THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE?

This year-by-year guideline will help keep you on the right track as you prepare for college.

FRESHMAN YEAR...
- Get to know your high school guidance or career counselor.
- Participate in school and community activities.
- Research colleges and career possibilities on the internet.
- Take challenging academic courses.
- Start to save money for college.
- Discuss with your family your college plans.

SOPHOMORE YEAR...
- Talk to your high school guidance counselor or career counselor about taking the PSAT or the PLAN standardized tests. The PSAT will prepare you to take the SAT test, and the PLAN will prepare you to take the ACT test.
- Continue to stay involved with school and community activities.
- Create an academic portfolio of all of your extracurricular activities, volunteer work and employment.
- Visit your high school guidance office or career center to browse through college/university printed literature and catalogs.

JUNIOR YEAR...
- Register for the PSAT during the fall semester.
- Continue to be involved with school and community activities.
- Study hard. Your grade point average is very important.
- Attend college visits, night programs at your school or in your community.
- Contact the colleges that you might interested in attending.
- Register to take the SAT and/or ACT during the spring semester.
- Explore colleges that interest you. Identify characteristics that you want in a college.

Prepared for you courtesy of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
SENIOR YEAR...

AUGUST, SEPTEMBER
- Discuss your classes and college plans with your high school guidance or career counselor and your parents.
- Meet with your guidance counselor to be sure your list includes colleges appropriate to your academic and personal record. Review your transcript and extracurricular records with your school counselor to ensure their accuracy.
- Attend college and financial aid fairs at your high school and in your community to investigate those schools to which you will probably apply.
- Make sure you have all application materials required for college admission and financial aid. Write, phone, or go online to request missing information.
- Check on application, financial aid, scholarship and housing deadlines for the schools to which you plan to apply, as they may vary. It is essential to meet all deadlines!
- Begin to send your applications for admission to colleges. Request that your high school registrar send your transcript and test scores to the schools to which you are applying.
- Register to take the SAT and/or ACT. If you have not already taken these tests, make sure to have your test scores sent by the testing agency to colleges on your list.
- Search for scholarships and grants to pay for college.

OCTOBER
- Continue to attend college and financial aid fairs at your high school and in your community to visit with recruiters from those colleges to which you will probably apply.
- Send your applications in time to reach the colleges by the deadlines. If you have not already done so, request that your high school registrar send your transcripts and test scores to the schools to which you are applying.
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT if you have not completed the required tests or if you are not happy with your previous test scores and think you can do better. Make sure to have your test scores sent by the testing agency to colleges on your list.
- Ask your teachers for letters of recommendation. Admissions and scholarships applications may require letters of recommendation.
- Get pointers on writing admissions and scholarship essays.

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER
- Continue completing applications to colleges. If applicable, make copies of all applications before mailing the applications.
- If you are planning to apply for financial aid, obtain a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) from your guidance office. You can also access and complete the FAFSA online at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov. Make sure that you do not submit your FAFSA before January 1st, because it will not be processed. Check to see if the schools to which you are applying require any other financial aid form.
- Complete as many scholarship applications as you can.

JANUARY
- Monitor your applications to be sure that all materials are sent and received on time and that they are complete.
- Complete and return your FAFSA as quickly as possible after January 1. Parents and students: complete your income tax forms as soon as possible as you will need those figures to fill out the FAFSA.

FEBRUARY
- Remember to monitor your applications to be sure that all materials are sent and received on time and that they are complete.
- If you completed a FAFSA, you should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) within four weeks after submitting the FAFSA. Review the SAR carefully and check for any inaccuracies. If necessary, correct any items on the SAR and return it to the FAFSA processor. If there are special circumstances affecting your family's financial situation, be sure to discuss them with a financial aid officer.
- Make sure to respond quickly to financial aid office requests for additional documentation.

MARCH, APRIL
- Review your college acceptances and financial aid awards. Be sure to compare financial aid packages in your decision-making process. If you are positive you will not enroll at one or more of the schools which accepted you, please notify those schools of your plans.

MAY
- Decide on the one college that you will attend. Notify the other colleges that accepted you that you have selected another college.
- Look for information in the mail from the college about new student orientation and housing. Respond promptly to all requests from the college.
- Request that your high school registrar mail your final high school transcript to the school that you will be attending.
- If you plan to take Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, request that your AP scores be sent to the school you will attend.

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST
- Attend new student orientation and register for classes.
- Notify the college of any private scholarships or grants you will be receiving.
- Know when the payment for tuition, room and board, meal plans, etc., is due. If necessary, ask the Business Office about a possible payment plan that will allow for you to pay in installments.