or merit of some sort but also awarded on the basis of ethnic and religious background, intended career field, parent's place of employment, etc. Begin your search for scholarships now. Check with civic clubs and organizations, your parent's or your employer, your church, and any resources with which you are familiar. Listen to daily announcements, check with Scholarship Bulletin in the counseling office, and frequently visit the counseling webpage under the high school link for College & Career Center.
2. **Grant**- no repayment; usually based on need; usually obtained from federal government through the college's financial aid office.

3. **Work-Study programs**- funded by the federal government through the college's financial aid office.

4. **Loan**- on your own or funded by the federal or state governments through the college's financial aid office or participating lenders such as; banks, credit unions, savings and loans, insurance agencies, etc. Shop around for the best interest rates.

A few short tips about financial aid

⇒Apply for financial aid even if you are not certain whether you qualify. If you don't apply, you surely won't get it.

⇒Apply as early as possible after January 1st, after your family completes the income tax report. Early applicants have the best chance of getting the most help.

⇒Parents are encouraged to complete their taxes early for filing the FAFSA.

⇒Keep a copy of your family's completed income tax form, particularly in case you need to submit it to the financial aid office.

⇒Keep a copy of all forms you submit to any place or anyone.

⇒Ask about gradual payment plans. Many colleges permit semester, monthly, or otherwise gradual payment of fees.

⇒Contact your college choices to be certain of which financial aid applications are required.

⇒In addition to contacting the financial aid office, check with the department with which you intend to major.

⇒Departments sometimes have their own sources of student aid. Research the hundreds of scholarships made available through your counseling office. Visit our website.

⇒If you are planning to attend a college in Texas, you may receive a Texas grant if you graduate with the recommended program requirements and demonstrate financial need based on the FAFSA guidelines.

Financial Aid Myths

- You or your parents cannot get financial aid because your family's income is too high.
- You shouldn't even consider your first choice if it costs too much.
- There is not as much financial aid as there used to be.

Selective Service Registration

All males must register within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Those who do not register will not be eligible for financial aid. <http://www.sss.gov/>

2011-2012 Comal ISD School Calendar

| July 2011 | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | H4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | T11 | T12 | T13 | T14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

| August 2011 | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | ♣8 | ♣9 | ♣10 | ♣11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | ▲15 | ▲16 | ▲17 | ▲18 | ▲19 | 20 |
| 21 | ☾22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

| September 2011 | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | H5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | H23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |

| October 2011 | | | | | | |
|--------------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | T18 | T19 | T20 | T21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

| November 2011 | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | | | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | H23 | H24 | H25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

| December 2011 | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | ☸17 | |
| 18 | H19 | H20 | H21 | H22 | H23 | 24 |
| 25 | H26 | H27 | H28 | H29 | H30 | 31 |

| Student/Staff Holidays | |
|------------------------|---|
| Holidays | July 4 Fourth of July |
| | September 5 Labor Day |
| | September 23 Fair Day |
| | November 23-25 Thanksgiving |
| | December 19 - January 1 Christmas Break |
| | March 12 - 16 Spring Break |
| May 28 Memorial Day | |

| Holiday or Bad Weather Make-up Days | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ☺ | February 20 Presidents' Day |
| | April 6 Good Friday |

| Teacher Training/Staff Development/Workdays | |
|---|--|
| | Students do not attend school on these days |

| | |
|---|---|
| ♣ | August 8-11 New Teacher Training |
| ▲ | August 15-19 Staff Development & Workdays |
| ▲ | January 16 Staff Development |
| ▲ | February 20 Staff Development |
| ▲ | May 29 Workday |
| ▲ | May 30 - 31 Learning Academy |

visit the Comal ISD Calendars page:
www.comalisd.org/Calendars/for_testing_info

| | |
|---|----------------|
| July 11-14/Oct. 18-21/Mar. 5 & 7-9/Apr. 24-27 | HS TAKS Retest |
| March 7 | TAKS |
| March 26-29 | STAAR/EOC |
| April 23-27 | STAAR/TAKS |
| May 7-18 | EOC |

| Nine-Week Reporting Periods | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|------|
| Begins | Ends | Days |
| Aug. 22 | Oct. 21 | 43 |
| Oct. 24 | Jan. 13 | 47 |
| Jan. 17 | Mar. 9 | 38 |
| Mar. 19 | May 25 | 49 |

| Graduation Information | |
|--|--|
| Comal Academy | |
| May 22, 2012 at 6 pm | |
| will be held at Smithson Valley HS Auditorium | |
| Graduation will be @ Texas State University's Strahan Coliseum in San Marcos | |
| Saturday, May 26, 2012 | |
| Canyon High School, 9 am | |
| Smithson Valley High School, 1 pm | |
| Canyon Lake High School, 5 pm | |

| Early Release Information | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 🕒 | Early Release Days |
| | December 16 and May 25 (1.5 hrs. early) |
| 👤 | Parent Teacher Conference Days |
| | (1.5 hrs. early release for all students) |
| | November 8-9 |

Note: 177 instructional days, 10 staff dev./work

| January 2012 | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | ▲16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

| February 2012 | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | ☺▲ | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | | | |

| March 2012 | | | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | T5 | 6 | T7 | T8 | T9 | 10 |
| 11 | H12 | H13 | H14 | H15 | H16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | T26 | T27 | T28 | T29 | 30 | 31 |

| April 2012 | | | | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | ☺6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | T23 | T24 | T25 | T26 | T27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

| May 2012 | | | | | | |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | T7 | T8 | T9 | T10 | T11 | 12 |
| 13 | T14 | T15 | T16 | T17 | T18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | ☸26 | |
| 27 | H28 | ▲29 | ▲30 | ▲31 | | |

| June 2012 | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

CISD Board Approved: 12.17.09
 Updated: 11.18.10 & 4.13.11