



SENIOR FLIGHT PLAN

The Redhawk Guide to College and Beyond

Getting Started: *Choose your destination*

Congratulations and welcome to the most exciting and challenging year of your life (so far). Selecting a place to continue your education after high school may be your first adult decision. The goal of the LHS counseling department is to provide as much information and support as possible as you choose between thousands of options. Keep in mind that there is something out there for everyone. Your job is to find that something and *make it happen*. Whether you choose community college, technical school, public university, military academy, or private college, your future successes depend on this critical decision.

Begin by asking yourself these questions:

- What careers are you interested in and what preparation is required?
- What do you hope to have as a major field of study?
- What can you and your family afford to spend?
- Where would you like to live? (at home, in your own apartment, dorm room, far away, in the mountains, in a small town or large city...)
- What type of college environment most appeals to you?
- What size classes are most appropriate for you?
- What schools are most compatible with your class rank, grade point average, test scores, and class selections?

2009-2010 LHS Senior Class College Planner

ALL YEAR	AUGUST/SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize college list Update Family Connection Review college applications & their requirements Compare college requirements to your GP A, rank, & scores Review transcript, grades & credits one more time YOU ARE ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING ALL THE COURSES YOU NEED FOR GRADUATION. Notify your counselor immediately if you discover a credit you are lacking. Meet with college representatives who visit our school. See who is coming at Family Connection Make copies of every college or scholarship application you submit Student athletes: File with NCAA Clearinghouse if pursuing college athletics LHS school code = 445579 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit college applications as early as possible to avoid the rush in Nov. Request letters of recommendation from teachers, counselors and/or employers (one month in advance) Attend College Fair on September 23rd at Frisco HS from 6-8 PM. Register for SAT, ACT or SAT II if needed - collegeboard.com and act.org ACT is September 12th Take THEA if applicable Rank & GPA available mid-September. Make sure you have registered with NCAA Clearinghouse if you plan to participate in college athletics. (See link on Family Connection.) Chances are you will have to submit at least one essay as part of each application. Start to develop an outline this month. Log on to Family Connection and complete My Colleges. Review SAT II - Subject test requirements for college to which 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check on housing arrangements at your college. Complete final essays & admission procedures necessary for applications including housing Conduct scholarship search. T AKS retesting for senior students Watch deadlines and work on applications. SAT is October 10th ACT is October 24th File early action/early decision applications (if applicable). Bring back official documentation of proof of visit to college campus. (Remember day's taken for college visits count against final exam exemptions) Portrait EX on campus Oct 1 for seniors who still need senior picture made Informational meeting with Jostens on cap, gown, and announcements on Oct 27th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue scholarship search; utilize information on Family Connection & web sites Take THEA if applicable Mail all applications before Thanksgiving! SAT is November 7th Register for a Pin II for F AFSA at www.pin.ed.gov (Parent and Student numbers are required to complete application). F AFSA is the federal form for financial aid Order cap, gown and announcements Attend Financial Aid Night on November 9th at 6:30PM at WHS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To file a FAFSA, you will need 20011 Income TIL ". Return, W-2, and income records for 2008 and/or other financial records. Do not submit FAFSA before Jan. 1, 2010 Complete any Texas Tech correspondence courses by Spring Break Get 2nd semester schedule adjusted for courses you may need to graduate Keep studying and prepare for exams. Some colleges may request grades again in January. Verify cap, gown and announcements are ordered Provide mid-year reports to your counselor, if requested by your college. SAT is December 5th ACT is December 12th
<p>JANUARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAST CHANCE FOR YOU TO CHECK CREDITS FOR GRADUATION. SEE YOUR COUNSELOR ASAP IF LACKING ANY CREDITS. Complete F AFSA forms & file after Jan. 1, 2010. Do not wait to file F AFSA until you are admitted to the college. Check applications for any errors to avoid delays. PARENTS: File IRS returns early to determine financial aid eligibility. Attend Frisco Education Foundation meeting for scholarship information (TBA) KEEP COPIES OF EVERYTHING! 	<p>FEBRUARY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verify that all required forms have arrived at your choice colleges by telephone or on-line Verify that financial aid forms have been mailed. Watch the mail for college decisions Continue scholarship search. Take THEA if applicable. Midyear reports mailed to colleges by counselors New GPA and rank available Complete diploma verification. 	<p>MARCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check final plans for housing at your college/university. Don't forget your deposit. Make sure you turned in everything required for admissions & financial aid, i.e. medical forms Watch for award letters from colleges where you applied for aid. Respond by the deadline. Make final decisions on which college to attend. Send in paperwork & deposits by the deadlines. Notify other colleges where you applied but will not attend. Register for AP Tests 	<p>APRIL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cap, gown & announcements for graduation are delivered. Complete follow-up paperwork for admissions housing, orientation, financial aid, medical exams, etc Keep a file of college paperwork. Last T AKS Retest before graduation Attend AP Pre-administration session. Most selective colleges announce admission decisions. Complete the Graduation Survey on Family Connection to inform counselors of your final college choice and scholarships received and request final transcript. Check college orientation schedules Final diploma verification. Prom 	<p>MAY/JUNE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AP exams EEF Scholarship Night Study for those final exams. Don't blow it now! Register for THEA test if attending a Texas school, unless you are exempt Attend summer orientation for college registration. Follow up on financial aid awards if you haven't heard anything yet. Verify your final transcript request at Family Connection Finalize summer plans for jobs, classes, etc. Senior Day Senior Awards Night Graduation! Congratulations Grads!

GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN...

The College Admission Process

If you are applying to a community college or technical school:

1. **NOW**- Review your current courses and graduation plan. Make sure that you have earned credit for all required courses and electives.
2. **September**- Log on to the college's website and make note of all entrance requirements and deadlines.
3. **October**- Begin investigating scholarships.
4. **October**- Pass all sections of the Exit TAKS and keep a copy of your score report- If you haven't already.
5. **January**- Complete and submit the FAFSA- Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
6. **January**- Contact the college's admissions office to request a catalog and course schedule.
7. **February**- Set up an appointment with an admissions officer to tour the campus and meet with academic and financial aid advisors.
8. **March-April**- Take one of the following tests under the Texas Success Initiative (TSI): THEA, Compass, Accuplacer or Asset. (Exemptions- TAKS Math- 2200, TAKS English/Language Arts 2200, TAKS Writing 3 or higher, or SAT 1070 Total, 500 Verbal, 500 Math, or ACT 23 Composite, 19 English, 19 Math)
9. **MAY**- Request a transcript:

SEE HOW TO REQUEST A
TRANSCRIPT FOR DIRECTIONS.

Community College Advantages

- *Less expensive than most 4 year universities
- *Open to all high school graduates
- *Close to home
- *Smaller classes
- *Smooth transition from high school to college
- *Wide range of associate degrees and certification programs
- *Concurrent enrollment programs with area universities.

Collin College	www.ccccd.edu
Dallas County Community Colleges	www.dcccd.edu
Grayson County College	www.grayson.edu
Austin Community College	www.austin.cc.tx.us
Blinn College	www.blinn.edu
South plains College	www.southplainscollege.edu

If a public university in Texas is the right road for you:

1. **NOW**- Review your current courses and graduation plan. Make sure that you have earned credit for all required courses and electives.
2. **September**- Log on to the school's website and make note of all entrance requirements and deadlines. (admissions, housing, financial aid)
3. **September**- Contact the college's admissions office to request a catalog and course schedule.
4. **September**- Set up an appointment with an admissions officer to tour the campus and meet with academic and financial aid advisors if possible.
5. **September**- Go to www.applytexas.org to apply on-line to any public university in Texas. Your application does not have to be submitted at this time, but you need to be familiar with the procedures.
6. **September/ October**- Take (or retake) the SAT and/or ACT if necessary.
7. **October**- Begin investigating scholarships.
8. **October**- Pass all sections of the Exit TAKS- if you haven't already.
9. **November**- Request a transcript:

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TRANSCRIPT FOR DIRECTIONS.

10. **November**- Submit application for admissions. Keep in mind that although all Texas public universities will accept the common application, the essay requirements may vary. Do this now even though the deadline might not be until January or February.
11. **November**- Check deadlines and requirements for honors programs. If a letter of recommendation is required, see the steps in #7 on the next page.
12. **January**- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. (FAFSA)
13. **March- April**- Take THEA unless you are exempt. See #8 under community colleges.

***These dates are suggested guidelines. It is your responsibility to obtain and meet deadlines set by each university.

If your journey calls for a private or out of state college or university:

1. **NOW**- Review your current courses and graduation plan. Make sure that you have earned credit for all required courses and electives.
2. **September**-- Log on to the school's website and make note of all entrance requirements and deadlines. Make sure to find the housing application deadline.
3. **September**-- Contact the college's admissions office to request a catalog and course schedule.
4. **September**-- Set up an appointment with an admissions officer to tour the campus and meet with academic and financial aid advisors if possible.
5. **September**-- Determine whether or not early decision, early action or early notification programs are offered and if they are in your best interest. Early decision is a binding agreement between you, the university, and LHS that if admitted you will attend that university and will forgo all other offers regardless of program or financial benefit. This option best fits those students who are certain that they want to go a particular university and do not need to weigh it against other possibilities. This applicant pool is usually smaller than the general pool, but it is highly competitive. Early action and early notification programs allow you to apply early and learn of admission decisions as early as December or January. These non-binding plans do not require an immediate financial commitment. Please note that each university has its own policy. Pay close attention to specific guidelines and find out what happens to your application if you are not admitted early.
6. **September-October** (depending on college deadlines)- Determine the application procedure for the university or college and submit an application. Many institutions (300) use all or part of the Universal Common Application that includes an on-line submission tool or print version of numerous components. Make sure to find out exactly what each school needs to complete your admissions file.
www.commonapp.org
7. **September- October**--

SEE HOW TO REQUEST A
LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION
FROM YOUR COUNSELOR.

8. **September- October**-- If you need teacher recommendations follow the guidelines set forth by each teacher and provide a stamped business envelope addressed to the particular admissions department.
9. **September/ October**-- Take (SAT) or ACT necessary. Arrange to take any required or recommended subject tests
10. **October**-- Begin investigating scholarships.
11. **October**-- Pass all sections of TAKS- if you haven't already.
12. **November**--

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13. **January**-- If the college or university requires a mid-year report, submit the request and any necessary forms along with an addressed, stamped envelope to your counselor by January 15th. Reports will be mailed as soon as updated GPAs and class ranks are available. Make sure that you have completed and signed your part of the form.

14.

Travel Tips-

Keep a file for each college and include all due dates, forms and hard copies of on-line submissions.

Don't underestimate the power of the essay. ---This is your best opportunity to distinguish yourself from the masses.

Colleges care about your course load and senior grades!

A word (or two) about deadlines- If you're early, you're on time, if you're on time you may be late... missing deadlines for any reason is unacceptable. Admissions officers believe that students who miss deadlines would not be good candidates for their schools.



How to Request a Letter of Recommendation from Teachers

- If your college requires a certain recommendation form, please provide a copy to your teacher(s); otherwise, please simply ask your teacher(s) to write you a letter of recommendation.
- Provide your teacher with a copy of a completed self assessment form (attached).
- Provide an addressed stamped envelope and your teacher(s) will mail the letter directly.
- Be courteous!
- ASAP is not a deadline! Please give your teachers at least two weeks!
- Thank you cards are appreciated - you may need them to write you another letter!

How to Request an Official Transcript

In order to request a transcript you must do the following;
this is the only way to request a transcript!!

- Log on to Family Connection, which can be found on the LHS Counselor Corner.
- Click on "My Colleges".
- Click "add to this list" and add the colleges to which you are applying.
- Apply to colleges.
- Once you have applied to the university, you will go back to "My Colleges" and put a check mark beside that college and "move to application list".
- Once you have applied to the university, you can now request a transcript by clicking on "Transcripts" under the "About College" heading on the left-hand side of your Family Connection home page.
- Follow appropriate links.
- Please do not request a transcript until you have actually applied to the college.
- Updated rank and GPA will be available mid-September and an unofficial transcript will be delivered to your English classroom. Please double check your transcript to make sure you have completed all graduation requirements!!
- Each official transcript will cost \$1.00 and must be paid at the time of request to Ms. Hardy, our registrar in the front office.
- Transcripts will not be mailed immediately, so please allow time for processing. ASAP is not a deadline!
- Please keep holidays in mind - we will be unable to send transcripts and/or letters of recommendation during Thanksgiving and Winter Break. It is up to you to check deadlines and request in a timely manner.

How to Request a Letter of Recommendation from Counselor

- Not all colleges require a letter of recommendation from your counselor. If your college *specifically* asks for a letter of recommendation from your counselor, the attached self assessment must be filled out and returned to your counselor.
- On Family Connection under "Document Library", click on "Seniors" and print 4 copies of the Teacher Recommendation Forms. Please fill out the top section and give to 4 of your teachers; they will then return them to your counselor. The counselor will use this information to help write the letter of recommendation.
- **Before** we write your letter of recommendation, we must have the input from 4 of your teachers and your self assessment!!
- Please provide addressed stamped envelopes to your counselor, and we will mail these letters directly to the college.
- Please keep holidays in mind - we will be unable to send transcripts and/or letters of recommendation during Thanksgiving and Winter Break. It is up to you to check deadlines and request in a timely manner.

ASAP is not a deadline! Please allow two weeks for this process.

6. How do you select colleges on your list? What do they have in common? How are they different?

7. List activities that you have been involved in throughout high school, including: extracurricular (athletics, clubs, fine arts programs, etc), community service, employment, and hobbies.

8. In or out of school, which academic awards and/or achievements do you want me to know about? Which elected offices have you held?

9. Describe the academic accomplishment (major paper, science experiment, artistic project) you are most proud of and why.

10. List your three most distinguishing or most admirable qualities. Explain each.

11. What do you hope to accomplish in college and after? Consider your career goals and your broader goals.

Things You Wish You Knew Before Applying to College...

1. **Applying to college is like taking another class at school.** You can either take it as a "summer class" and get started early or you can worry about it as an additional "course" come your senior year of high school in the fall.
2. **Leadership and commitment** are extraordinarily valuable assets and are extremely important on your college application.
3. **You need to believe in yourself.** Little do you know where you're really headed — nobody really has the right idea. Have a good attitude and work ethic towards other courses and you'll be surprised. Never undercut yourself.
4. **Statistics change.** What happened two years ago may not hold true anymore. Just because your friend got into Yale in 2004 with "worse grades than you" doesn't mean that your chances are better than his.
5. **Read.** A lot. Reading in college is going to have to become second nature. Getting a head start will only help you grow intellectually and will build up some motivation for later.
6. **Volunteer early.** Don't just get into community service just because your college application demands it. It actually makes you feel very good.
7. **Research scholarship opportunities.** They vary from state to state and from school to school. You may be on your own on this one as some college counselors don't have all the resources. Thankfully, you do.
8. **Stand out.** That's what all colleges demand: someone who will be an asset to the school rather than an ordinary student. Write a college essay that matters. To get an idea of what works and what doesn't, just don't write on the same topics that your friends have written on.
9. **Study your college and make a case.** Read documentation on the school. Then, when the application asks you "why do you want to go to THIS school?" you need to have an answer that will blow them away.
10. **Build up your vocabulary.** Your SATs and ACTs need them. So do you. You'll come across those words in college more than once and you'll sound a lot smarter.
11. **Challenge yourself.** Trust me, you'll be challenged in school, and if not in college, in the real world, so it's better to get a head start now. Plus, it's a great learning experience for you. Take AP courses. Enroll in independent study courses or in classes at your local college. Always keep learning.
12. **Be nice to your teachers.** They write your recommendation letters.
13. **Seek out the safety schools.** Look hard and you shall find something that will make you happy. It will also make your life a lot less stressful.
14. **Take your SAT IIs alongside the relevant AP class.** It saves a lot of studying down the road. If that means you're taking an SAT II in 9th grade, do it. Better to prepare earlier than to have to study all over again a few years down the road.
15. **Assert yourself.** Don't be shy. Leadership is important. Colleges seek out the leaders of tomorrow, so be one today.
16. **Explore internships.** Find out what you're passionate about and pursue it in the "working world." Some people realize that they're not cut out for that line of work, so getting a head start gives you more insight on whether you can live with it for years or whether it's time to make a change.
17. **The common college application can be recycled.** You can send them to different schools (with the proper edits) without worrying about rewriting an entire new application.
18. **Be yourself.** Don't be your parents' child. Go to a school you love, not one that your parents love.
19. **College interviews aren't that bad.** Present yourself as you normally would (be yourself — there's no need to play dress up) and just talk about what interests you in the school. Interviewers want to get to know the real you. Just talk and you'll be fine.
20. **Ivies aren't always worth it.** They don't necessarily offer better educations than your local schools or your "safeties." The best school for you may not necessarily be the highest-ranked institution.

21. **Apply early action if you can** (when there are no penalties). You may grow impatient.
22. **Organize yourself.** You'll need to continue it in college. Get a notebook and a daily planner that can keep you up to speed on your homework assignments. PDAs are fine too.
23. **Your college counselor is a resource.** Take advantage of him/her. Build that relationship today.
24. **Consider competitions.** Math and science buffs should look into the Intel Science Talent Search, the Siemens Westinghouse Competition, the Olympiads (in your field), or the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF).
25. **Don't slack off.** You'll pay for it one day.
26. **Build a relationship with your teachers that is more than about grades.** In the grand scheme of things, grades matter little.
27. **Halloween is the day before the Early Decision/Early Action admissions deadline.** Finish your college application a lot earlier.
28. **Get your recommendation letters in order.** Teachers are asked by hundreds of students for these letters yearly. Be first or at least early.
29. **Don't pass up the merit award.** It may never come back to you again.
30. **Check financial aid deadlines** and don't be late.
31. **Focus.** Do your assignments. Do your homework. Slacking off will not pay.
32. **Rely on yourself.** In college, you're the boss. A college coach may help, but at the end of the day, it's all you.
33. **You're no different than the others.** Well, maybe you are. But if your friends get rejected, take heed! Don't say "it won't happen to me."
34. **Create your own opportunities.** Sometimes, you won't get into the prestigious geography team, but your interest in politics can get you started on your own Congress Club. That will also make you a leader.
35. **Relax.** Don't stress out. You're not alone in this.
36. **Don't dismiss smaller schools.** Liberal arts colleges may be great for you and perfect for what you're pursuing. Single-sex schools can also offer superior learning experiences in a much smaller and closer-knit community than you'll find in larger schools.
37. **Visit the campus.** You might really love it on paper, but until you visit it, you can never be so sure. Why do you think job applicants are interviewed before they're hired?
38. **Got a question? Call the school.** They're not screening calls and won't hold it against you if you have a question about the application process or about coursework. Don't be afraid to initiate.
39. **Plan for the best but prepare for the worst.** You need to be realistic about the entire situation. There are lots of schools out there — not only Ivy Leagues — but schools that really will be your perfect match. Seek and you shall find.

Senior Checklist

Have you...

- ✓ Applied to 3 colleges?
- ✓ Charted out all deadlines?
- ✓ Ordered transcripts through Family Connection?
- ✓ Written essays for applications?
- ✓ Completed a resume of activities?
- ✓ Taken required tests (ACT, SAT, SAT II) & sent scores?
- ✓ Requested letters of recommendations?
- ✓ Downloaded the Freshman Scholarship?
- ✓ Applications for each school?
- ✓ Decided or at least researched majors?
- ✓ Gotten a FAFSA pin number?
- ✓ Searched scholarship websites?
- ✓ Updated your college list in Family Connection?
- ✓ Checked out the websites on the back of this page??

Check out these websites!!

- www.collegeanswer.com
- www.collegefund.org (Native American)
- www.college-scholarships.com
- www.fastaid.com
- www.fastweb.com
- www.finaid.org
- www.nacac.com
- www.gmsp.org (Gates Millennium Scholars)
- www.hsf.net (Hispanic)
- www.ocanatl.org (Asian)
- www.review.com
- www.scholarships.com
- www.scholarshipsforhispanics.org
- www.studentaid.ed.gov
- www.salliemafund.org
- www.uncf.org (African American)
- www.collegeforalltexans.com
- www.collegeanswer.com
- www.collegeboard.com
- www.collegeispossible.org

- www.mapping-your-future.org
- www.myroad.com

- www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/search.asp
- www.petersons.com
- www.students.gov