



HOLY CROSS OF SAN ANTONIO

COLLEGE PREPARATION GUIDANCE BOOKLET FOR SENIORS

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COLLEGE SELECTION AND ADMISSIONS TIMETABLE

August/September

- Settle in for a solid academic year. Colleges do look at your senior grades!
- If you have not done so already, narrow your list of colleges to about 5.
- Write colleges for catalogs, applications, and information about financial aid. This may often be done online.
- Become familiar with the application deadlines for the colleges to which you will apply.
- Submit applications to colleges on rolling admission.
- Register for the ACT, the SAT Reasoning Test, or SAT Subject Test.
- Make campus visits when possible.
- Meet with visiting college representatives.
- Request a social security number if you do not have one.
- Prepare a resume for the teachers you will ask to write recommendations.
- Turn in the completed College Information Sheet to your guidance counselor.
- Visit resource room in the Guidance Office for scholarship and college applications.
- Apply for on-campus housing if you have not already done so. **Note: The UT-Austin housing applications are accepted between Sept.1 and Oct 1 at www.utexas.edu/student/housing**
- Register for and complete the CSS Profile Financial Aid form if your college requires it. You can register at www.collegeboard.com.
- Prepare Early Decision/Early Action applications for submission before Nov. 1.
- Register for the draft if male and 18 years old. **You must register within 30 days of your 18th birthday.** Reference www.sss.gov.

October

- Take the SAT/ACT.
- Ask teachers and your guidance counselor for a recommendation, if necessary.
- Continue search for scholarship money or other financial aid. Check scholarship database in Guidance Office for updates. Note deadline dates for submission.
- Visit college campuses.
- Note: Oct. 15 is the preferred submission date for Early Action applications.

November

- Submit all Early Decision/Action applications before the 1st of the month. Applications for processing with early January deadlines must be submitted to the Guidance Office by the end of the month.
- Continue to focus on your grades.
- Apply for applicable scholarships.

December

- Complete any scholarship applications.
- Take or retake the SAT or ACT, if necessary.
- Assemble records needed to complete the financial aid form (FAFSA). Pick up financial aid forms (FAFSA) from the Guidance Office or see the online version at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Study hard for exams!

January

- Finalize all applications for regular admissions deadlines in mid to late January or February.
- File FAFSA. **Note: if you are applying to a college that requires the CSS Profile, the usual deadline for filing the form is February 1.**
- Attend the College and Financial Aid Meeting given by Co-step and various colleges or meet with the representatives from the colleges and universities who visit our school.

February

- Continue to work on various scholarship applications. Check scholarship database in Guidance Office for updates. Note deadline dates for submission.
- Don't get senioritis! Colleges want to see your second semester grades.
- Take THEA, if needed.

March

- Consider admission and financial aid offers.
- Register for Advanced Placement Tests.
- Take THEA, if needed.

April

Take one of the following state approved assessment tests:

- THEA
 - ASSET
 - ACCUPLACER
 - COMPASS
- Please contact the college or university you plan to attend for exemptions or test information.
- **Concentrate on graduation!**

May

- May 1 is the **Candidate's Reply Date**. Notify the college you will be attending regarding your acceptance. Inform those colleges you are rejecting with a thank you note.
- Apply for housing deposit refund from schools you are rejecting if you have reserved dorm space.
- Register for freshman orientation at the college of your choice.
- Request final transcript be sent to the college of your choice, and notify counselor and senior moderator of your decision for publication in graduation program.
- Provide counselor and senior moderator with written documentation of scholarship awards.
- Congratulations on your graduation!

FACTORS IN COMPETITIVE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

From admissions officers everywhere, the advice is virtually the same. Here is what counts to them.

Your Secondary School Record - How have you done in the courses taken? Colleges would much rather see you taking a tough and challenging load that is in line with your ability than improving your grade point average by taking “easy” courses. They will also ask to see your senior grades. Keep working!

ACT/SAT Scores - Scores on the SAT Reasoning Test or the ACT are used by admissions committees as one measure to compare students from different schools. Scores on SAT Subject tests are often important as they come closer to testing actual knowledge in a particular course. Standardized test results ultimately reflect the student’s ability to take timed, multiple-choice tests and, as such, cannot represent the individual student’s cognitive abilities. Many able students have low test scores. A combination of high grades and low test scores can be explained by many factors. HOWEVER, high scores and low grades are the worst possible combination, since it almost always describes an able person who does not work productively and is therefore perceived by admissions officers as a greater risk.

Extracurricular Activities and Work Experience - Your involvement in activities does not carry as much weight as your transcript unless your talent or skill is exceptional. If you are an accomplished musician, you may impress a committee in your audition, especially if you are the bassoonist he/she needs for next year’s orchestra. If you are one of the nation’s best high school basketball players, your 78.5 grade point average may be overlooked. For the majority of students, the list of high school activities indicates a high level of involvement; only rarely is it exceptional. Capable involvement is seen as a good thing by college people if it means something to you other than simply compiling a list of activities, and if the time commitment does not detract from you academic record.

The Essay and the Application - The essay is often the most overlooked aspect of college admissions by students. Students are expected to spend a considerable amount of time in the preparation of the essay. It is your chance to become more than a name for admissions staff. Your choice of a topic for the essay is far less important than its presentation. It should be personal and honest, thoughtfully and carefully written, and should discuss something of importance to you. Unless it says otherwise, TYPE the essay. Neatness counts. You are presenting yourself through this document and a hastily completed, sloppy, hard-to-read application form will not win you points; an imperfect but genuine effort will.

The Counselor Statement - The school’s recommendation for a student is written by that student’s counselor. Your counselor will attempt to present an assessment which is fair and accurate and which emphasizes achievements and talents. The counselor won’t ignore major difficulties as they are reflected on the transcript, but will tell the story to your advantage in so far as it is possible.

Teacher Recommendations - Each college has its own specific requirements for teacher recommendations, but in most cases, two are requested: one from a history, English or foreign language teacher, and the other from a math or science teacher. In some instances, colleges are very specific, asking for recommendations from your current English and math teachers, whereas in other cases they may give you your choice or require none at all. If you have a particular strength in the arts or athletics or any extracurricular activity, you may want to have that teacher or coach write on your behalf, but in all other instances you should not give the colleges more than they ask for. Read the application forms carefully. Teacher recommendations speak to your abilities and accomplishments as a student and need to be positive. Thus, you should choose carefully the teachers you ask and be sure they feel comfortable writing a recommendation for you. Don't assume that your chosen teacher will automatically accept your request. Have back-ups in mind. Be sure they are teachers you've worked with in your junior or senior year, and remember to phrase your request as a request, not a demand.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Teachers are just like you - they need adequate time if they are going to write well. Be **SURE** to contact your teachers **AT LEAST 2 WEEKS** before you need to submit the letter of recommendation and provide them with a copy of your resume to help them write about you.

Geographic Distribution and Legacy Status - In addition to ethnic and racial diversity, each college has an interest in creating a geographically diverse student body. Hence, if you are applying to colleges far away from home, you may have a slight advantage over equally qualified local candidates. It is also in a college's self-interest to encourage generations of family to attend the college, since these families are usually among their most loyal (and generous) supporters. For that reason, if you're applying to the undergraduate college one of your parents attended, you may have a slight advantage over equally qualified candidates, but it hardly makes your admission a "sure thing". In fact, due to the extremely competitive nature of college admissions, legacy status is often of negligible value, particularly at the larger universities. The amount that either of these factors affects admission cannot be quantified or predicted.

Above all, don't try to fool the colleges! **BE YOURSELF!**

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Admissions tests are considered by many schools to be part of the admissions process. They are thought to “level the playing field”. A single test taken by students from across the nation gives the colleges comparative data to use in evaluating students from different high schools.

I. College Entrance Tests

- A. **ACT** - A three-hour test measuring understanding and ability in English usage, mathematical usage, reading comprehension, and science reasoning. Students usually take the ACT in the spring of their junior year and/or in the fall of their senior year.
 - B. **SAT Reasoning Test** - The SAT Reasoning Test is a three hour and 45 minute test that measures critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills that students have developed over time and that they need to be successful in college. Testing is usually done in the spring of the junior year and is often repeated in the fall of the senior year.
 - C. **SAT Subject Tests** - The SAT Subject Tests (formerly SAT II: Subject Tests) are a battery of one hour, mostly multiple-choice tests that measure how much students know about a particular academic subject and how well they can apply that knowledge. Check the requirements of the colleges you are considering before you decide which tests to take. These tests are best taken at the completion of your study of a subject if you will not be continuing in that area.
- II. **Advanced Placement Tests** - Exams taken at the conclusion of study in an Advanced Placement course. College credit or advanced standing is awarded by certain colleges when students achieve sufficiently high scores.
- III. The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Program, formerly TASP, mandates that you must take one of the following state-approved assessment tests before enrolling in any college-level coursework: **THEA, ASSET, ACCUPLACER, or COMPASS**. Test results are not used for admission purposes; you must, however, have test results prior to enrolling, unless you are exempt. **PLEASE CONTACT THE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY YOU PLAN TO ATTEND FOR EXEMPTIONS OR TEST INFORMATION.**
- Note:** Your SAT or ACT score may exempt you from the THEA.

How to register for these tests:

- SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Test: www.collegeboard.com
- ACT: www.actstudent.org
- THEA: www.thea.nesinc.com
- For those without internet access, registration forms and other information can be obtained in the Guidance Office.

The school code for Holy Cross of San Antonio is 446152.

DECIDING WHERE TO APPLY

Guidance counselors are frequently asked: "What should my final list of colleges include?" Inherent in this question are two considerations: first, how many schools should I apply to, and second, what range of schools should be included with regards to admissions competition?

We discourage you from adopting the "shotgun approach" of applying to a multitude of schools. We also discourage you, regardless of your academic ability, from "putting all your eggs in one basket" by applying to only one institution or level of college. As a general rule, we advise that you apply to approximately five schools which vary in terms of selectivity, but which have the most important features in which you are interested. As long as you do not overly limit yourself geographically, finding such a group of schools is not that difficult a task when you consider the large number of colleges and universities found in the United States. Generally, we recommend that your final list include schools from each of the following categories:

Category I: Your top choice schools. It is fine in this group to include a couple of "reach" schools. A "reach" school is understood to be one where your chances of admission are less than 50/50, perhaps more like 1 in 3.

Category II: Schools that possess the significant features you desire and at which the probability of admission is even or slightly better than even. These are categorized as "realistic" schools.

Category III: Schools that have most of the features you desire and at which the probability of admission is "highly likely" to "certain". We refer to colleges in this category as your "safety" schools.

While there is no hard-and-fast rule, you usually include two or three schools from categories one and two and at least one or two schools from category three. Obviously, those schools that qualify as "reach," "realistic," and "safety" vary from student to student. Each of you has an individual academic profile and should select schools accordingly, making sure that choices range through all three categories. We would like to emphasize that you are strongly encouraged to apply to more than one "realistic" or "safety" school. This will insure acceptances and provide you with some choices.

A FEW NOTES OF CAUTION:

- Many students spend hours deciding on their few top choices and five minutes selecting one or two safer institutions. Please think carefully about all of your choices, so that if you were to eventually attend your fourth or fifth choice school, you would have a good chance of being happy and successful. Make sure that all of your choices are places where you could find the atmosphere and programs that suit you.
- Many of you feel that simply because a particular institution falls into category II as opposed to category I, it does not offer programs of equal quality. Such an assumption is, in many instances, incorrect. The selectivity of any institution is dependent on the size of its applicant pool which, in turn, may be affected as much by geographic location, popularity, and reputation as by actual academic quality. Many schools, for a variety of reasons, may be category II schools from an admissions perspective, yet offer programs equal in quality to your few top choices.
- There are many good schools throughout the country, and we encourage you to investigate options outside of Texas. A strictly regional approach can, in some instances, limit your ability to attain admission to the quality school you desire. You may, for a variety of reasons, be considered a more unique and attractive candidate by a school outside of the state than by a school equal in quality within the area.
- Many students and their parents still feel that you can select any one of the various state universities as a safety choice. This is no longer the case if, in fact, it ever was. You must realize that state universities are becoming more and more competitive. Many state universities have established quotas governing the number of out-of-state students admitted, thereby creating keen competition for a limited number of places.

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

| COLLEGE | APPLICATION DEADLINE | MATERIALS REQUIRED |
|---------|----------------------|---|
| 1. | | Essay _____ Counselor Form ____ Teacher Rec(s) ____ |
| 2. | | Essay _____ Counselor Form ____ Teacher Rec(s) ____ |
| 3. | | Essay _____ Counselor Form ____ Teacher Rec(s) ____ |
| 4. | | Essay _____ Counselor Form ____ Teacher Rec(s) ____ |
| 5. | | Essay _____ Counselor Form ____ Teacher Rec(s) ____ |
| 6. | | Essay _____ Counselor Form ____ Teacher Rec(s) ____ |

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Colleges and universities have varying admission practices. Information pertaining to the policy of a prospective school will be found in its publications. Some of the more frequently mentioned practices are the following:

- A. **Early Decision:** Students who have demonstrated sound academic ability apply for admission to their first choice college very early in their senior year. Notification of admission is given usually in December. Restrictive policies vary with each school and must be checked carefully to see if Early Decision works to the individual's advantage. Generally, if you apply Early Decision, you must also sign a commitment to attend if accepted and to withdraw any applications submitted to other colleges. If you are a qualified candidate applying to a selective school, and you are certain of your choice, regardless of financial aid, it may be to your advantage to choose this option. Discuss this carefully with your counselor.
- B. **Early Action:** This plan allows students to indicate a first choice college and receive a decision in the senior year well in advance of the normal response date in the spring. Students are not committed to enroll if accepted. In recent years, many colleges have filled a large portion of their classes with Early Action applicants. If you are a qualified applicant, this option may be advantageous to you. Discuss this carefully with your counselor.
- C. **Rolling Admission:** As soon as an application is complete (meaning that the forms, the fee, and all required credentials have been received and processed), a decision on that application is made and the student is notified. It is generally advantageous for students to apply well in advance of the posted deadline because it is impossible to know how quickly the available spaces are being filled.
- D. **Regular Decision (Precipice Admission):** The process whereby a college accepts applications from prospective students and delays the admission decision until all applications from the entire applicant pool have been received. Decision letters are mailed to applicants, all at once, traditionally in March or April. The most selective colleges mail their decision letters in early to mid-April.
- E. **Deferred Admission:** Students who have alternate plans for the year following high school may apply to many colleges for deferred admission. The application process and timetable remain the same as for regular admission, but students should indicate that they do not intend to matriculate until the following year. An explanation of how the student plans to spend the year and the benefits the student expects to derive from it is usually required by the college.

- F. **Open Enrollment:** A term used by an institution that publishes a set of admission standards and pledges to admit any student whose credentials equal or exceed them. This is most often used by community colleges.
- G. **Wait List:** The process used by selective colleges who do not initially offer or deny admission, but extend the possibility of admission to a later date (usually late May through July). Students should accept another college's offer since waiting list acceptances are very inconsistent. (Discuss all wait list situations with your counselor. Second semester grades and your method of reply can be critical to your acceptance.)

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Use the sample information below as a guide to complete each step in the application process.

Reminder: Each institution has its own unique admission instructions and required credentials. Before mailing your application, refer to the web site or contact the admissions office of each college or university to which you apply for additional institutional information.

1. Complete the College Information Sheet included in this packet and see that your parents complete the portion of the form that is mailed to them, as well as the Parental Permission for Release of Information.
2. Locate the application forms you will need, as well as forms for financial aid, scholarships, and housing. The easiest way to do this is on the internet, where you can often either apply electronically or download the necessary forms.
3. Request that your official SAT/ACT test results be sent directly from the testing agency to the college if required to do so. **Note: for some schools, this is the required first step in the admissions process; check instructions carefully.**
4. Request letters of recommendation from teachers and counselor, if required. Provide them with any necessary forms and information. Please keep in mind that to write an accurate and vivid portrait of a student is demanding and time-consuming. Be sure to make your request **at least two weeks** in advance of your mailing date.
5. Complete the application neatly. You may complete a paper application or apply electronically. In either case, when you have completed the application, make a copy for the Guidance Department files.

6. **Websites for Application:**

- www.commonapp.org www.ecos.princetonreview.com
- www.collegeboard.com www.applytexas.org

7. **At least two weeks before the deadline**, fill out a transcript request.

8. When the above steps have been completed, your application, recommendations, and an official transcript will be sent to your college.

During the entire process, it is extremely important that you do not throw things away! Test score reports, application instruction sheets, information from colleges, financial aid forms and applications, correspondence with colleges - all of these are examples of materials commonly lost by applicants who are not organized.

**Your Name
Your Address
City, State, Zip
Your Telephone
Your e-mail address**

Student of Holy Cross of San Antonio – Class of _____
_____ GPA – Ranked _____ in class of _____

Note: be sure to explain any activities or honors which the admissions committee may not recognize. If you devoted an unusual amount of time or served in a leadership capacity, be sure that is brought to the committee's attention. See example below:

Academic honors:

- First honors in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. Grades throughout high school: 90 and above.
- National Honor Society 11,12
This activity involved meetings twice per month throughout the school year and 40 hours of service per year.

Leadership Activities:

- Student Council Class Representative 10
- Yearbook editor 11,12

Athletic Accomplishments:

- Cross-country 9, 10

Volunteer Activities:

Community Involvement:

Work Activities:

Extracurricular Activities:

Outside Activities/Interests:

Summary Statement: Participating in the activities listed above has helped me develop the responsibility and maturity to be successful in college. I have learned the importance of working together with others toward a common goal. I have also learned that in order to be successful and happy, I must sometimes say “no” in an effort to maintain a balance in my life.

Note: The above is a sample you might use in putting together your resume to include with your applications. Create your own categories; those that are most appropriate for you to showcase your list of activities. Your summary statement should be a reflection of you. Be original. Please do not copy the sample word-for-word! It would look strange if you all had the same summary statement.

WRITING YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY

Colleges require essays for admission for a number of reasons:

- to determine your writing ability,
- to determine if you have anything to say, and
- to determine if you will be a good match for the curriculum it has to offer.

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR ESSAY

1. Show enthusiasm - about yourself, about your life.
2. Have originality.
3. Avoid trying to be humorous unless you are good at it.
4. Be honest; be yourself. The essay is your chance to present YOU - the unique individual behind the grades and test scores.
5. Look at the application as if you were a member of the panel of judges.
 - Let it reflect yourself as nearly as possible.
 - Use your own language - your own style.
 - Write to convey your ideas clearly and easily; don't write to "impress".
 - Illustrate your points with specific examples and interesting details.
6. Don't try to second-guess the Selection Committee.
 - More is not necessarily better - do not ramble just to have a longer essay.
 - Type your essay and have someone proofread it for errors. Don't rely entirely on spell-check!
 - Ask your English teacher to go over your essay with you. But don't wait until the last minute to ask.
7. Meeting deadlines is very important.
8. Keep in mind the basic rules of grammar:
 - Proper rules of paragraphs, including spelling and punctuation.
 - Spend at least as much time in actually thinking about what to say as in the actual writing of the essay. The most important thing is to have a clear idea of what you want to say.
9. DON'T give your life story. ("I was born in...I have three cats and two dogs, etc.")
10. DON'T list all of your high school activities. Selection committees are looking for experiences in your life which have been meaningful and unique. If you have been president of the National Honor Society, how have you used it? If you have been a camp counselor, how are you a different person because of that experience?
11. DON'T tell the university about them. For example, "I want to go to Rice University because it offers..." and then copy directly from their college catalog.

NCAA

If you intend to participate in Division I or II athletics as a freshman in college, you must be registered with and certified as eligible by the Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. The student-release form is available online at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. You may complete the form online or print out a PDF form and mail it to the Clearinghouse.

You must also have your high school transcript sent directly from Holy Cross to the Clearinghouse. If you use the online Web application, you should print a copy of your completed student-release form (see instructions on the release form submission screen). By printing your registration form, you will receive two copies. Bring both copies to the counselor and request transcripts and mailing. One copy will be sent with your transcript to the Clearinghouse immediately. The other will be held and sent with your final transcript after graduation.

You must also submit SAT or ACT scores. If you have had your scores reported to Holy Cross, they will be submitted on your transcript. If you have not had your scores sent to Holy Cross, you will have to arrange that they be sent to the Clearinghouse directly. See the counselor for instructions.

Although there is no stated deadline for registration, you must be certified before receiving an athletic scholarship, or practicing and competing at a Division I or II institution. You should take care of this soon to avoid delaying any possible scholarship awards.

NCAA Clearinghouse Websites and Services

The key features of the new Clearinghouse services include:

- **IMPORTANT! New Eligibility Rules!**
- You may access the Clearinghouse Home Page directly or through links from the NCAA's website at www.ncaa.org.
- From the NCAA Clearinghouse website, prospective student-athletes are able to access information needed to understand the Division I and Division II eligibility requirements, register with the Clearinghouse, and access individual Clearinghouse records.
- Prospective student-athletes (domestic) who are eligible for a waiver of the Initial-Eligibility Certification fee may complete their Student Release Form (SRF) online.
- Clearinghouse Customer Services mailing address:
NCAA Clearinghouse
301 ACT Drive
Box 4043
Iowa City, IA 52243-4043
- Clearinghouse customer service hours:
8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Central Time, Monday through Friday
- Toll free phone numbers (domestic callers only): Customer service line - (319) 337-1492
- Fax number - (319) 337-1556

FINANCIAL AID

Due to the rising cost of attending college, more students are depending on financial aid to meet college expenses. Financial aid comes in the following forms:

Grants which are based on financial need and do not have to be repaid.

College Work-Study Programs which provide minimum wage for you in on-campus jobs.

Student loans which have reasonable interest rates and usually do not have to be repaid until after you leave college.

Parent loans which have reasonable interest rates; payments begin immediately.

Scholarships which may be awarded according to need and achievement or may be awarded strictly on achievement.

LOAN PROGRAMS - EXAMPLES

Federal Family Education Loans and Direct loans - awarded on the basis of information provided on the FAFSA form. These may be subsidized or unsubsidized Stafford Loans. Loans are repaid after graduation.

PLUS Loans - These loans enable parents with good credit histories to borrow money to pay the education expenses of each child who is a dependent undergraduate student. Loan payments begin immediately after loan funds are disbursed.

Texas B On-Time Loans - no-interest loans awarded to eligible Texas residents. If a student meets goals for graduating within a specified period of time with a GPA of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale, the loan can be forgiven.

GRANT PROGRAMS - EXAMPLES

Federal Pell Grant - awarded to undergraduate students based on financial need. The amount you would receive would be determined by your family size, the number of family members in college, and the income and assets of your parents, siblings, and yourself.

S.E.O.G. (Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant)- awarded to undergraduates with exceptional financial need - that is, students with the lowest Expected Family Contributions (EFCs). Priority is given to students who receive Pell Grants. This program is administered by the university's financial aid office. The number of SEOGs awarded may depend on the availability of funds at a particular university.

TEXAS Grant - awarded to Texas residents with financial need who completed the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement High School Program and who enroll in a Texas college or university as a freshman within 16 months of high school graduation. The maximum award varies by type of institution.

Texas Public Education Grant (TPEG) - awarded to Texas residents, nonresidents, and foreign students enrolled at public colleges or universities in Texas. The maximum award varies according to financial need.

STEPS IN APPLYING FOR STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

1. Notify the colleges under consideration that you are interested in financial aid. They may have their own financial aid forms and often have deadlines that are quite early in the year. Remember that scholarships are also called financial aid.
2. Pick up a FAFSA form. Copies of the FAFSA will be available in the Guidance Office in late November or early December. These forms cannot be mailed prior to January 1, 2010. You may access the online application at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You are encouraged to file your application electronically for quicker processing.
3. Some colleges also require the CSS Profile. The forms are available online at www.collegeboard.com. **Important: you should register for your PROFILE application in the fall semester, 2009-10. PROFILE applications will be accepted starting on October 1, 2009. If you have any questions about PROFILE, please e-mail at: help@cssprofile.org or call toll free at (800) 239-5888.**
4. You will be asked to include information from your tax forms on the financial aid forms. In addition, many of the colleges require a copy of the family's tax return before they put the student's financial aid "package" together.
5. **File early!** If you file early in 2010, you have the best chance of receiving a larger portion of grant money in your aid package. If your tax information is not available by the end of January, you can file an estimate using last year's return and update later.
6. Several weeks after you have filed the FAFSA, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). If you have filed electronically, you can view this report online. Check this report carefully for errors and make corrections as needed.
7. When the college financial aid office awards a financial aid package, you should acknowledge, in writing, acceptance of the financial aid. If, however, you decide not to accept the financial aid award, you should notify the college financial aid office of this decision.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The scholarship application process requires time, work, and dedication on the part of you and your parents. Many times those who are the most diligent with the application process are the ones who receive the scholarships. You should do the following:

1. **Check the Scholarship File in the Guidance Office regularly.** We receive information on many scholarships for which you may be eligible.
2. Investigate scholarships via printed books available in the Guidance Office or the Public Library.
3. Search the Internet.
4. Contact the financial aid officers of the colleges you are considering.
5. Listen carefully to announcements and note deadlines carefully.
6. If your application requires a transcript or recommendation, see your counselor or the Guidance department secretary. If an official transcript is required, you must allow at least 2 days for processing.
7. Investigate possible scholarship opportunities available via your parents' employment, the college or university you will attend, community organizations, and other sources.
8. Free Scholarship Search – over 1.3 million awards worth over \$3 billion.
www.fastweb.com www.hsf.net www.absolutelyscholarships.org
9. **Don't give up too easily!** There is a lot of money available to students who are willing to devote the time to searching for it.

HELPFUL HINTS ON APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

- Type your application.
Neat applications are easier to read; it makes a difference for a judge who has to go through a huge stack of applications.
- Be creative when answering essay questions.
Give as much information as possible, use humor, personal stories, poetry, whatever it takes to capture the imagination of the person reading that application.
- Complete the entire application form.
Judges will give lower scores to applications that have incomplete answers or information.
- Proofread your application form prior to mailing it.
In this day and age of computers and spell-check, there are no excuses for typos!
- Submit all materials requested.

Judges will disqualify any application that does not have the requested transcript, teacher recommendation, or any other form that is requested.

- Submit letters of recommendation from people who know you well.
Get your favorite teacher, or the teacher who has really inspired you to succeed to write a glowing report about your accomplishments and all that you learned, both in the classroom and about determination to succeed.
- Sell yourself.
Include every honor, recognition, project, job or office position held, that point to your talent, accomplishments and involvement in various areas.
- Work ahead of deadlines.
Take the time to rewrite essay answers and proof-read work. This is especially true for the teacher recommendations and counselor approvals. They may have a lot of students they are trying to help with scholarship applications.
- Be honest.
Don't say that you were president of a club, or received all As, or were recognized for certain accomplishments if they aren't true. We can find out. We want to know the best you are capable of now, and in the future. That's what's important.
- Believe in yourself.
Don't worry about who else is applying for the scholarship. Put all your energies into turning in your best effort on this application. Scholarship judges look for the overall package, not the most popular kid in school.
- Take advantage of the many scholarship opportunities and apply.
You have everything to gain by applying, but if you don't, you get nothing. Investing in the time now may save you and your family some stressful times worrying about how you will finance your college career.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON FEDERAL
FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS**

General information about the federal Student Financial Assistance Program, assistance in completing the FAFSA, and to obtain federal student aid publications.....1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)

To check on the processing of your federal Student financial aid application or to request a copy of your Student Aid Report.....1-319-337-5665
(This is not a toll free number.)

FREQUENTLY REQUESTED WEB SITES

The Student Guide to Financial Aid.....www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov

FAFSA on the Web.....www.fafsa.ed.gov

For PIN information, visit.....www.pin.ed.gov

Help in completing the FAFSA..... www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov/fafsa_options.html

Title IV School Codes
(used to complete the FAFSA).....www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/14_codes.html

CSS Profile Application.....www.collegeboard.com