

Senior Year To-Do's

- Continue to keep your grades up. Colleges/universities will look at your six-semester, seven-semester AND your final eight-semester transcript after graduation. You will send your final transcript to the college you have chosen to attend (not all the ones to which you applied).
- If you have not set up a Parchment, College Board, and/or ACT account, do that immediately. **DO NOT USE YOUR SMA EMAIL ADDRESS; USE/CREATE A PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS.**
- Continue to be active in school this year with community service, extracurricular activities, and leadership roles.
- Update your resume'--you will need an updated resume' for college/university applications and scholarship forms.
- Take advantage of SMA policy for college/university visits during the school year (see Student Handbook section 200.06).
- Take your ACT/SAT early in the fall if you have not already taken it. Sign up to take SAT/ACT prep classes or take practice tests offered on their websites or on a number of other sites.
- Write a meaningful essay that is all about you--not so much what all you did in high school, but about you as a person. Here are a few websites that give essay-writing tips:
 - <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/college-essay>
 - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays/8-tips-for-crafting-your-best-college-essay>
 - <https://www.petersons.com/blog/7-effective-application-essay-tips-to-take-your-essay-from-meh-to-amazing/>
 - <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/slideshows/10-tips-to-inspire-college-essays>
- Do not procrastinate! Apply to your college/university EARLY and pay the fees required. Most colleges/universities prefer that you apply online either through their website, Apply Texas, or the Common Application. Your college's/university's website will let you know which it prefers.
- College applications take time (generally 2-3 hours but you can save the data and come back to it at a later time rather than complete it all in one sitting); do not try to rush through the application process. Remember, you are trying to "sell" yourself to the college, so do not leave anything out that you have done throughout your high school career.
- Not all colleges/universities require letters of recommendations, but most scholarship applications do. Come to Mrs. Nash's office to pick up a Letter of Recommendation Request Form for your letters of rec. Get your letter of recommendation requests to your teachers/staff members early. Nothing is worse than having your person write the letter of recommendation in a hurry; thoughtful, important information about you could be left out if the person has little time to write your letter.
- Be very careful about what you post on your social media pages. Colleges/universities look at these to see what kind of pictures you post, what comments you make, what things you share, etc. You want to present your best self.

- **Be sure to meet all deadlines that the colleges/universities set; only under very rare circumstances will they take late items. Colleges/universities are looking for responsible students that can take care of business in a timely manner. Look over and reread the college/university admissions page CAREFULLY and especially be familiar with specific requirements for any program you might be interested in, such as Honors or Computer Science, etc.**
- **When the college/university requests a transcript from you, you will send your transcript using Parchment. Very rarely will a college ask for a transcript to be mailed, but it has happened; Parchment can mail it for you. DO NOT submit a transcript to a college/university until you have completed and submitted your application. Otherwise it floats around somewhere in cyberspace because the college/university has no application to attach it to.**
- **All seniors should request an unofficial transcript from Parchment to be emailed to yourselves. Print it, look over it, and verify that all the courses and credits listed are correct. Any discrepancies need to be brought to Ms. Jannett for correction. Keep the transcript on hand when filling out your college/university application.**
- **Scholarships, grants, financial aid applications are totally separate from college/university applications. In addition, housing at your college/university and financial aid are separate offices at most colleges/universities and require separate forms for you to fill out.**
- **If you and your family are seeking financial aid for college, you and your parents will have to fill out a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). This form will have to be filled out every year that you are in college and wish to receive financial aid. To get more information about FAFSA, visit their website <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> or contact your college's/university's financial aid office. This application also takes time to fill out, so do not rush through it. You will need your parents'/guardians' income tax return to fill out this form; you and/or your parents/guardians can fill out that portion of the application.**
- **Do not hesitate to seek advice from your parents/guardians, grandparents, counselor, deans, and teachers about colleges/universities. Also, be willing to contact one of the college admissions officers yourself if you have any questions or concerns about the process.**
- **I will help you in every way I can in your application process; however, please understand that the college/university is interested in YOU. Even if I contact the college/university for you by phone, they will want to talk to YOU personally. You will be your own advocate when dealing with colleges/universities--not me, not your parents/guardians, not your teachers, but YOU. YOU can do this!**
- **Listen for announcements in the WAAG or emails to you for upcoming college/university visits from representatives.**
- **Listen for announcements in the WAAG or emails to you for any other information that you will need to know for this year.**

- There are many websites that can help with questions you may have about college, but I have found these to be very helpful websites:
 - collegesimply.com/colleges/texas This website lists all colleges and universities in Texas for 2018.
 - free-4u.com This website gives information on national colleges, universities, and scholarships.
 - princetonreview.com This website is good for tips in writing college application essays, help with SAT, and gives college admission tips.
 - Big Future College Board <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
 - Niche Advanced College Search <https://.niche.com>
 - US News Education <https://www.usnews.com/education>
 - Trade Schools <http://www.trade-schools.net/locations/texas-schools-directory.asp>
- We will have other meetings that will focus on application do's and don't's, essay writing, resumes, scholarships, financial aid, etc.
- And most important--this is your senior year! Study hard, have fun, make good decisions and enjoy it!

If you need any help during the year, come by; we will be delighted to help you in any way that we can.

Mrs. Nash, SMA Guidance Counselor, nasht@smabears.org

Mrs. Boyer, boyerv@smabears.org

Mrs. Strauss, straussc@smabears.org

Ms. Jannett, jannettj@smabears.org