



If you can dream  
it ... you can Do  
it!

Parent's Guide to support their student's College and Career Readiness dreams.

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## Introduction

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### Dream Big

In today's world, a college education is becoming a requirement for jobs that pay a living wage and provide opportunity for promotion. A college education includes four-year college degrees, as well as junior and community (two-year) degrees and technical colleges where a student can earn a two-year associate degree or obtain a certificate or licensure in a specialized field to prepare for a career. Parents and other caring adults play a crucial role in student's education and decision making process.

Dream preparation is important. It is important to support our student's big dreams and help make a big future for them. Students must be at a level of academic, social, emotional, independents in order to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program, or in a high-quality certificate program that enables students to enter a career pathway with potential future advancement.

Student success is measurable. If your child is prepared to complete the entry-level or prerequisite courses or core certificate and licensure courses at a level of understanding and proficiency, then it is possible for them to successfully take the next course in the sequence (or grade level) or the next level of course in college in the subject area or of completing the certificate or licensure. Having this skill increases your student's ability to be successful scholastically and professionally.

This guide is designed to assist parents with meaningful standards to support student's preparation for college and career from preschool through high school in five readiness areas:

**Academic Readiness:** The ability to succeed in first-year classes that earn credits at a technical college, community college or four-year college or university

**Admissions Readiness:** The ability to meet admissions requirements at a range of postsecondary institutions

**College and Career Readiness:** The ability to identify careers that match personal, financial, and other goals and an understanding of the skills, credentials, and experiences required to succeed in those careers

**Financial Readiness:** The ability to cover the cost of the first semester of study at a postsecondary institution through savings, loans, and financial aid

**Military Readiness:** The ability to meet enlistment requirements for the United States Armed Forces.

**Social and Personal Readiness:** The ability to set educational goals, make and monitor progress toward them, and create relationships with peers and adults that support academic success

Standards for college and career readiness are also measurable. The standards are descriptions of the essential skills and knowledge students need to become ready for college and career, giving clear meaning to test scores and serving as a link between what students have learned and what they are ready to learn next. Parents, teachers, counselors, and students can use the standards to:

- Communicate widely shared learning goals and expectations
- Relate test scores to the skills needed in high school and beyond
- Understand the increasing complexity of skills needed across the score ranges in English, mathematics, reading, writing and more

The standards encompass the many paths available to students after high school, and they provide insights related to both college and career readiness.

#### **Benchmark Scores:**

Lubbock ISD uses multiple benchmark scores for measuring the college and career readiness of groups of students. A benchmark score is a simple, powerful way to evaluate and support student's progress toward success after high school. This document provides grade level targeted benchmark scores for STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness), MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), College Board Suite of Assessments (PSATs, Preliminary-SAT, and SAT, Scholastic Aptitude Test) and ACT (American College Testing) for elementary through high school in addition to advising families on supporting student's college and career aspirations in the aforementioned six areas. Specific scores are listed throughout this document for appropriate elementary to high school levels. Students are considered college- and career-ready when their STAAR, STAAR End-of-Course, SAT or ACT section scores meet the minimal benchmarks for all sections of the test(s).

# College and Career Prep for Early Childhood through Elementary School Years

## Preschool through Grade 5

**Encourage reading:** Reading helps develop vocabulary and is a fundamental skill for all learning - math, science, social studies, etc.

- Talk to your child, from the time he or she is an infant.
- Point out letters and words on signs to preschoolers.
- Spend 20 minutes a day reading to your child, or having your child read to you or an older sibling.
  - Older students should read on their own daily, but often still enjoy listening to adults read.
  - Visit a public library for books and magazines or read a newspaper.

**Remember, intelligence (being smart) is not fixed:** Effort and persistence when facing challenges are important characteristics of a successful student.

- Tell your child, “That hard work makes you smart.”
- Praise your child’s effort, not just success; say things such as: “I like how hard you worked at that math assignment even though it was difficult.”

**Help your child set goals:** Setting goals is good practice, and achieving goals guides motivation.

- Help your student set and achieve goals about behavior, prioritizing, time management, academics and more.
- Turn off TVs, cell phones, electronic devices and eliminate other distractions.
- Help your child check his/her homework to be sure it is done correctly.

**Stay connected with school:** Advocating for your student helps your child develop the skills for academic success.

- Attend parent-teacher conferences and use your school’s information system to stay informed about your child’s progress and grades.
- If you have questions, contact your student’s teacher.
- Find out how your child keeps track of his or her homework and how he organizes his notebooks. Then work together to develop a system he will want to use - a planner or binder - and review it each night to know the upcoming assignments.

## Grades Preschool-5

- Encourage reading
- Remember, intelligence (being smart) is not fixed
- Help your student set goals
- Stay connected with school
- Encourage your child to seek help
- Establish a set time for homework every night
- Sing to your child
- Start saving for college

- Ask teachers or school counselors if your child is taking classes that will prepare him or her for college, and if your child's test scores indicate that he or she will be ready for college.

**Encourage your child to seek help:** Learning when and how to get assistance is an important skill for college and life in self-efficacy. It is better to get help early before a problem worsens.

If you think your child needs extra help, you or your student can ask a teacher or counselor about tutoring or other assistance available at the school.

**Establish a set time for homework every night:** Turn off TVs, cell phones and eliminate other distractions. Forming this habit earlier will benefit your child through high school.

**Sing to your child:** From the time he or she is an infant, sing to your child; later sing and recite Nursery Rhymes together using motion when possible.

**Start saving for college:** There are many ways to make college affordable. Even the smallest savings add up if set aside regularly over a long period of time.

- Research Texas 529 College Savings Plans and other savings ideas at [savingforcollege.com](http://savingforcollege.com).
- Try the College Savings Planner to get a prospective cost of college, including room and board, books supplies and other expenses. You can calculate your savings need at [savingforcollege.com/529-college-savings-planner](http://savingforcollege.com/529-college-savings-planner).

If no one in your family has attended college before, [firstinthefamily.org](http://firstinthefamily.org) provides advice for first-generations students.

## College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

### STAAR Scores

Reading (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>): Meets Grade Level Score

Math (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>): Meets Grade Level Score

Writing (4<sup>th</sup>): Meets Grade Level Score

### MAP Scores

Reading (5<sup>th</sup>): 59<sup>th</sup> or above Percentile

Math (5<sup>th</sup>): 61<sup>st</sup> or above Percentile

Please be advised ~.

Students that achieve the STAAR Meets Grade Level equates to a 60% chance of completing one year of college without remediation. Meets equates to a 75% chance.



# College and Career Prep for Middle School Years

## Grades 6 through 8

**Encourage your child to take school seriously and choose challenging classes:** Your child needs strong preparation in middle school to take the high school classes that colleges require. Middle school subjects are important preparation for college and career preparatory classes such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual credit, career and technical education (CTE), etc.

**Explore a variety of career interests:** It is difficult to predict the future, but it's never too early to start planning for it.

- Ask your child about activities that he or she enjoys, and explore related careers.
- Find a way to connect your child's dreams to attending college. For example, if a child wants to be a professional athlete or fashion designer, mention that the road to those careers includes college.
- Visit [kids.usa.gov/teens-home/index.html](http://kids.usa.gov/teens-home/index.html) or [nasa.gov/audience/students/5-8/index.html](http://nasa.gov/audience/students/5-8/index.html) for fun websites to explore careers.
- This interactive tool, [texasrealitycheck.com](http://texasrealitycheck.com), will help your child connect the cost of a desired lifestyle with college and career options.

## Grades 6-8

- Encourage your child to take challenging classes
- Explore a variety of career interests
- Develop academic habits of success
- Get involved in extracurricular activities
- Learn about college cost and financial aid
- Take the PSAT 8/9
- Develop a PGP

**Develop academic habits of success:** Developing organizational skills, learning how to get help from school staff and building positive relationships are key college and career skills to begin developing in middle school.

- Check your child's binder or planner each night.
- Help your child build positive relationships with peers who make good choices and are developing good study habits.
- Help your child take a learning style self-assessment to identify his or her best approaches to studying and learning. ([educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml](http://educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml))

**Get involved in extracurricular activities:** Colleges look for well-rounded students who volunteer or are involved in school and community activities. Activities are also a great way to get to know other students or adjust to a new school.

- Sign your child up for a school or community activity.

**Learn about college costs and financial aid:** Become familiar with college costs and ways to cover those costs, including grants, loans and scholarships.



- Get an early estimate of the financial aid your child might receive by using the planning tools at [studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/estimate](http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/estimate) or [collegeforalltexans.com](http://collegeforalltexans.com).

**Take the PSAT 8/9 test in 8th grade:** The PSAT 8/9 test is good practice for the SAT college admissions exam that students will take later in 11th grade. It provides feedback on whether students are academically college ready in addition to providing personalized study plan through the online College Board and Khan Academy® resources.

- Review test results with your student and your student’s teacher or counselor.

**Develop a Personal Graduation Plan (PGP):** Students will discuss with their alpha counselor career goal setting and courses in high school that can help them reach their career aspirations.

- Help your child select high school classes and an endorsement option(s) with a career in mind.
- Make sure your child registers for classes that will keep your student on track for college – Foundation plus Endorsement graduation plan. Typically, four-year colleges require:
  - 4 years of math (including Algebra II and other advance mathematics)
  - 4 years of English (including English 4)
  - 4 years of science (including biology and chemistry)
  - 2-3 years of foreign language
  - 4 years of social studies
  - 1 year of fine arts

Although these classes may not be required for a two-year community or technical college, they are good preparation for all college students, especially if students plan to pursue an advance degree later in life. It is important to research all options and college entrance requirements.

- Encourage your student to take math, science and technology classes, because many jobs of the future are in these fields.

## College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

### STAAR Scores

Reading (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>): Meets Grade Level Score

Math (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>): Meets Grade Level Score

Writing (7<sup>th</sup>): Meets Grade Level Score

### MAP Scores

Reading (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>): 59<sup>th</sup> or above Percentile

Math (7<sup>th</sup>): 61<sup>st</sup> or above Percentile

### PSAT 8/9 College and Career Readiness Benchmarks - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 390

Math: 430

# High School College and Career Prep

## Grades 9 through 12

**Explore college credit courses available at the high school:** Dual Credit, OnRamps, AP, and IB to name a few. Review prerequisites requirements for these courses, including TSIA (Texas Success Initiative Assessment) and others. Most students become more confident and prepared after taking a college-level course in high school. For more information, see Lubbock ISD Secondary Course Offerings, Grades 9-12 booklet located under the “Parent and Student” tab on the Lubbock ISD website.

**Explore career interests:** Continue discussions with your child about activities he or she enjoys and brainstorm careers related to those interests. Having a career goal can help students be more motivated and see the connection with school.

- Your child can find careers that fit his or her interests by taking an interest inventory. One website that can help is [actstudent.org/career/](http://actstudent.org/career/).
- School counselors can discuss the type of college degree needed for those careers.

**Consider different types of postsecondary options:** There is a wide range of postsecondary options, including two- and four-year colleges, and technical college programs that often take fewer than two years to complete. With good planning, two-year college credits can transfer to a four-year college. For some majors, it may be best to start at a four-year college, because of a required sequence of classes. For example, a student who transfers after two years at a community college often will need three more years of study to complete an engineering degree.

- Discuss with your child what type of college may be the right fit for the careers or areas of study that interest them.
- Some other factors include: diversity and size of the student population, student support systems, city size/location, and average high school GPA for incoming freshman.

**Attend college fairs and visit campuses:** Visiting colleges and talking to admissions staff are good ways to see if a campus is the right fit for your student.

- For information on factors to consider, review the “Choosing a School” link on [studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college](http://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college).
- Consider whether the college has majors (areas of study) that fit your child’s interests as well as college size, location and cost.
- Make appointments for information sessions and tours with a college’s Office of Admissions and major departments.

**Complete a College Financial Aid Calculator:** This will give you a realistic estimate of college costs and how much your family is expected to contribute.

- Check out the FAFSA4caster at [studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/estimate](http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/estimate) to get an estimate of college expenses and find planning tools.
- Encourage your child to explore grant and scholarship options online and with their alpha counselor.

## Grades 9-12

- Explore college-credit courses
- Explore career interests
- Consider different types of postsecondary options
- Attend college fairs and visit campuses
- Complete a College Financial Aid Calculator

## Freshman Year (9<sup>th</sup> grade)

**Grades count:** Often students think that grades in 9<sup>th</sup> grade classes do not count for college admissions. Not only do they count, success in those classes is the foundation for more challenging coursework later in high school.

- Take advantage of Lubbock ISD online gradebook, track your student's progress regularly.
- If your student is struggling, contact the teacher or counselor to obtain additional support. Do not wait for the end of the semester to intervene.

**Get involved in extracurricular activities:** Colleges look for well-rounded students who volunteer, are successfully employed and/or are involved in school activities.

- Help your child get involved in an activity at school or in the community.
- Keep homework a priority by helping your child develop time management skills. Register for 10<sup>th</sup> grade classes: Registration can happen as early as January.
- Stay involved in the registration process to make sure your student is taking the recommended classes to be prepared for college.

**Retake the PSAT 8/9 test in 9<sup>th</sup> grade:** Compare your student's scores with the college and career readiness benchmark. Encourage your student to take advantage of the personalized study plan through the online College Board and Khan Academy® resources.

### Grade 9

- Grades count
- Get involved in extracurricular activities
- Retake the PSAT 8/9 test in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade

### College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

#### STAAR End of Course

English 1: Meets Grade Level Score

Algebra I: Meets Grade Level Score

#### PSAT 8/9 College and Career Readiness Benchmarks - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 410

Math: 450

## Sophomore Year (10<sup>th</sup> Grade)

**Take the PSAT:** Use them as practice for the SAT tests, and to see how your child is progressing in academic readiness for college.

**Sign up for a College Board account:** If you already have an account, do not sign up for another. Log into your account and review your college and career benchmark scores and use Khan Academy to prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT (11 grade) and SAT.

**Register for 11th grade classes:** Your student should consider taking a class that offers college credit and/or industry bearing licensures and certifications, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Credit, CTE, OnRamps, and other options

- Learn more at [Lubbockisd.org](http://Lubbockisd.org) – Counseling & College/Career Readiness Department
- Learn more about choosing and exploring colleges at [bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search) and [actstudent.org/college/choosing.html](http://actstudent.org/college/choosing.html)

### Grade 10

- Take the fall PSAT
- Explore career interests
- Sign up for a College Board
- Register for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade classes

### College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

#### STAAR End of Course

English II: Meets Grade Level Score

PSAT/NMSQT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks - 10th Grade

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 430

Math: 480

## Junior Year (11<sup>th</sup> grade)

**Take the PSAT/NMSQT:** Scores on this test will determine students national merit status which can lead to scholarships for merit- commended and finalist scholar.

**Take the ACT and/or SAT:** Most four-year colleges expect applicants to take the ACT or SAT exam in spring. Test dates in March, April, June and August (varies per test type) are good, because students have completed most or all of their junior year classes.

- Find out which test your child's preferred college accepts.
- Register your child at least one month in advance. For dates and registration, see [actstudent.org](http://actstudent.org) and [sat.collegeboard.org/home](http://sat.collegeboard.org/home).
- Have your student participate in ACT or SAT preparation classes offered through schools and community education programs.

**Continue planning for financing college:** Completing a sample FAFSA (financial aid) form will help you get an estimate of the expected family contribution, and the financial aid your child might receive.

- Explore the financial planning tools and sample FAFSA at [studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/estimate](http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/estimate).
- Talk to school alpha counselor with your child and research scholarships online.

**If your student aspires to play a sport in college:** Contact your high school coach to ask about programs and scholarships for college-bound athletes. Also, see [www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future](http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future) for National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and other guidelines for college athletes.

**Register for a strong senior year:** Advanced courses in English, math, science and social studies are important subjects to continue in 12th grade. Four-year colleges expect it and two-year community and technical colleges often require placement tests in math or language arts, i.e. TSIA.

### Grade 11

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT
- Take the ACT and/or SAT
- Continue planning for financing college
- Contact your high school coach about programs and scholarships for college-bound athletes
- Register for a strong senior year

### College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

PSAT/NMSQT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks - 11<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 460  
Math: 510

SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks  
Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 480  
8<sup>th</sup> Math: 530

## Senior Year (12th grade)

**Avoid 'senioritis':** Colleges consider the senior year course load when making admission decisions. In addition, seniors who skip math courses can lose skills and increase the risk of being required to take non-credited developmental classes in college.

**Last chance for ACT and SAT:**

- Register for the July, August, or October test(s) at least one month in advance.
- If your student took the test in 11th grade however did not score as high as he/she expected, consider **re-taking** the test. Some schools use best score, all score, or superscore options, increasing your student's chance for admissions and scholarships.

**Submit applications:** Most applications are submitted online. Texas public colleges use the "Apply Texas Application" which can be submitted to multiple colleges at once. Some colleges will waive application fees based on financial need.

- Many four-year colleges have December deadlines, while others allow applications until January, February or even June. Some community colleges will accept students until the start of school, but others have spring or summer deadlines.
- Apply to at least four colleges: Applying to four colleges instead of one makes it 40% more likely that students will enroll in a four-year college. When students apply to more than two, their chances of enrolling will be even better. Encourage your student to apply to at least four or more colleges – one safety, two good fits, and one reach.
  - Good fit (Match) school: one where the average GPA and ACT/SAT scores for incoming first-year students are about the same as your child's
  - Reach (stretch) school: one where the GPA and test scores are a bit higher
  - Safety school: one where the scores are a little lower
- If the application requires recommendation letters, make sure your student asks people to write letters at least one month before the due date, and preferably early in fall. They can ask counselors, teachers, employers, coaches or leaders from volunteer activities. Colleges may request references from specific people.

### Grades 12

- Avoid 'senioritis'
- Retake the ACT and SAT
- Submit college applications
- Decide where to go
- Confirm enrollment
- Plan for college expenses
- Plan for getting to college and moving in

- If a college your student applies to requires an essay, make sure they have a teacher, counselor or yourself review it and provide comments. Make sure your student revises the essay before submitting it.
- Monitor applications to make sure all of the required documents (essays, official transcript, admission fees, test scores, student activities, letters of recommendation, etc.) are submitted.
- Attend any financial aid workshops offered by your school.

**Decide where to go:** By March/April most colleges will have made admission decisions and provided information on financial aid.

- Compare schools based on the actual cost to pay after any grants or scholarships offered by the college are subtracted from the full tuition price.
- Apply for housing: Complete the housing application, which may be due as early as October 1. Consider living and learning communities where students live on the same floor and take classes in common.

**Confirm enrollment:** Follow the directions in the acceptance letter for the school your student chooses. Often a confirmation fee must be sent to the school in spring. If the fee is a financial hardship, ask the college if they will waive the fee.

- Your student should tell the school counselor the college he/she plans to attend, and request that the final transcript and all college credit exam scores be sent there.
- Find out when tuition and room and board payments are due. Colleges usually allow installment payments, but you may have to ask for that option.
- Check with your student often to make sure they are reading emails and responding to all information sent by the college.
- If your student has a disability and needs assistance, help your student with submitting required paperwork to the college office for students with disabilities.

**Plan for college expenses:**

- Help your child prepare a budget for college in advance.
- Determine how much to spend on food, necessities, books and supplies, and entertainment.
- Most students will need debit cards. Highly recommended is for the bank you and your child choose has an ATM machine close to campus.
- A checking account is convenient for the purchase of books and other expenses. Most colleges will charge books to a student's college account, which is then paid by check, charge card or online payments from bank accounts.
- Complete an official financial aid form (FAFSA) in October at [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov). You will need your prior-prior year income tax forms and savings information handy.

**Plan for getting to college and moving in:** Students are provided a specific move in date, and possibly time of day. Ask the college's residential advisor for more information.

- Air travel: Schedule flights in advance for the best prices.
- Car: Parking on campus may be challenging, so be aware of parking restrictions.
- College Bus Shuttle Service: Some college campuses provide bus services to and from the city where the student lives.
- Train or bus: Find out how much your child can take as luggage.



## College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

### Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA)

Reading: 355

Math: 356

Writing/Essay: 340 MC + 4 Essay or 4 Diagnostic Level + 5 Essay Score

### \* SAT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks

Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 480

Math: 530

### \*ACT Readiness Benchmarks

English: 18

Mathematics: 22

Reading: 22

Science: 23

Composite Score: 22

\*SAT and ACT benchmark scores are not necessarily the same scores required for college admissions.

Please be advised ~ Students are considered college- and career-ready when their STAAR End-of-Course, SAT or ACT section scores meet all benchmarks.

- Students that achieve Meets Grade Level equates to a 60% chance of completing one year of college without remediation. Meets equates to a 75% chance.
- Students with a SAT Math section score that meets or exceeds the benchmark have a 75 percent chance of earning at least a C in first-semester, credit-bearing college courses in College algebra, statistics, pre-calculus, or calculus.
- Students with a SAT ERW section score that meets or exceeds the benchmark have a 75 percent chance of earning at least a C in first-semester, credit-bearing college courses in history, literature, social sciences, or writing classes.
- Students with an ACT score at or above the Benchmarks, have at least a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in specific first-year college courses in the corresponding subject area. There are currently no Benchmarks for ELA or writing.

It is important to note that college and career readiness is a continuum — students scoring below the SAT or ACT benchmarks can still be successful in college, especially with additional preparation and perseverance.

## Building College Collateral

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**College Visits** and **College and Career Fairs** are very important to do before attending a college. College visits, both live and virtual, will not only help a student narrow down their college choices but, it can also act as a motivator for students to do well in academic coursework and extracurricular activities. It will give a clearer picture about the college environment, admissions requirements, and encourage parents and students to talk about the importance of the college selection process.

College and career fairs encourage students to explore careers they are interested in is a key way to demonstrate the relevance of a college degree, industry licensure or certification. A career and college fair (or similar event), like the annual Lubbock ISD College and Career Fair, raises awareness about the importance of college and career options, connects students with many different professions and gives community members a chance to share their expertise with students.

### **Listen for answers to or ask the following questions:**

- Does the college offer your child's intended major or concentrations?
- Are alternative admissions applications required for certain college majors or concentrations?
- Are there learning communities where students with similar interests live in the same hall and take classes together?
- What types of honors courses are offered?
- What kinds of academic supports are available on campus?
- How much time do students spend on homework each week?
- How much writing is expected? How much reading is expected?
- Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?
- Do class discussions and assignments include diverse perspectives?
- Do students often work together on projects?
- What kinds of activities are students involved in outside of the classroom?
- When and how do students interact with other students who have different social, political, or religious views or come from different racial and ethnic backgrounds?
- How many students study in other countries?
- What percentage of students do community service?
- How many students live on campus?
- Are faculty members accessible and supportive?
- Can students work on research projects with faculty?
- What policy is in place for school safety?
- Is there a parent communication program?
- How can parents access student grades?

# Glossary

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**ACT:** A standardized test used by many colleges as one factor considered in admissions. A student is encouraged to register and take this test by spring of their junior year.

**Advanced Placement (AP):** AP classes are taught in high schools by high school teachers who are trained to use a specific college-level curriculum. Students take an exam at the end of the course and many colleges will give academic credits to students based on their exam scores.

**Community Colleges / Junior College:** Public colleges that grant two-year associate degrees. Students who plan to continue their education at a four-year college should ask about the transfer curriculum.

**Dual Credit:** A course in which specially-trained high school teachers teach college-level courses in the high school. Students who successfully complete a dual credit course receive academic credit for both high school and participating college and grades are recorded on college and high school transcripts.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** This is the application required by all colleges for student loans and grants. The application requires information about both parent and student income and assets, and must be completed each year the student is in college. It calculates the expected family contribution.

**Financial Aid:** Colleges will calculate financial aid based on the difference between the expected family contribution and the cost of attending a particular college. Financial aid comes in many forms, including:

- Pell grants: Federal money that does not need to be repaid, available to students with the highest need.
- State or college grants: Money that does not need to be repaid.
- Tuition waivers: A college may waive part or all of the tuition based on a student's talents or need.
- Work study: On campus jobs funded through financial aid.
- Loans: Money that must be paid back, usually with interest.
- Scholarships: Money that does not need to be repaid. Colleges and many organizations offer scholarships based on a wide range of criteria.

**International Baccalaureate (IB):** IB classes are taught in high schools by high school teachers who are trained to use a specific college-level curriculum. Students take an exam at the end of the course and many colleges will give academic credits to students based on exam scores.

**MAP (Measures of Academic Progress):** MAP assessments are computer administered and scored achievement tests designed to measure growth in student learning for individual students, classrooms, schools, and the district. Tests for mathematics, reading, and language usage are given in the elementary and middle schools. Per the administration students are given Unit (RIT), which is a special type of number scale that measures student achievement and expected academic progress. A RIT score will vary from grade to grade as a student grows.

**PSAT 8/9:** A standardized test offered in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade that is aligned with the SAT. The results provide information about a student's knowledge and skills, and can help assess whether a student is on track for college readiness.

**PSAT/NMSQT:** A standardized test offered in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade that is aligned with the SAT and can help a student prepare for the SAT. The results provide information about a student's knowledge and skills, and can help assess whether a student is on track for college readiness.

**SAT:** A standardized test used by many colleges, particularly colleges with highly competitive admissions, as one factor considered in admissions. LISD offers this test in the spring of a student's junior year.

**STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness):** STAAR assessments are a series of state-mandated standardized tests to assess a student's achievements and knowledge learned in the grade level. For STAAR and STAAR Spanish, the labels for the performance categories are: Masters Grade Level, Meets Grade Level, Approaches Grade Level, and Did Not Meet Grade Level

**Technical College:** Public colleges that provide specific training that usually requires less than two years to achieve a diploma or certificate.

