

# Academic and Career Planning

## Preparation for College and a Career: A Four-Year Process

### Career Clusters

In order to assist students in preparing for life beyond high school, the state has adopted the national model of the 16 Career Clusters. Career Clusters assist students in their education process to guide his or her learning in the context of personal interests preparing for secondary and postsecondary opportunities, career preparation and advancement, meaningful work, and active citizenship. Each cluster has developed pathways models to assist in planning courses to take while in high school. Students may find more information on the 16 Career Clusters and the 87 educational pathways model to assist them in course planning. Pathways offered within the Endorsements and are available in Hays CISD are listed below.

### Hays CISD offers following Pathways within Endorsements

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture, Construction/Manufacturing
- Arts, A/V Technology
- Business
- Education & Training
- Human Services
- Finance
- Hospitality
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)
- Project Lead the Way: Engineering, Aerospace and Biomedical
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

### **HB 5- Foundations High School Graduation Program with Endorsements**

Freshman in 2014 and beyond will be graduating under HB 5 Foundations of the High School Program with Endorsements. The 4 year Personal Graduation Plan can be found in the *Navigate Your Future* Endorsement Guide. Students must graduate with a coherent sequence of courses for an Endorsement. This endorsement will go on the student's Academic Achievement Record (transcript). For more information on the new graduation plans and Endorsement Guide, students and parents can go to their counselors for more information.

### **Navigate Your Future**

It's a smart idea to create a four year plan to guide your studies through high school and into college or other postsecondary education or training. It represents your plan

to take control of your education and career choices.

Working with your parents/guardians and counselor, you can pick the cluster on which you want to focus your studies as well as your career and post-secondary education goals.

Planning in high school means that a student should have a goal in an Endorsement. You are not locked into your choices for your 4-year plan or post-secondary choices. You should revisit your plan at least once a year to update it. You can change your programs of study, career and postsecondary goals as your interests and ambitions change. Having a plan, even if it changes, is smarter than having no idea of what you want to do and why you are attending school. The important thing to remember is that to graduate from high school, you must have a coherent sequence of courses towards an Endorsement.

Your 4 year plan, or Personal Graduation Plan, will include all courses for Foundation High School Program and the electives that complete your course of study in high school.

Students will work through their counselors to create and complete their student portfolio each year they are in high school.

Students will have a login and password based on their Hays CISD student ID number. Students should talk to their counselor to get more information on Career Cruising, <https://www.careercruising.com> and how they can connect as a family to plan for high school, but also for those college dreams after graduation.

The four years of high school should be planned to preserve a student's options. Too much math and science cannot harm either college or career prospects, but too little may affect a vast range of career and college possibilities in which the student may later become interested. A student who decides to enter engineering or attend a selective college during their junior or senior year may discover too late that the college or career required four years of math or chemistry, physics and foreign language.

### **Freshman**

Serious preparation for college and career begins when a student enters high school. The courses he/she takes as a high school freshman will be on the transcript of grades sent to a university, community or tech college to which he/she applies. Students who want to be well prepared should take rigorous courses and make good grades.

Academic preparation is important throughout a student's high school career, but there are other steps that students should take along the way.

The eighth grade counselors will meet with students and their parents to discuss their four-year Personal Graduation Plan and post-secondary goals. Parents and students are encouraged to meet with their counselor during this conference time. If changes need to be made in the freshman year, students and parents are welcome to make an appointment with their counselor. Changes in the Personal Graduation Plans cannot be made without parent knowledge and approval.

### **Sophomores**

Hays CISD pays the fee for all Hays CISD Sophomore and Junior students to take the PSAT/NMSQT. These tests are administered on all Hays CISD high school campuses. Sophomores will take the PSAT/ NMSQT (National Merit Qualifying Test) in October. The purpose of the test is to practice for the SAT, one of the two tests used for college admission. The score on the PSAT/NMSQT may entitle them to be exempt for testing to begin Dual credit classes at ACC during the summer following their sophomore year.

The counselors will go in to the sophomore classrooms in January to review each student's PSAT/NMSQT test results and assist them in creating a College Board account for [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org). Once the student logs in and creates an account, they get a plan for improving their PSAT/NMSQT scores in their junior year as well as SAT preparation tips the student needs, including the program, Big Future. Students should enroll in <https://www.khanacademy.org> to help them study for the SAT and any HS courses they might need more help in. The website is free. This program also provides students an opportunity to get information on any college or university in the United States and abroad.

The counselors will work with the sophomores in groups to go over the transcript and ensure the students know their credits and transcripts are correct. They will also assist students with an update of their 4 year Personal Graduation plan and course selection. Students and/or their parents can also schedule an appointment with your counselor to ask questions and receive personalized assistance.

### **Juniors**

Juniors will take the PSAT/NMSQT in October for an additional opportunity to practice, but the test also has an additional purpose in the junior year. Not only does a high enough score allow students to begin Dual Credit classes at ACC, but some students-(who score very well on the test as juniors) become National Merit Semi-Finalists or Commended Merit Scholars their Senior year and may qualify for scholarships. The counselors will go in to the junior classrooms in January to review each student's PSAT/NMSQT test results and assist them in creating a College Board account. Students are encouraged to enroll

in the <https://www.khanacademy.org> to help them study for the SAT and any HS courses they might need more help in. The website is free. Once the student logs in and creates an account, they get suggestions for performing well on the SAT and they can begin the college/career search for their college matches. The Big Future link on their College Board account will help them search colleges and learn more about financial aid. This program provides students an opportunity to get information on any college or university in the United States and abroad.

In the spring, **juniors** should take the **SAT** and/or the **ACT**: two tests required for college admission. We recommend that students take both tests because some will do better on one exam than on the other. All colleges and universities in Texas will accept a score on either test.

One of the reasons to take the SAT or ACT during the spring of the junior year is to be prepared for scholarship applications in the early part of the fall semester of the senior year. Some of the better scholarships from colleges and universities have fall deadlines, and students who did not take the SAT or ACT in the preceding spring may not be able to meet the early deadlines. Also, students who did not do as well on the test as they hoped have more opportunities to repeat the test. Seniors should have taken the test by December. There are free test prep programs for the ACT and SAT on the following websites:

ACT - [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

SAT - [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

Both tests are timed, meaning that students must complete any section of the test in the allotted time of 25 to 40 minutes.

We strongly encourage families to **visit college campuses** when they have the opportunity. This can be particularly important for a student who will be the first in his/her family to attend college. For example, if you are on a family trip to Houston, take the scenic route and go through Huntsville to look at Sam Houston State University. If you are going to San Antonio, take time to stop by the University of Texas at San Antonio. Even when you get away to the coast, you can stop by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. The HCISD Counseling Departments at each HS plans junior and senior college trips throughout the year. They are free and we encourage you to talk to your counselor about the dates.

The counselors will meet with the juniors review the transcript and ensure the students know their credits and transcripts are accurate. They will also assist students with an update of their 4-year Personal Graduation Plan and course selection. Students and/or their parents can also schedule an appointment with the counselor to ask questions and receive personalized guidance. Students should begin to look at Career and Technology courses for college credit, Dual Credit and Advanced Placement

courses. Talk to your counselor about these options. These courses are also listed in this *Course Description Guide*.

## Seniors

At the beginning of a student's **senior year**, your counselors will review all the basics of the college and technical program admissions process in large groups. You and/or your parent can also schedule an appointment with your counselor to ask questions and receive personalized guidance. Your transcript will be checked for accuracy of credits and grades. Seniors are encouraged to come to the High School College and Career Center or meet with their counselor to find out about scholarship applications and the college admissions application process. Scholarships are also listed on each high school website. The English teachers will also require students to write at least one essay to be used on the college application. The counselors will meet with seniors to ensure they know what they need to do.

Hopefully, seniors will **complete their college applications** before winter break. At the highly competitive colleges, students who apply early have a better chance of being accepted. **It is suggested that seniors interested in attending high profile or competitive universities prepare their applications by October. The ApplyTX common college application opens for application on July 1 of each year.** Out of state competitive universities have early deadlines. Seniors should always check with their counselor or go online to the college website to double check admission deadlines.

In **January and February of the senior year**, students and parents will complete the **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid-.) <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. This is the form students must submit to be eligible for grants and subsidized student loans. Hays CISD parents and students will be given numerous opportunities to get assistance in completing the FAFSA. Contact your school counselors to get the information about financial aid and scholarships, including meetings. Sometimes parents do not have all their IRS information ready for the **October 1** FAFSA kick off. Students and parents should talk to their counselor about how to estimate or use their prior income to complete the FAFSA. Parents can also use a prior income tax statement to complete the FAFSA. **Early priority state deadlines for the FAFSA is in January.**

All of this help and information is free. Please be wary of companies and individuals who offer to find scholarships and financial aid for a fee. **The "F" in FAFSA stands for "Free."** You should not have to pay to apply for financial aid. Parents and students can work together to do scholarship searches through the College and Career Center. <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. Parents and student are always encouraged to begin the process. The counselors are not essential for the submission of the FAFSA.

Helpful free websites for college planning, financial aid, and scholarships:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>  
<http://www.actstudent.org/college/>  
<http://www.collegeforalltexas.com/>

Students should always check their campus website for posted scholarships monthly. **The local scholarship applications usually open in January and close in March.**

Undocumented students can also qualify for financial aid. They or their parents should contact their counselors about the TASFA (Texas Application for Student Financial Aid) at Texas state universities.

**Bottom line: Your counselors are here to help!  
Make the most of your four years in high school!**

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## Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)

The PSAT/NMSQT is a rigorous, national assessment that measures critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills that are important for success in college. Critical reading and math sections test a student's ability to reason with facts and concepts; the multiple-choice writing skills component assesses communication skills.

While the test is an excellent preparation for the SAT, it also offers students:

- The opportunity to learn about their academic strengths and weaknesses - The PSAT score report gives students personalized feedback on their test performance
- Preparation for the SAT
- Scholarship opportunities and academic recognition.
- Information from colleges and universities through Student Search Service
- College and career planning information through a free personalized online college planning kit based on their test results.

**The PSAT/NMSQT is used by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as an initial screener of entrants in its annual academic competitions for recognition and college scholarships.**

Hays CISD pays for and administers the PSAT/NMSQT to every tenth and eleventh grade student in the district.

The PSAT/NMSQT is administered in October on the same day across the nation. For more information, go to:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/>

## SAT

The SAT Program offers two reliable, objective standardized tests to assist students, their families, and educators in assessing students' ability to succeed in college-level studies. If students are in Special Education or in the 504 program, they can qualify for certain accommodations that must be approved by College Board. For information on how to qualify for accommodations, go <https://www.collegeboard.org/students-with-disabilities>. Each campus has an SSD (Services with Students with Disabilities) coordinator. If the parent or student is unsure of who that may be on each campus, then they should contact the Academic Dean or counselor for information. There are deadlines involved in getting College Board approval for disabilities on the PSAT/NMSQT or the SAT.

The SAT Reasoning Test measures critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills that students have developed over time, both in and out of school, and that they need to be successful in college. SAT scores are intended to complement your students' secondary school record and help them demonstrate their college readiness.

The SAT Reasoning Test is the most widely used and rigorously researched college admissions test in history. Administered seven times a year and taken by more than two million students each year, the SAT is used by virtually every college in the United States to measure the critical thinking skills students need for academic success in college.

SAT Subject Tests measure students' knowledge and skills in five major subject areas, and their ability to apply that knowledge independent of any particular textbook or method of instruction. The content of each test is not based on any one approach or curriculum, but rather evolves to reflect current trends in high school course work. The SAT Program offers 20 Subject Tests over English, history, mathematics, science, and foreign languages. For dates of tests for 2019-20 go to: <http://www.collegeboard.com>.

SAT Subject Tests provide a reliable, objective assessment of students' readiness for college-level work. Each year, nearly 500,000 students take the SAT Subject Tests to demonstrate their mastery of particular subject areas. Colleges across the country use the tests as a common and objective scale for evaluating a student's learning. The Subject Tests are offered six times a year. These tests may not be required for admissions. Students should double check with their university.

Hays CISD hosts SAT testing on selected Saturdays throughout the school year. SAT tests are held at Jack C. Hays High School.

See your school counselor for specific deadlines and registration dates or go online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) more information

The SAT costs \$64.50. Students should always take the essay portion of the tests. Fee waivers are available. See your counselor. Registration must be submitted by the deadlines. Go online for more information:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/dates-deadlines>

### **SAT Test Dates**

**August 24, 2019**

**October 5, 2019**

**November 2, 2019**

**December 7, 2019**

**March 14 , 2020**

**May 2, 2020**

**June 6, 2020**

### **ACT**

The ACT consists of four multiple-choice tests: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. The ACT, plus Writing includes the four multiple-choice tests plus a writing test. All students are expected to take the ACT, plus the Writing. Hays CISD hosts ACT testing on selected Saturdays throughout the school year at **Lehman High School** on selected dates. See your school college and career center for specific deadlines for registration. For more information go to <http://www.actstudent.org>. There are deadlines for registration.

The ACT costs \$58.50. Fee waivers are available. See your counselor to see you qualify for a fee waiver. **Students should always check the ACT website for registration deadlines.**

Just like the SAT, students that have been admitted into Special Education or the 504 program may be approved for accommodations. There are deadlines involved in the approval process and the student/or parent should see the SSD Coordinator on their campus or their counselor for more information on that process. Information the process can be located at <http://www.actstudent.org/regist/disab/opt1.html>

### **ACT DATES 2019-20**

**Sept 7, 2019**

**Oct 26, 2019**

**Dec 7, 2019**

**Feb 8, 2020**

**Apr 18, 2020**

**June 13, 2020**

**July 18, 2020**

## **TSI (Texas Success Initiative (Accuplacer) Assessment**

The Texas Success Initiative is a state-legislated program designed to improve student success in college. There are two components of the program. The TSI assessment assists the colleges in determining whether high school students are college ready for coursework in English, reading, writing and math. The TSI is administered at all high school campuses or college campuses. The TSI Assessment diagnoses students' basic skills in reading, mathematics, and writing. The scores on the assessment determine whether a student gets to start college level courses OR take developmental instruction classes to strengthen academic skills that need improvement. The developmental course work does not count for college instruction or credit. If sophomores or juniors are interested in Dual Credit classes, they should sign with their counselor to take the TSI (if they are not exempt through their ACT, SAT or AP scores).

The cost of the first administration of the TSI is paid for by the district. Students get the opportunity to take this test two times without cost. These test can also be taken at the ACC (Austin Community College Campus) Hays campus for a fee.

### **COLLEGE PREP CLASSES FOR SENIORS BASED ON COLLEGE READINESS ASSESSMENTS**

Juniors that are not college ready will be placed in College Prep Class in their senior year. Parents and students that want more information should talk to their counselors. Before a senior is placed in these classes, Hays CISD will notify parents and students. At the end of the College Prep Class, the seniors will be given an Austin Community College course exam and the TSI to determine readiness for college admissions. Since the state of Texas requires students to be college ready to enroll in college credit bearing classes, it is important that they take as rigorous classes as possible starting in their freshman year of high school. If parents or student have questions about College Prep classes for seniors, they should contact their campus counselor.

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