



PARENT ACTION GUIDES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE TO PARENTS 4

PARENT ACTION GUIDES

What Are My School Choice Options? 5

How Can I Get Involved at My Child’s School?..... 25

Early Education (Ages 0 – 5)..... 33

Preparing for Education After High School..... 41

**FOR EXTRAS: SCHOOL PROFILES, FAQ, METHODOLOGY, AND
MORE VISIT: WWW.TEXASSCHOOLGUIDE.ORG/RESOURCES**

DISCLAIMER

CHILDREN AT RISK is a nonprofit organization that drives change for children through research, education, and influencing public policy. *Texas School Guide: Empowering Families to Succeed in Public Education* has been developed independently, and is not endorsed by the Dallas Independent School District. The school level information that appears in this guide has been gathered from the Texas Education Agency, the Dallas ISD website, or individual schools. The information in this guide is subject to change at any time and it is important that parents, community members, educators, and all others contact their schools directly to obtain the most current and accurate information.

See www.texasschoolguide.org/resources for a more detailed description of our methodology.

WELCOME TO THE FOURTH EDITION OF TEXAS SCHOOL GUIDE!

CHILDREN AT RISK hopes that *Texas School Guide: Empowering Parents to Succeed in Public Education* for the Dallas ISD area will be your trusted resource for making decisions about your child's education.

In this book, you will find four Parent Action Guides to help you in the process:

1. What Are My School Options?

This guide lays out a four-step process for figuring out public school options for your child in grades Kindergarten through 12th.

2. How Can I Get Involved at My Child's School?

Being involved in your child's school can help them succeed! This section explains different ways you can get involved.

3. Early Education (Ages 0 – 5)

This section is for parents or caregivers with children ages 5 and younger. It explains all of their options for education and why education is so important during the child's first few years of life.

4. Preparing for Education After High School

This section applies to parents or caregivers with students in middle school or high school. It is never too early to start thinking about the future!

You can find this same information and more at www.texasschoolguide.org/resources.

Remember, it is helpful to always contact the program or school for the most updated information. Throughout the guide, we offer many phone numbers and websites to help you navigate the system.

We encourage you to share this valuable resource with others, so that more children have the opportunity for quality education and a brighter future. Please send feedback to texasschoolguide@childrenatrisk.org to help us continue to improve this resource for children and families!

For Children,



Dr. Robert Sanborn
President & CEO
CHILDREN AT RISK





PARENT ACTION GUIDES

What Are My School
Choice Options?

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

WHAT IS SCHOOL CHOICE?

School choice is selecting a school for your child based on the qualities of the school and your child's needs, rather than on your home address.



Parents have options other than the traditional neighborhood school assigned to their home address, but options are different for each district.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF SCHOOLS MY FAMILY CAN CHOOSE?

A **Neighborhood School** is the public school that a child is assigned based on their family's home address.

A **Charter School** is a public school that is not managed by a local school district. They are:

- Tuition-free.
- Open to any student within a specific area that wishes to apply.
- Usually required to use a lottery system to choose the students who may attend.
- Can have different rules than neighborhood schools (example: some charters may have a longer school day or year).

A **Magnet Program or School** is a Dallas ISD school option that:

- Is either run by a school district or a group of school districts.
- Offers a curriculum that is mostly focused on a specific subject (example: Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM), performing arts, leadership, or certain career paths).
- Offers a more in-depth education in their focus area than traditional public schools.

Some magnet programs are located at neighborhood schools. Other **magnet schools** have their own campuses. The word "magnet" is used because these schools attract students from all parts of the district.

A **Private School** is a school that is not funded by the government. Private schools receive their funding from individuals or a private organization. They usually require students to:

- Pay tuition.
- Complete an application process that may include applications, tests, interviews, and financial aid applications.

Private schools can have a religious affiliation or be independent. Although this guide does not include profiles of private schools, they are one of the available options for parents.

THE TEXAS SCHOOL GUIDE FOUR-STEP PROCESS

A Four-Step Guide to Finding the Right School for Your Child



STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

To find your neighborhood school, you can use Dallas ISD's website at www.dallasisd.org! You will need your child's:

- Home address
- City
- State
- Zip code

The school district sets boundaries for all schools in the district, and these boundaries can change. Once you have found your neighborhood school, don't forget to call the school to confirm the boundaries prior to enrollment!

STEP 2: FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

Once you know your child's neighborhood school, you will need to decide if it is the best option for your child. You can look at:

- School quality.
- School programs / assets.
- Other important factors, like transportation options.

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

School Quality

Using www.texaschoolguide.org. Look up your child's school profile. This profile shows a lot of information about the school, including the school's 2016 CHILDREN AT RISK School Rankings. You will find:

- School Grade – Just like students, each school is given a grade of A through F. A grade of A, B, and even some C schools are all good options for student success!
- School Ranking – Most schools across the state are ranked based on their grade received.

You can also look at the 2016-2017 Public Education Grant (PEG) List on [page 21](#) to see if the Texas Education Agency rated your child's school as underperforming. In some cases, you can transfer your child to a better school based on a school's PEG status.

Finally, be sure to look for the different organizations that are working in your school. This can be a sign that the community is making an investment to improve your child's learning!



Determine what is important for your student and family. There are a variety of activities and programs that may enrich your student's learning experience.

School Programs / Assets

Academic quality isn't the only important thing about your child's school! Your child might be interested in an activity like art, music, or STEM (Science Technology Math Engineering). If so, you may want your child to be in programs that encourage his or her learning in those areas. And, if your child is in high school, you may want him or her to have access to a college counselor.

In the school profiles, you will find information on programs offered by all public and charter schools in the district. If a school offers the following programs, it will be included in their profile:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	MIDDLE SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOLS
Art Classes	Art Classes	Art Classes
Music Classes	Music Classes	Music Classes
Dual Language	Dual Language	Dual Language
Before School Program (if available, grades that are offered this program)*	Before School Program*	AP, IB, College/Dual Credit Options*
After School Program (if available, grades that are offered this program)*	After School Program*	College Counseling
Pre-K (Full Day)*	Sports/Athletics*	Sports/Athletics*
Pre-K (Half Day)*	–	–

* There may be a weekly or monthly fee associated with these programs. Contact the school for more information.

Other Important Factors

- What else is important to you and your family?
- Is transportation a concern?
- What is the school's climate?
- What resources are available for students with special needs?



You have the right to ask questions and find the resources you need for your child.

Transportation Options in Dallas ISD

Getting your child to and from school can sometimes be a challenge. Many parents have busy work schedules or may not have a vehicle at home. Dallas ISD has some options.

Dallas ISD students are eligible to ride the bus if they:

- Are in grades K-12, attend their neighborhood school, and live two or more miles away from their school.
- Attend a magnet school or program and live two or more miles away from the school.

Out of district students are responsible for their own transportation.

Dallas ISD students with special needs are eligible for transportation that meets their needs. In order to be eligible for special needs transportation, a student must have both of the following:

- A completed written Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee recommendation requesting specialized transportation services. The recommendation must state the specific type of transportation services necessary to reasonably accommodate the student's disability or impairment.
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) that includes the completed written recommendation of the ARD committee request for specialized transportation services.

Visit texasprojectfirst.org/FAQTransportation.html to learn more about transportation options that are available for students with special needs. If you have any questions, call the Dallas ISD Special Education Department at (972) 581-4100.

Resources for Students with Special Needs

Dallas ISD has a Special Education Department that offers programming, information, and services to families with students who have special education needs.

Visit www.dallasisd.org to learn more about:

- Activities of Daily Living (ADL) Program
- Assistive Technology
- Auditory Impairment Services
- Autism/Total Communication (TC) Program
- Behavior Program
- Child Find
- Dyslexia Services
- Elementary Programs
- Functional Living Skills (FLS) Program
- Individual Evaluation
- Itinerant Services
- Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD)
- Secondary Programs
- Speech-Language Pathology Services
- Transition Services
- Vision Program

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Dallas ISD Transportation Office
(972) 925-4953

www.dallasisd.org/busroutes

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Dallas ISD Special Education Department
912 South Ervay Street
Dallas, Texas 75201
(972) 581-4100

www.dallasisd.org/sped

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

There are many organizations in the Dallas area that help parents who have children with special needs, including:

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	MISSION / PURPOSE	PHONE	WEBSITE
Achievement Center of Texas	Garland, TX	Provides day care, day habilitation (life skills training), arts exploration, educational assistance, and community inclusion for children and young adults with special needs.	(972) 414-7700	www.achievementcenteroftexas.org
Association for Independent Living	Dallas, TX	Strengthens the independence of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through life skills education, vocational guidance, community integration, and spiritual growth in a supportive living environment.	(214) 351-0798	www.afildfw.org
Callier Center for Communication Disorders	Dallas, TX Richardson, TX	Transforms the lives of those with communication disorders by providing outstanding, leading-edge clinical services, conducting meaningful and innovative basic and applied research into new treatments and technologies, and training the next generation of caring clinical providers.	Dallas: (214) 905-3000 Richardson: (972) 883-3630	www.utdallas.edu/calliercenter
Camp Summit	Dallas, TX	Provides barrier-free outdoor experiences that promote personal growth and foster independence for children and adults with disabilities.	(972) 484-8900	www.campsummittx.org
Chase's Place	Richardson, TX	Supports students in discovering their abilities so that they develop independence to their maximum potential, allowing them to live life to the fullest.	(972) 243-2676	www.chasesplace.org
Child Study Center	Fort Worth, TX	Provides children with complex developmental and behavioral disabilities the highest quality diagnosis, treatment and education, helping them achieve their full potential.	(817) 336-8611	www.cscfw.org
Citizens Development Center	Dallas, TX	Training center and employment placement organization for adults with intellectual, mental health and/or physical disabilities (clients) living in Dallas and surrounding areas.	(214) 637-2911	www.citizensdevelopmentcenter.org
Community Homes for Adults, Inc. (CHAI)	Dallas, TX	Provides programs and services to enable adults with cognitive disabilities to live full, rich lives in a safe environment and to meaningfully participate in the community.	(214) 373-8600	www.chaidallas.org
Dallas Center, Inc.	Dallas, TX	A non-profit, non-denominational, early intervention and training center for infants, children, and adults with developmental differences serving the greater Dallas metropolitan area.	(214) 328-4309	www.dallascenter.org

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	MISSION / PURPOSE	PHONE	WEBSITE
Dallas Services	Dallas, TX	Committed to providing affordable, inclusive, and unique pre-school learning opportunities and low vision services to all individuals in our culturally and economically diverse community.	(214) 828-9900	www.dallasservices.org
Decoding Dyslexia Texas	Texas	Grassroots movement to raise dyslexia awareness, empower families to support their children, and inform policy-makers on best practices to identify, remediate, and support students with dyslexia in Texas schools.	None listed	www.decodingdyslexiatx.org
Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas	Richardson, TX	Provides accurate and current information, resources, and support for people with Down syndrome, their families, and the community.	(214) 267-1374	www.downsyndromedallas.org
Easter Seals North Texas	North Dallas, TX South Dallas, TX Fort Worth, TX Grapevine, TX	Spreads help, hope and answers, creating opportunities that advance the independence of individuals with disabilities and other special needs.	North Dallas: (972) 394-8900 South Dallas: (214) 372-3300 Fort Worth: (817) 332-7171 Grapevine (817) 424-9797	www.easterseals.com/northtexas
Evergreen Life Services	Dallas, TX Fort Worth, TX Sherman, TX Texarkana, TX Longview, TX	Offers a wide range of community-based services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, designed to not only meet basic needs, but also teach life skills and help each individual reach his or her own personal potential.	Dallas: 972) 386-4834 Ft. Worth: (817)285-8011 Sherman: (903) 893-0149	www.evergreens.org
Great Lakes Academy	Plano, TX	Provides students with average to above-average intelligence, diagnosed with various Learning Differences, Asperger's Syndrome, ADD or ADHD, a stimulating environment and favorable atmosphere which affords each student opportunities to develop.	(972)-517-7498 x 103	www.greatlaksacademy.com
Hill School	Fort Worth, TX	Provides students who learn differently and are of average to above average intelligence a student-centered educational environment that focuses on intellectual development, while supporting social, emotional, and physical well-being.	Fort Worth: (817) 923-9482	www.hillschool.org
Jo Kelly Special	Fort Worth, TX	Provides for the needs and education of students with multiple disabilities and medical fragility that they may develop to their fullest potential.	(817) 815-5900	jokelly.fwisd.org/pages/JoKelly
Lakes Regional MHMR	Various Locations	Serves the communities of 15 counties in Northeast Texas with mental health, mental disability and recovery services.	(972) 524-4159	www.lakesregional.org

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

ORGANIZATION	LOCATION	MISSION / PURPOSE	PHONE	WEBSITE
LifePath Systems	McKinney, TX	Provides critically needed assistance to the intellectually disabled, mental illness treatment, and early childhood intervention, for developmentally delayed infants and their families.	(972) 562-0190	www.lifepathsystems.org
Metrocare Services	Dallas, TX	Dedicated to helping people with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and severe emotional problems live healthier lives.	(214) 743-1200	www.metrocareservices.org
Metrocrest Community Services	Carrollton, TX	Provides quality services to individuals with developmental disabilities and other related disabilities by supporting them in day habilitation, vocational and community services of their choice.	(972) 323-1220	www.metrocrestcs.org
My Possibilities	Plano, TX	The first full day, full year continuing education program in Collin County for disabled Texans who have “aged out” of public education.	(469) 241-9100	www.mypossibilities.org
Notre Dame School	Dallas, TX	Educates students with intellectual disabilities and facilitates their integration into society.	(214) 720-3911	www.notredameschool.org
Partners Resource Network	Texas	A non-profit agency that operates the Texas statewide network of Parent Training and Information Centers.	Region 9 and 11: (817) 988-7717 Region 10: (214) 425-3056	www.partnerstx.org
Sage Care Therapy	Dallas, TX	Aims to provide the most effective, function-centered therapies to children, and promote the most therapist-friendly Pediatric Home Health Care Company in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex area.	(214) 295-5374	www.sagecaretherapy.com
The Arc	Texas	Advocates for and serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, encompassing all ages and all spectrums from autism, Down syndrome, Fragile X and various other developmental disabilities.	The Arc of Collin, Dallas and Rockwall Counties: (214) 634-9810 The Arc of Greater Tarrant County, Inc.: (817) 877-1474	www.thearcdallas.org www.arctc.org
The Shelton School	Dallas, TX	Serves students with learning differences, including dyslexia and related disorders.	(972) 774-1772	www.shelton.org
Therapy 2000	Dallas, TX Fort Worth, TX	Delivers high quality individualized home care rehabilitation services to children, such as occupational, physical, and speech therapy services to children (birth-21) with special needs, including disabilities, developmental delays and autism spectrum disorders.	Central Division - Dallas: (214) 467-9787 West Division - Ft. Worth: (817) 507-1500	www.t2000.com

School Climate

School climate is important because the school's environment sets the tone for your student's learning. It can include:

- The relationships between students and teachers.
- General school environment (how different parts of the school look and feel to you).
- Front office staff behavior.
- Bullying prevention on the school campus.
- Safety measures.

What to look for in a school climate:

- *Office staff* (school secretary, office manager, etc.) who are friendly and encouraging, and display other supportive behaviors with students, staff, and parents.
- Teachers who are *helping and speaking positively* with students in the hallways and classrooms.
- Teachers who are keeping the *students engaged and thinking critically*.
- *Parents are encouraged to visit* the school, participate in different activities, and ask questions.
- Students who are *friendly* with one another.
- The school has a *hopeful and supportive environment*, such as posters on the walls with sayings that encourage students to “reach for the stars,” etc.
- *Safety measures* in place throughout the school, such as automatic locks or gated entrances to the front office during the school day.
- *Safe and clear resources* for students with emotional, mental, and physical disabilities, such as unobstructed ramps for wheelchair access.

You can call the school or request an in-person tour to learn more about the school climate. Below are some questions you can ask to learn more about the school climate.



School climate is important because the school's environment sets the tone for your student's learning.

- How does the school provide information to parents about their child's behavior?
- How do office staff or teachers communicate positive feedback to the students?
- If a parent contacts the school, how long does it usually take to get a response?
- How does the school prevent and respond to bullying?
- Are there any official rules that require the school to notify parents when bullying happens in their child's classroom?
- What rules are in place to keep drugs from being shared on school grounds?
- How does the school support students' social and emotional growth?
- What resources and trainings does the school have to help teachers and staff support students' social and emotional growth?
- How does the school encourage parents to talk with teachers and school staff if their child is having a problem?
- How does the school support emotional and physical growth for students with special needs?

STEP 3: FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS

In this section you can explore how to:

- Visit a school.
- Get involved in your child's school.
- Look into other school options, like magnet schools and programs.
- For high school children, look into career academies and pathways.
- Consider transfer options.
- Enroll in a charter school.

Visit a School

Whether you want to learn more about your neighborhood school, a charter school, or a magnet program, one of the most important things you can do when finding the best school for your child is to visit the campus!

Questions to Ask When Visiting a School

General School Priorities

- What is the school's *mission*? The mission statement is usually a sentence or two that describes the school's values and purpose.
- How does the school approach *safety*?
- How does the school approach *discipline*?
- What are the school's *greatest successes*?
- What are the school's *greatest challenges*?
- What is the *student attrition rate*? (The student attrition rate represents the number of students leaving the school each year for reasons other than graduation.)
- What is the *teacher attrition rate*? (The teacher attrition rate represents the number of teachers leaving the school each year.)

Meeting Student Needs

- How does the school keep track of *student academic progress*?
- How do teachers instruct students with *limited English proficiency*?
- What *strategies* do teachers use to help students catch up if they are falling behind?
- What services does the school have for students with *special needs* or learning disabilities?
- How do students get to school? Is *bus transportation* available?
- Does the school have *free or reduced-price meals* for students who qualify based on family income?
- If a child is doing really well in his or her classes, does the school have *advanced courses or programs* that help them continue to succeed?

Classroom and Curriculum

- What *rules and systems* are most important in classrooms?
- What is the typical *class size*? What is the maximum class size?
- How is *technology* used to support teaching and learning?
- What *non-academic activities* are available for students?
- How does *fine arts* fit into the curriculum?

Parent Involvement

- How can parents *get involved*?
- How do teachers and staff *communicate with parents*?
- Are *parent-teacher conferences* scheduled regularly throughout the year?

Get Involved in Your Child's School

If you are not happy with your child's school, you can try to make changes to the campus. For example, if you feel like your child's neighborhood school is not meeting your child's educational needs, start by asking questions. If the school is on the Public Education Grant (PEG) List or if it scored a D or an F in the CHILDREN AT RISK Rankings, you have a right to find out why.

You can start by scheduling a meeting with a school staff member or the principal. If you don't get the answers you need, reach out to your School Board Representative. Find out more about how to get involved on [page 26](#).



If you are not happy with your child's school, you can try to make changes to the campus.

Check out Magnet Schools / Programs

Magnet schools and programs in Dallas ISD provide a curriculum focused around a particular subject (such as art or science) or a career, in addition to regular academic subjects. The Dallas ISD magnet school system is made up of:

1. Vanguards for elementary schools.
2. Academies for middle schools.
3. Magnets for high schools.

All magnet programs and schools require an application for admittance. For Dallas ISD, you can find applications during the application period, typically in December or January, at:

- Any Dallas ISD school.
- The Magnet Programs Office.
- Online at www.dallasisd.org/magnet.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND CURRENT DEADLINES, CONTACT:
The Dallas ISD Magnet Programs
(972) 925-8936
Dallas Independent School District
Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center
1201 East Eighth Street, Suite 237A
Dallas, Texas 75203
magnetschools@dallasisd.org

www.dallasisd.org/magnet

Magnet Schools/Programs Application Process

Be sure to first check the updated deadlines and application requirements listed on the website:

<http://www.dallasisd.org/magnet>.



Application Tips:

- Only apply for a *maximum of two programs* based on *interests, talents, and aptitude*.
- Only apply for *one program per school*. For example, you may apply to an arts magnet program at one campus and a science program at another campus, but not to two programs housed on the same campus.
- Only complete *one magnet program application* even if applying to two programs. On the application you can list your child's first and second choice programs.
- Submit the application to your *first-choice school*. If you submit more than one application, your child will be disqualified from the whole process.
- *Turn in* the application, a current report card, test scores, and proof of parent/guardian residence.
- After turning in the application, your child will *complete an "assessment"* (a test, interview, and/or writing assignment) for your child's first and second choice programs.

MAGNET APPLICATION TIMELINE

MAGNET APPLICATION TIMELINE	
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications become available • Attend the Magnet Fair and Open House
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance letters sent to students
January - February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magnet "assessment" days
Late February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First choice notification letters mailed
Early April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second choice notification letters mailed

2016-2017 Magnet Focus Areas and Requirements

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	MAGNET AREA OF FOCUS	REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS
Alex W. Spence Talented and Gifted Academy	06 - 08	Advanced academic program in all curricula	On-site essay and critical thinking assessment
Barack Obama Male Leadership School	06 - 12	Math, Science, Student Wellness, and Leadership Skills	On-site math assessment and essay
Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing & Visual Arts	09 - 12	Performing and Visual Arts	On-site interview and audition
Dallas Environmental Science Academy	06 - 08	Environmental Science and Mathematics	On-site math assessment, essay, and interview
Franklin D. Roosevelt Health Magnet	09 - 12	Administrative Medical Assistant, Culinary Arts, and Physical Therapy	On-site essay, interview, and career choice inventory

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	MAGNET AREA OF FOCUS	REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS
George Bannerman Dealey Montessori Vanguard and International Academy	PK - 08	Montessori	On-site essay and interview
Harry Stone Montessori Vanguard and Academy	PK - 08	Montessori	On-site essay and interview
Henry W. Longfellow Career Exploration Academy	06 - 08	Education, Hospitality, and Health Science, Professional Communications, Business, Marketing, and Finance, Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness, STEM/IT, and Touch System Data Entry	On-site essay, and portfolio of graded work samples
Irma L. Rangel Young Women's Leadership School	06 - 12	Math, Science, Technology, Student Wellness, and Leadership Skills	On-site math assessment and essay
J. P. Starks Math, Science and Technology Vanguard	04 - 05	Mathematics, Science, and Technology	On-site math assessment and essay
Judge Barefoot Sanders Law Magnet at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center	09 - 12	Government, Law, and Law Enforcement	On-site essay, interview, and timed math assessment
Justin F. Kimball Math & Science	09 - 12	Mathematics, Science, and Computer Science	On-site timed math assessment, essay, and interview
K. B. Polk Talented and Gifted Vanguard	04 - 05	Advanced academic program in all curricula	On-site essay and critical thinking assessment
L.G. Pinkston Law Magnet	09 - 12	Government, Law, and Law Enforcement	On-site essay, interview, and portfolio of graded work samples
Lincoln Humanities/ Communications	09 - 12	Literature, Philosophy, Art, Languages, Radio, Television, and Newspaper Production	On-site essay/skills assessment and interview
Mark Twain Leadership Vanguard	04 - 05	Leadership Skills	On-site essay, interview, and portfolio of graded work samples
Oliver Wendell Holmes Humanities/ Communications Academy	06 - 08	Art, Literature, Music, Philosophy, and Government	On-site essay and portfolio of graded work samples
Rosie M. Collins Sorrells School of Education and Social Services at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center	09 - 12	Social Services, Education, and Child Related Professions	On-site essay and interview
School for the Talented and Gifted at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center	09 - 12	Advanced academic program in all curricula	On-site essay, interview, and project from school or outside school
Business and Management Center at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center	09 - 12	Business Management, Marketing, and Technology	On-site essay, interview, and resume

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	MAGNET AREA OF FOCUS	REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS
School of Health Professions at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center	09 - 12	Health, Dental Careers, Medical Careers, and Veterinary Careers	On-site essay, interview, and career choice inventory
School of Science and Engineering at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center	09 - 12	Mathematics, Engineering, Science, and Computer Science	On-site math and critical thinking assessments, essay, and interview
Agriculture and Natural Resources Magnet at Seagoville	09 - 12	Environmental Studies	On-site interview and three minute presentation on a current environmental issue
Sidney Lanier Expressive Arts Vanguard	04 - 05	Performing and Visual Arts	On-site interview and short answer writing sample
Skyline Career Development Center	09 - 12	Advanced Math, Graphic Design and Illustration, Advanced Social Sciences, Advanced Science, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Printing and Imaging Technology, Interior Design, Flexible Manufacturing, Photography, Travel and Tourism, Aircraft Technology, Architecture, Floriculture, Horticulture, Audio and Visual Technology, World Languages, Building Trades, Fashion Marketing and Apparel Design, and Transportation	On-site interview, additional requirements vary by cluster
W.E. Greiner Exploratory Arts Academy	06 - 08	Performing and Visual Arts	Audition/portfolio
William B. Travis Talented and Gifted Vanguard and Academy	04 - 08	Advanced academic program in all curricula	On-site essay and critical thinking assessment
William Hawley Atwell Law Academy	06 - 08	Law and Law Enforcement	On-site essay, interview, and portfolio of graded work samples

Look at Career Academies and Pathways

Career Academies and Pathways are specific programs that are offered at Dallas ISD high schools with the goal of preparing students for college and careers.

A Career Academy is:

- A smaller, family-type atmosphere within a school.
- Comprised of approximately 75-150 students.
- A personalized learning environment where students have the same teachers for certain subjects.
- A program that partners with local businesses, community organizations, and higher education programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATED DEADLINES, CONTACT:
College and Career Readiness Office
(972) 925-8816
Dallas Independent School District
3700 Ross Avenue
Dallas, Texas 75204

<http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/813>

A Career Pathway is:

- A program where students can take multiple courses for similar careers.
- A targeted program that gives students the knowledge and skills needed for a specific career field.
- A program that leads to a certificate, degree, and/or career.

Career Academies and Pathways are open to all students. If a student wants to apply to a program outside of the neighborhood school that is zoned to his or her home address, he or she must complete a transfer process (see page 20). To find out what school is zoned to your home, visit the district’s website at www.dallasisd.org/Page/3201.

Career Academies and Career Pathways Available in Dallas ISD:

HIGH SCHOOL	CAREER ACADEMY OR PATHWAY
Bryan Adams	Engineering, Health Science, Law Enforcement, Business Management and Administration, and Information Technology
David W. Carter	Business, Visual and Performing Arts, Law Enforcement, and Information Technology
Emmett J. Conrad	Finance, Health Science, Hospitality and Tourism, IT, Engineering, and Culinary Arts
H. Grady Spruce	Engineering, Finance, Transportation, Distribution, Logistics, Information Technology, and Business
Hillcrest	Engineering
James Madison	Information Technology
Justin F. Kimball	Engineering, Hospitality and Tourism, and Law Enforcement
L.G. Pinkston	Law, Automotive Technology, Architecture, and Welding
Lincoln	Business Management, Arts, A/V, Engineering, and Culinary Arts/ Entrepreneurial Pathway
Molina	Art, Animation, A/V, Culinary Arts, Architecture, and Graphic Design
New Tech High School at A. Maceo Smith	Information Technology
North Dallas	Information Technology, Finance, and Engineering
Roosevelt	Health Sciences
Seagoville	Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Agricultural Management, Environmental Studies, Veterinarian Technician, and Information Technology Pathway
South Oak Cliff	Information Technology, Education and Training, Law Enforcement, and Finance
Sunset	Health Science, Finance, Business Management, Education & Training, Information Technology, Computer Technician, Law and Public Service, and Sports Entertainment and Marketing
Thomas Jefferson	Engineering, Culinary Arts, Finance, and Hospitality and Tourism
W.H. Adamson	Finance, Business, Education & Training, and Automotive Technology
W.T. White	Engineering, Business and Marketing, and Human Services

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

Transfer Your Child to Another Dallas ISD School

A student's neighborhood school is based on his or her home address. Students can apply for transfer requests to other schools if they meet one of these 3 requirements:

- Student Transfers: if a student or family has specific needs.
- Public Education Grant (PEG) Transfers: if your neighborhood school has a track record of failing to meet state requirements.
- Out of District Transfers: if you live outside of Dallas ISD and want to attend a Dallas ISD school.

There are application deadlines for each of these 3 transfer options. Be sure to check the most current deadlines by visiting the Dallas ISD website or calling your school or district.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND
UPDATED DEADLINES, CONTACT:
The Student Transfer Office
(972) 749-5720
studenttransfer@dallasisd.org

www.dallasisd.org/Page/100



Transfer Tips

- Transfers are only for grades Kindergarten to 12th.
- Transfers are only for one school year.
- Students must reapply every year.
- No transportation is provided by the district (transportation is the responsibility of the parent).
- A transfer application can be denied based on:
 - » Availability of space at the campus to which the student is applying.
 - » The student's grades, attendance, and conduct.
 - » An application submitted past the deadline.

Student Transfers

A student may apply to transfer to a different school within Dallas ISD if:

- The new school has a program or course that the neighborhood school does not have, or
- The student cannot attend the neighborhood school due to personal "hardship" or family circumstances.

For example, if the student is interested in a program like ROTC but the neighborhood school does not offer that program, the student may apply to transfer to another school in Dallas ISD that offers the ROTC program.

Another example is a "hardship transfer." A hardship might be if a parent works far away from their child's neighborhood school and would find it difficult to get back to that school quickly in case of an emergency.

The typical transfer window for this type of student transfer is early January to early March, and the transfer application will need to be repeated every year if the child wishes to remain at the school.

Transfer Process

- 1** **APPLY EITHER:**
Online at www.dallasisd.org/Page/100, OR
Through a paper form (available at your Dallas ISD neighborhood school).
- 2** The school's principal will decide whether or not to accept the transfer application and will notify the Dallas ISD Student Transfer Office.
- 3** Finally, the Dallas ISD Student Transfer Office will make a final decision.
- 4** If the Student Transfer Office denies your application, you may file an appeal and present your child's case to a committee. The appeal will usually take place towards the end of the school year. In order to file an appeal, contact the Student Transfer Office directly.

PEG Transfers

Your student can request a transfer to a different school within Dallas ISD if he or she is attending a neighborhood school that is listed as a Public Education Grant (PEG) school.

PEG schools are low-performing schools where:

- 50% or fewer students passed the STAAR exam in any two of the most recent three years (2013, 2014, and 2015), or
- The school was rated by the state as “Improvement Required” in 2013, 2014, or 2015.

Every year, the state provides districts with a list of PEG schools, and the districts must tell the parents who have students in these PEG schools by February 1st. For more information, visit the Texas Education Agency’s website at www.tea.texas.gov/PEG.aspx.

 2016 – 2017 DALLAS ISD PEG SCHOOLS	
Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School	Harrell Budd Elementary School
Amelia Earhart Learning Center	Hector P. Garcia Middle School
Annie Webb Blanton Elementary School	Highland Meadows Elementary School
Bayles Elementary School	J. N. Ervin Elementary School
Billy Earl Dade Middle School	J. W. Ray Learning Center
Boude Storey Middle School	Jack Lowe Sr. Elementary School
C.F. Carr Elementary School	James Madison High School
Casa View Elementary School	James S. Hogg Elementary School
Cesar Chavez Learning Center	John B. Hood Middle School
Clara Oliver Elementary School	John F. Kennedy Learning Center
Daniel Webster Elementary School	John F. Peeler Elementary School
David W. Carter High School	John H. Reagan Elementary School
E. B. Comstock Middle School	John N. Bryan Elementary School
Ebby Halliday Elementary School	John W. Carpenter Elementary School
Eduardo Mata Elementary School	Justin F. Kimball High School
Edward H. Cary Middle School	L. G. Pinkston High School
Edward Titcher Elementary School	L. L. Hotchkiss Elementary School
Elisha M. Pease Elementary School	L. O. Donald Elementary School
Emmett J. Conrad High School	Leila P. Cowart Elementary School
Esperanza Medrano Elementary School	Lenore Kirk Hall Elementary School
Francisco Medrano Middle School	Leonides Conzalez Cigarroa Elementary School
Frank Guzick Elementary School	Lincoln Humanities/Communication High School
Franklin D. Roosevelt High School	Louise Wolfe Kahn Elementary School
Fred F. Florence Middle School	Maria Moreno Elementary School
Frederick Douglass Elementary School	Mark Twain Elementary School
Gabe P. Allen Charter School	Mount Auburn Elementary School
George W. Carver Creative Arts Learning Center	Nancy J. Cochran Elementary School
George W. Truett Elementary School	Nancy Moseley Elementary School
Gilbert Cuellar Sr. Elementary School	North Dallas High School
H. Grady Spruce High School	Oliver Wendell Holmes Middle School
Harold W. Lang Sr. Middle School	Onesimo Hernandez Elementary School

WHAT ARE MY SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS?

2016 – 2017 DALLAS ISD PEG SCHOOLS

Oran M. Roberts Elementary School	Thomas C. Marsh Middle School
Paul L. Dunbar Elementary School	Thomas J. Rusk Middle School
Pleasant Grove Elementary School	Thomas Jefferson High School
Roger Q. Mills Elementary School	Thomas L. Marsalis Elementary School
Ronald E. McNair Elementary School	Tom C. Gooch Elementary School
Rufus C. Bureson Elementary School	Umphrey Lee Elementary School
Sam Tasby Middle School	W. H. Gaston Middle School
San Jacinto Elementary School	W. W. Bushman Elementary School
Sarah Zumwalt Middle School	W. W. Samuell High School
Seagoville High School	Whitney M. Young Elementary School
Seagoville Middle School	William B. Miller Elementary School
South Oak Cliff High School	William H. Atwell Law Academy
Stevens Park Elementary School	Wilmer-Hutchins Elementary School
T. W. Browne Middle School	Wilmer-Hutchins High School
Thomas A. Edison Middle School	

Out of District Transfers

Students who live outside of Dallas ISD and want to attend a Dallas ISD school may be eligible for an out of district transfer. You can download the Out of District Form and find more information on the district's website at www.dallasisd.org/Page/100.

Charter Schools in Dallas

Charter Schools are not a part of Dallas ISD, but they are still public schools. Most charter schools accept students through a lottery system, which is a random drawing.

- These schools require some kind of application.
- Many applications can be submitted online, but the process is different for each school.
- Check with each school for their requirements, such as documents or an interview/audition.
- If your child is on a charter school's waiting list, it may help to contact the school to let them know that you are still interested if space becomes available.

Charter schools must follow the same rules as traditional public schools when it comes to services for children with special education needs. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask your school's administrators.

Here you will find a short list of charter schools in the area to help you get started, but make sure to:

1. Look up their grade and campus profile in the 4th edition of *Texas School Guide* or at www.texaschoolguide.org.
2. Visit each of the school's websites or call the school to learn more about updated deadlines and application process.
3. Google search the school to see if you find any recent news articles about the school.
4. Ask the school whether they "Met Standard" for the 2015-2016 school year. If they did not, they would be rated as "Improvement Required," which means they failed at some portion of the state education standards.

SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL	APPLICATION PERIOD	ADMISSIONS MODEL	PHONE NUMBER	WEBSITE
A.W. Brown Fellowship Charter School	PK - 08	January 7 - June 1	Open enrollment/lottery	(972) 709-4700	www.awbrown.org
A+ Academy	PK - 12	Contact school for details	Contact school for details	(972) 557-5578	www.apluscharterschools.org
Dallas Can Academy	09 – 12 (multiple campuses)	Contact school for details	Open enrollment	(214) 944-1985	www.texanscan.org
East Grand Preparatory Academy	PK – 6	Contact school for details	Open enrollment/lottery	(214) 824-4747	www.cityscapeschools.org
Gateway Charter Academy	PK – 12 (two campuses)	Beginning April 1	Open enrollment	(214) 375-2039	www.gatewaycharter.org
Golden Rule Charter School	PK – 08 Varies by campus	Contact school for details	Open enrollment	(214) 333-9330	www.goldenruledallas.org
Inspired Vision Academy	PK – 06	Contact school for details	Contact school for details	(214) 391-7964	ivelem.apluscharterschools.org
KIPP Schools	Varies by campus	Begins in January	Open enrollment/lottery	KIPP Destiny Elementary: (214) 323-4200	www.iltexaskhs.com
La Academia de Estrellas	PK - 08	February 1 - May 15	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 731-2028	laetx.org
Life Schools	KG – 12	Contact school for details	Open enrollment/lottery	(817) 731-7627	www.rmaschools.org
Lumin Education	Varies by campus	January 7 - February 21	Open enrollment/lottery	(214) 824-8950	www.lumineducation.org
Nova Academy	PK – 08 Varies by campus	January 3 – April 28	Open enrollment/lottery	Prichard Campus: (972) 808-7470 Bruton Campus: (214) 309-9030 Scyene Campus: (214) 381-3088	www.novaacademy.org
St. Anthony Academy	KG - 08	Contact school for details	Open enrollment/lottery	(214) 421-3645	www.stanthonydallas.org
Trinity Basin Preparatory	PK - 08	Contact school for details	Open enrollment/lottery	(214) 946-9100	www.trinitybasin.net
Ume Preparatory Academy	K - 12	Contact school for details	Contact school for details	(214) 445-6243	www.umeprep.org

STEP 4: TAKE ACTION!

There are so many options when it comes to school choice in the Dallas ISD area. You know what is right for you and your family. Be confident that once you have made an informed decision – charter school, magnet school or program, or just getting involved in your neighborhood school – it is the right decision. Act on it!



PARENT ACTION GUIDES

How Can I Get Involved
at My Child's School?

GETTING INVOLVED

As a parent, your involvement in your child's school is important to his or her success. A student with involved parents is more likely to:

- Earn good grades.
- Attend school regularly.
- Have a positive attitude about school.
- Have good behavior.

Taking the time to be involved in your child's education shows your student how important his or her academic success is to your family. It also gives you the opportunity to make sure your child is receiving the quality education he or she deserves. Advocating for your child's education means making sure that your child is getting the very best education possible.



In this section you can learn how to:

- Build relationships with people at your child's school.
- Help your child at home.
- Join parent organizations on campus.
- Find your School Board Representative.
- Access services provided by community organizations.

Building Relationships

The first step to advocating for your child's education is getting to know your child's teachers, counselors, coaches, and other school staff. Forming these relationships will make it easier for you to talk to them about your child's education.

You don't have to be an expert in the school system! Here are some great options to get started:

- *Attend school events*, such as open houses, performances, or award ceremonies.
- *Request a conference with your child's teacher, counselor, or school administrator.* If you work during the school day, you can request a conference at a time that works for you.
- *Join parent groups* or organizations at your child's school.
- If your child has special needs or a learning disability, *join a support group* in your community or school district, such as the Dyslexia Parent Education/Support Group sponsored by your school district.
- Ask the program leader how you can *help with your child's after school program.*
- *Volunteer at your child's school* or in your child's classroom.
- *Vote* in the School Board of Trustees election.

Also, on [page 29](#) you will find a list of community organizations that can help you get involved.

FIND OUT HOW TO GET INVOLVED:
Dallas ISD Office of Family
and Community Engagement
(972) 925-3916
3700 Ross Avenue, 3rd Floor, Ste. 320
Dallas, Texas 75204
family@dallasisd.org

<http://www.dallasisd.org/domain/13>

Help Your Child at Home

Outside of attending events and direct contact with the school, you can advocate for your child by talking to him or her about the importance of education.

You can show your child that education is important by:

- Making sure your child *attends school regularly*.
- Making sure your child *does his or her homework*.
- Making sure your child *gets to school on time*.
- Regularly *checking your child's progress* through **Parent Portal** at www.dallasisd.org/parentportal to identify any problems early on. On Parent Portal, you have access to many school related indicators, including your student's grades, homework assignments, and teacher contact information.
- Setting aside a *time and place* for homework.
- *Talking to your child's teacher* regularly.
- Regularly *asking your child* about his or her classes.
- Making your child's education *a focus of your life* at home.
- *Reading together* at home.

Parent Groups and Organizations

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and **Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs)** are groups that parents can join to advocate for their children.

- A **PTA** is connected to a larger local, state, or national group.
- A **PTO** is specific to an individual school.

Many of these groups keep parents involved and informed about what is going on at school. For example, they might organize a school fundraiser, work with teachers, or provide parent trainings on how to get involved at school.

If you are interested in getting involved in these organizations, contact your school's office about how to join. If your school does not currently have a PTA or a PTO, you can start one!

Organizing a Parent Teacher Association:

Any school official, parent, or interested person can organize a **PTA**. You might begin by talking to the school principal and a few teachers to gain their support of the idea. For more information about organizing a new local PTA, contact Texas PTA's Director of Member Services, Michelle Jackson, at mjackson@txpta.org, 1-800-TALK-PTA, or visit the website at www.txpta.org.

Organizing a Parent Teacher Organization:

To start a PTO at your school, get a group of parents and/or teachers together that also want to start a PTO. As a group, agree on a common goal, like improving parent involvement or giving kids more options for after school activities. Then create a plan to make it happen. Examples include running an ice cream social for parents, students, and teachers to get to know one another, or planning a school fundraiser to raise money. Because every PTO is an independent organization, bylaws vary for each group. Learn more about organizing a PTO at www.ptotoday.com.

Site Based Decision Making Committee:

If you are interested in getting involved in the decision-making that goes on at your child's campus, you might consider joining your school's Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) Committee. SBDM Committees hold school

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED AT MY CHILD'S SCHOOL?

based meetings that include teachers, administrators, community leaders, and parents and are open to the public. Even if you don't become a member of the committee, attending an SBDM Committee meeting is a good way to meet school officials and learn about the latest updates at your child's school. Contact your school principal directly to learn more about your school's SBDM Committee.

If you have concerns...

If you have concerns about your child's learning or your child's school, you have multiple options:

1. As a first attempt to resolve a concern, contact the school teacher or staff member that is involved.
2. If the teacher or staff member is not able to help, contact the school principal.
3. If the principal is not able to help, contact the Dallas ISD Board Services Department at (972) 925-3720.

Your School Board Representative

The Dallas ISD School Board includes 9 trustees that are elected by people who live in each trustee's district. Trustees serve for a period of 3 years and have a variety of responsibilities including:

- Setting policies for the District.
- Hiring the District Superintendent.
- Finding additional money for the District.
- Looking at how schools perform.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING UPCOMING BOARD MEETING DATES, CONTACT:
Dallas ISD Board Services Department
3700 Ross Ave., Box 1
Dallas, TX 75204
(972) 925-3720

<http://www.dallasisd.org/domain/61>

Some helpful links:

- ▶ **DISD Board of Trustees Information:**
<http://www.dallasisd.org/board>
- ▶ **Maps of DISD Board Districts:**
<http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/662>
- ▶ **Voting information:**
<http://www.dallascountyvotes.org/voter-information/>



Anyone can attend a Board Meeting. The meetings are also shown on local TV stations and streamed live from <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/663>. You can learn more about the Dallas ISD Board's roles and responsibilities online at <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/361>.

Below is a list of the current Dallas ISD Board of Trustees:

- **District 1:** Edwin Flores (term expires 2018)
- **District 2:** Dustin Marshall (term expires 2019)
- **District 3:** Dan Micciche (term expires 2018)
- **District 4:** Jaime Resendez (term expires 2019)
- **District 5:** Lew Blackburn (term expires 2019)
- **District 6:** Joyce Foreman (term expires 2017)
- **District 7:** Audrey Pinkerton (term expires 2019)
- **District 8:** Miguel Solis (term expires 2017)
- **District 9:** Bernadette Nutall (term expires 2018)

Community Resources

Local community centers, churches, and nonprofit organizations can help you get involved in your child's education. For example, some organizations offer parent trainings that can help you learn how to request and have positive conferences with teachers, counselors, and school administrators. Here is a brief list of some organizations working with students and parents in the community:

ORGANIZATION NAME	SERVICES	WEBSITE
AVANCE	To unlock America's potential by strengthening families in at-risk communities through effective parent education and support programs.	www.avance-dallas.org
All Stars Project of Dallas	Provide afterschool programs to transform the lives of youth and poor communities using the developmental power of performance in partnership with caring adults.	www.allstars.org/dallas
After-School All-Stars North Texas	Provide comprehensive after-school programs that keep children safe and help them succeed in school and in life.	http://asasnorthtexas.org/
Big Brothers Big Sisters	To provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported 1-to-1 relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.	www.bbbsbx.org
Catholic Charities	Motivated by the teachings and love of Jesus Christ, Catholic Charities of Dallas serves, advocates for, and empowers people in need regardless of race, religion, age, gender or national origin and calls the community to action.	www.catholiccharitiesdallas.org
CitySquare	To fight the causes and effects of poverty through service, advocacy, and friendship.	www.citysquare.org
Communities in Schools Dallas Region	To surround students with community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.	www.cisdallas.org
Dallas Afterschool	To inform, train, support and evaluate afterschool sites that serve low-income youth in our community. The goal is to help local afterschool sites achieve national quality standards for the benefit of the children they serve.	www.dasn.org

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED AT MY CHILD'S SCHOOL?

ORGANIZATION NAME	SERVICES	WEBSITE
Early Childhood Matters	To help parents connect with one another and provide them with information from experts in the field in order to make their job both more effective and more enjoyable.	www.earlychildhoodmatters.org
Education is Freedom	To provide comprehensive college planning services and produce life changing results for students and families.	www.educationisfreedom.com
Educational First Steps	To increase the availability of early childhood education for economically disadvantaged children.	www.educationalfirststeps.org
Education Opens Doors	Works with schools and organizations to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate purposefully through high school to post-secondary success through a self-guided student manual titled Roadmap to Success.	www.educationopensdoors.org
Frazier Revitalization, Inc	To be a catalyst for the revitalization and transformation of the Frazier Neighborhood by coordinating, supporting, and assisting in economic and cultural development.	www.fridallas.org
Girls Inc.	To inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold through life-changing experiences and solutions to the unique challenges girls face.	www.girlsinc.org
Heart House Dallas	A nonprofit that provides safety, education, and opportunity to refugee and underprivileged children.	hearthousedallas.org
Ignite Texas	To train young women at high schools, colleges and universities in the Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston and Austin regions through high school programming, working with students to organize college chapters, connecting young women with their elected network, and hosting an annual political leadership conference.	www.ignitenational.org/texas
Jubilee Park	Serves as a catalyst for comprehensive community revitalization in Southeast Dallas, with emphasis on the education of children and adults.	www.jubileecenter.org
Kids U	To improve the lives of low-income children by concentrating on education and issues that affect the whole child.	www.kids-u.org
Latino Cultural Center	The Latino Cultural Center (LCC) is a multidisciplinary arts center designed to serve as a regional catalyst for the preservation, development and promotion of Latino and Hispanic arts and culture.	www.dallasculture.org/latinoculturalcenter
Leadership ISD	To recruit and prepare proven business and community leaders to positively influence the direction and outcomes of public education while actively supporting educational excellence and equity for all students.	www.leadershipdisd.org
LULAC	To advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States.	www.lulac.org
Mi Escuelita	To teach English to children from all cultures and prepare them for academic success.	www.miescuelita.org

ORGANIZATION NAME	SERVICES	WEBSITE
Momentous Institute	Momentous Institute impacts 6,000 kids and family members each year, developing kids who become self-regulated, good communicators, problem-solvers, empathetic, grateful, gritty and optimistic.	www.momentousinstitute.org
Project Transformation	To engage young adults in purposeful leadership and ministry, support underserved children and families, and connect churches to communities in need.	www.projecttransformation.org
Rainbow Days	To help children and youth in adversity build coping skills and resilience to create positive futures.	www.rdikids.org
Readers 2 Leaders	Provide reading resources and camps to develop and grow the reading skills of children in West Dallas ages 3-10 so that they succeed in West Dallas, graduate, and leave school prepared to live productive lives.	www.readers2leaders.org
Reading Partners	To help children become lifelong readers by empowering communities to provide individualized instruction with measurable results.	www.readingpartners.org
Serve West Dallas	To serve our West Dallas Ministry Partners, helping them be successful in their individual missions for the sake of the gospel.	www.servewestdallas.org
Stand For Children	To ensure that all children, regardless of their background, graduate from high school prepared for, and with access to, a college education.	www.stand.org/texas
The Arc	To promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.	www.thearc.org
The Concilio	To build stronger communities by empowering parents to improve the education and health of their families.	www.theconcilio.org
The Family Place	To empower victims of family violence by providing safe housing, counseling, and skills that create independence while building community engagement and advocating for social change to stop family violence.	www.familyplace.org
Trinity River Mission	A volunteer-based community learning center that promotes literacy, academic success and develops effective life skills among disadvantaged youth in West Dallas, in the belief that education connects us to life's possibilities.	www.trinityrivermission.org
Voice of Hope	To provide children living in the neighborhoods of West Dallas with strong character models, education support, life skills, and family support services needed to become productive Christian citizens.	www.voiceofhope.org
Wesley Rankin Community Center	An innovative community center that provides services to youth and adults in West Dallas.	www.wesleyrankin.org
YMCA	To put Christian values into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.	www.ymcadallas.org



PARENT ACTION GUIDES

Early Education
(Ages 0-5)

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EDUCATION

Deciding on a child care or Pre-Kindergarten program for your child is extremely important. There are many things to consider including:

- Program quality.
- Learning environment quality.
- Location.
- Cost.
- Hours of operation.

Some information can be found by making a quick phone call or visiting the program's website. However, understanding if the program is a quality program or not needs to be a priority and may require more effort.

WHY IS EARLY EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

Did you know that the first five years of a child's life are the most important in brain development? During this time, children learn at a much faster rate than at any other period in their lives. According to research by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), children who attend high quality early education programs are more likely to:

- Be ready for Kindergarten.
- Be successful readers in 3rd Grade.
- Graduate from high school.
- Have higher paying jobs as adults.
- Have fewer behavioral problems.
- Not engage in smoking and drug use, or have depression.



A supportive and engaging early education program is critically important because it starts infants, toddlers, and preschool children on the path to lifelong success.

High quality early education programs can set children up to be successful students before they start Kindergarten. They also help children become more comfortable with the routines and structure of a school classroom.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

Child Care

These are programs that are typically privately owned. Though it varies by provider, child care programs will generally accept children from birth through age 12. You either pay a fee up front or you might be eligible for **financial assistance** from the government if you meet certain criteria.

Child care financial assistance: Families meeting specific requirements (financial and other factors) are eligible for child care assistance. Check with your local Workforce Solutions office at (214) 290-1000 to see if you qualify for child care assistance. For more information on childcare assistance, visit: www.wrksolutions.com/for-individuals/financial-aid-support/financial-aid-for-child-care.

In Texas, there are four main types of child care providers:

1. Licensed Centers – Care for 7 or more children. They must follow minimum standards set by the state, including cleared background checks and passing inspection at least once a year.
2. Licensed Homes – Care for 7 to 12 children. They must follow minimum standards set by the state, including cleared background checks and passing inspection at least once a year.
3. Registered Homes – Care for no more than 12 children, with no more than 6 of them related to the home provider. They receive a registration certificate, are inspected every 1-2 years, and follow different minimum standards than licensed homes.
4. Listed Family Homes – Care for 1 to 3 unrelated children. They are not inspected unless there is a report of abuse/neglect and must not follow minimum requirements.

Early Head Start and Head Start

This is a free program that offers many services for children from birth to age 5, including education, health, nutrition, and social services. Household income must be at or below the poverty level. For example, a family of 4 people can make no more than \$24,300 per year. Families may also qualify if they are homeless, have children in foster care, or receive assistance from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). You can find a Head Start location by calling 1-866-763-6481 or visiting this website:

eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices.

Public Pre-K

Public Pre-K is a full-day program offered by Dallas ISD and is free to eligible 4-year-olds. A few elementary schools offer half-day or full-day programs to eligible 3-year-olds. For more information, see [page 39](#).

Non-Profit and Community Programs

Organizations like the YMCA or your local church may provide child care services. The fees and program rules vary by location.

HOW DO I KNOW IF THE EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM IS QUALITY?

Visiting the Program

You should spend at least **20-30 minutes** talking to teachers and watching classroom routines. Circle time, read alouds, and center time are the best times to observe. Try not to visit during meal and nap times, as you will be less likely to see the quality of learning activities and interaction between the teachers and children.



You should spend at least 20-30 minutes talking to teachers and watching classroom routines.

The questions below are available for you to print and take with you when you visit a child care provider. To print these questions, visit www.texaschoolguide.org/resources.

Things to look for in the classroom:

- Is the classroom clean?
- Is there enough floor space for infants to crawl and explore?
- Are the ratios of teachers to children in a classroom close to the recommended standards? (see chart below)
- Are the tables, chairs, and bookshelves short enough for the children?
- Are posters and pictures hanging at your child's eye level?
- Is the classroom open and easy for children to be seen by the teacher? This ensures that the teachers can always see your child and make sure that your child is not at risk for injury or participating in unsafe activities.
- Do you see activities that are both academic (numbers, letters, and books), developmental (puzzles and blocks), and creative (paints and crayons)?
- Is the child's sleep area safe and calm?
- Do they offer time for the children to be outside every day?

Recommended Teacher-to-Child Ratio, according to National Association for the Education of Young Children:

AGE	MAXIMUM TEACHER-TO-CHILD	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
Infant - 0 to 15 months	1 teacher for every 4 children	8 children
Toddler - 12 to 28 months	1 teacher for every 4 children	12 children
Toddler - 21 to 36 months	1 teacher for every 6 children	12 children
2.5 to 4 years	1 teacher for every 9 children	18 children
4 to 5 years	1 teacher for every 10 children	20 children

Things to look for in the program:

- Do the teachers follow a curriculum?
- Are infants' activities based on the needs of the child (napping, meals, or play time)?
- Is music ever played?
- Are there different types of age-appropriate toys?
- Are there goals set for each child?
- Do teachers encourage the children to try things on their own?
- Are there opportunities for the child to work both in groups and individually?
- Are the children read to by adults?
- Is there a daily lesson plan posted in the room that includes planned activities?



Ask teachers and staff about their qualifications. You are trusting them with your child and have the right to make sure they are qualified!

Things to look for in a healthy and safe space:

- Do they offer healthy snacks that are limited in sugar?
- Are menus posted for parents?
- Are food, drinks, and medicines labeled with the child's name and date, and stored in a safe place?
- Are the toys cleaned daily or as needed?
- Are the bathrooms clean and easily available to the children?
- Are there fire drills?
- Are there working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors?
- Are there safety gates?
- How often do the teachers wash their hands?
- Are children taught proper hand-washing?
- Is there a teacher trained in CPR?
- Is there a first aid kit?
- How do the teachers handle potty training?
- What happens when a child is bitten by another child?
- Do the teachers have paid sick days?

Things to look for in the teachers:

- Does a teacher greet children warmly when they arrive?
- Do teachers welcome questions and visits from parents?
- Do teachers use a warm and pleasant tone when talking to children?
- Do teachers encourage children to talk to other children and the teachers?
- Do teachers discipline the children in a caring, consistent, and calm manner?
- Has your child's teacher been there for more than 2 years?
- Does the teacher have a certification or degree from a college or university?
- Does the teacher have formal training in child growth and development?
- How often and for what subjects do the teachers have professional training throughout the year? (Examples include safety practices, curriculum, and first aid.)

Checking the Teacher Qualifications

Ask teachers and staff about their qualifications. You are trusting them with your child and have the right to make sure they are qualified! Early childhood teachers should have formal training in the field of early childhood education.

The most common qualifications for early education instructors are:

- **Early Childhood Associates Degree or Child Development Associates Degree from an accredited program:** teachers holding this degree have spent 2 years learning how to provide the appropriate environment and curriculum for children in their classroom.
- **Bachelor's Degree in Education (or another field) with a teaching certificate from the state specifying an Early Childhood qualification:** teachers holding this degree and certification have rigorous training in classroom management, curriculum, and at least one semester of practicum in a classroom under the observation of a mentor teacher.

Minimum Standards

Licensed child care providers are monitored and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The state routinely inspects these facilities and enforces basic health and safety standards. You can view records of the state's inspections at www.dontbeinthedark.org/.

Quality Accreditations

It is important to try to find a program that meets a specific set of quality standards, not just the state's minimum standards.

For children receiving child care through state assistance (a Workforce Solutions voucher), quality child care programs are certified as Texas Rising Star (TRS). These providers normally accept children both with and without the state subsidy. TRS providers can be found here: texasrisingstar.org/parents/find-a-trs-provider.

In addition, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredits and certifies centers. The NAEYC standards are much higher than the state's minimum standards. A list of centers accredited by NAEYC is available at www.naeyc.org/academy/accreditation/search.

Other national quality certifications include:

- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Child Care and Education (NAC)
- Association of Christian School International (ACSI)
- Council of Accreditation (COA)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- AdvancedED Quality Early Learning System (QELS)

Other Important Things to Consider:

- **Waiting lists:** Many early education programs have waiting lists and a registration process, including a non-refundable deposit.
- **Food menus:** Some programs ask parents to provide the food for their child, while others offer meals and snacks. For those that serve food, menus should be available to give you an example of the types of foods being served. If parents are expected to provide meals and snacks, ask how the food is stored throughout the day (refrigerator or at room temperature) so you know what you should pack.
- **Time spent doing physical activity:** Children should spend 30-45 minutes doing physical activity in the morning and again in the afternoon. Ask your provider what exercise activities they plan each day. For a list of activities that parents can do with their children, please visit: www.a-better-child.org/page/387090269.
- **Screen time (Tablets, Smart Phones, TV, and Computers):** For children from birth to age 2, screen time is not recommended. For children over age 2, screen time should be limited to 90 minutes for the entire day, including at home. Screen time for any children under age 5 should be primarily educational and allow for the caregiver to interact with the child. Ask your child care provider how they use screens if your child is under 5.

HOW DO I LOCATE CHILD CARE?

If you need help locating child care, there are resources available!

For high quality providers, see the “Quality Accreditations” section above for options to locate these providers that are certified to have quality programs and teachers.

If you receive financial assistance from the government through Workforce Solutions, you can find child care by calling (214) 290-1000. You are also eligible to send your children to Texas Rising Star quality certified providers, which can be found here <https://texasrisingstar.org/parents/find-a-trs-provider/>.

You can use Child Care Group's online search to find child care providers at <https://stage.worklivesystems.com/parent/7>. If you need help locating child care programs, you can call Child Care Group at (214) 631-2273 or email them at rrinfo@ccgroup.org.

You can also call 2-1-1 to get information from United Way about child care options in your area.

You can also search for child care providers online using the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care/search_texas_child_care. Once your search is complete, you can click on a provider's name to see important information like licensing violations.

After checking if the program has quality certifications or if they have any licensing violations, you should visit the provider to gain a better sense of both the physical and emotional environment.

What Are My Pre-K Options in Dallas ISD?

Dallas ISD offers a full-day Pre-K program for free to children who turn 4 years old on or before September 1st of the upcoming school year. The child must meet one of the federal eligibility requirements below:

- Unable to speak or understand English.
- Eligible to participate in the free or reduced-price lunch program. For income guidelines, visit <http://www.prekdallas.org/en/lunch-income-requirements/>.
- Currently homeless.
- Parent who is an active duty member of the U.S. armed forces.
- Has ever been in foster care.

About 90% of 4-year-olds in Dallas ISD meet at least one of the requirements above. If you do not meet one of those requirements, you can contact the Dallas ISD Pre-K office to see if you are able to pay for your child to attend the program or consider another option listed in this section.

A few campuses also have a half-day Pre-K program for 3-year-olds. Those children must meet the same requirements as 4-year-olds. More information can be found at www.prekdallas.org.

Dallas ISD also offers a HIPPY program (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters). For information call 214-932-5180.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND THE APPLICATION, CONTACT:
Pre-K Registration Intake Center at the Early Childhood and Community Partnership Building

3313 S. Beckley Ave. Room 100
Dallas, TX 75224
(214) 932-PREK (7735)

<http://www.prekdallas.org/>



You can register your child for the Dallas ISD Pre-K program during Pre-K Registration Week, which usually happens in April.

How Can I Register My Child for Pre-K?

You can register your child for the Dallas ISD Pre-K program during Pre-K Registration Week, which usually happens in April.

You will need to fill out the application, which can be found at <http://www.prekdallas.org/> or you can pick up a paper application at your local Dallas ISD elementary school.

Along with the application, you will also need:

- The child's birth certificate.
- The child's current immunization record.
- The child's social security card (optional, but will save time if available).
- Proof of residence (a utility bill or lease).
- Picture ID of the child's parent or guardian.
- Proof of income for all working members of the household, or a SNAP/TANF statement (if the child is eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches).
- Military ID card of parent or guardian (if applicable).
- Court papers indicating conservatorship or foster child placement (if applicable).



PARENT ACTION GUIDES

Preparing for Education
After High School

GETTING STARTED

There are many options for higher education in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Higher education can include a 4-year university, a 2-year college, or a trade school.

As a parent, it is important to set expectations for your child early. By setting the expectation that your child will attend some type of schooling or earn a certification after high school, they are much more likely to enroll in a higher education program.



In this section you can learn more about:

- When to Start Thinking About Higher Education.
- Higher Education Opportunities in the Dallas-Dallas Area.
- The Application Process.
- Financial Aid Resources.
- How Students Can Stay on Track With a Middle and High School Timeline.

WHEN TO START THINKING ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION

It's never too early! It is helpful to know about the different opportunities for higher education early in your child's school career.

By knowing early, you can make sure that you do not miss:

- Important application deadlines.
- Required middle and high school courses for particular college or career programs.
- Other steps that must be taken prior to admission to a program.
- Anything you can do to help your child prepare for the high cost of tuition, such as encouraging your child to save money from a part-time job.

If your child wants to attend a college or university, you may want to look at different characteristics of the middle and high school he or she attends. High schools that provide good preparation for college should offer an academically challenging curriculum, create a college-bound culture, and have a support system for navigating college admissions.

Indicators of these characteristics can include:

- Wide offering of advanced courses like Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and/or Honors courses.
- High percentage of students taking the SAT or ACT exams.
- Available and knowledgeable college and career counselors.

HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN NORTH TEXAS

TWO-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE AREA			
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES			
<p>Dallas Community College District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookhaven College • Cedar Valley College • Eastfield College • El Centro College • Mountain View College • North Lake College • Richland College 	<p>Tarrant County Community College District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeast Campus • Northwest Campus • South Campus • Southeast Campus • Trinity River Campus • Trinity River Campus East 	<p>Collin College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allen Center • Central Park Campus • Collin Higher Education Center • Courtyard Center • Preston Ridge Campus • Rockwall Center • Spring Creek Campus 	<p>North Central Texas College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowie Campus • Corinth Campus • Flower Mound Campus • Gainesville Campus • Graham Campus
FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE AREA			
PUBLIC COLLEGES			
<p>Texas A&M University Commerce</p> <p>Texas Women's University</p> <p>University of North Texas</p> <p>University of North Texas at Dallas</p>	<p>University of North Texas Health Science Center</p> <p>University of Texas at Arlington</p> <p>University of Texas at Dallas</p> <p>University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Dallas</p>		
PRIVATE COLLEGES			
<p>Arlington Baptist College</p> <p>Criswell College</p> <p>Dallas Baptist University</p> <p>Dallas Christian College</p> <p>***Dallas Theological Seminary</p> <p>Northwood University</p> <p>**Parker University</p> <p>Paul Quinn College</p> <p>Southern Methodist University</p>	<p>Southwestern Adventist College</p> <p>Southwestern Assemblies of God University</p> <p>***Southwestern Theological Seminary</p> <p>Texas Christian University</p> <p>Texas Wesleyan University</p> <p>*The Art Institute of Dallas</p> <p>*The Art Institute of Dallas</p> <p>University of Dallas</p> <p>*Wade College</p>		

* Two-year programs are also offered in addition to 4-year degree
 ** Offers various online and on-campus programs such as: graduate, doctoral, and certificate programs
 *** Offers masters and doctoral programs

APPLICATIONS

Most higher education programs require some kind of application. Community colleges have an open admissions policy, which means that students are admitted regardless of their grades in high school. However, families should be advised that students in Texas entering a public institution, including community colleges, must meet the minimum score on the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Assessment unless they are otherwise exempt. If students do not meet this score, they may be required to enroll in developmental education or Adult Basic Education classes, which do not count towards a degree and are fee-based, before they are eligible to enroll in college coursework. You can learn more about this requirement at www.thecb.state.tx.us.

The Common App and Apply Texas are two widely used application processes for four-year colleges and universities. The Common App is used by hundreds of colleges throughout the United States. Apply Texas allows students to apply for admission to any Texas public university, as well as to participating community and private colleges. To learn more about which schools accept these applications, application deadlines, and other information visit the individual sites:

- Common App: www.commonapp.org.
- Apply Texas: www.applytexas.org.
- The website for the higher education program in which your child interested.

FINANCIAL AID

The costs to attend higher education programs can seem overwhelming for parents, families, and students. However, there are many financial aid opportunities available. Each university or college has their own financial aid program, which may include grant and scholarship opportunities. There are also opportunities to get financial aid through the state and federal government, nonprofits, and private organizations.

You won't know just how much money a college or university is able to offer you in financial aid until you apply to the university and apply for government financial aid. Financial aid can be used to cover expenses such as tuition, dorm fees, meal plans, books, supplies, or other college fees.



You should submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as it is will make your student eligible for the largest source of financial aid available.

You should submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as it is will make your student eligible for the largest source of financial aid available. The application becomes available in early January, but deadlines are different for each program. You will want to submit the FAFSA as early as possible to make sure that you can take advantage of as many aid opportunities as possible.

If your child is undocumented, he or she will need to use the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA). Visit www.aie.org/state/tasfa/ for more information. Students file their first FAFSA or TASFA form beginning their senior year of high school and will re-file every year they intend to enroll in college courses.

How Do I Prepare for the FAFSA?

- The FAFSA asks for financial information, including balances of savings and checking accounts and information from tax forms.
- Filing your 2016 income taxes early and electronically enables you to use the IRS Data Retrieval System when completing the 2017-2018 FAFSA. Using the IRS Data Retrieval System helps make sure your FAFSA information is correct. Errors in the FAFSA could delay your application.
- If you haven't done your taxes, it's okay to estimate the amounts.
- You can base your estimates on your last pay check for the 2016 calendar year. After you file your taxes you must update your FAFSA. You can update your FAFSA with actual 2016 information by using the IRS Data Retrieval System or the information from your tax return.
- Before your student's senior year, he or she can use the FAFSA4caster to get a sense of how much federal aid may be available when he or she applies. Visit www.studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/estimate for more information.

How Can I File for FAFSA?

- Online at www.fafsa.gov.
- You can download or order a paper FAFSA application.
- Ask the financial aid office at your student's college or career school if it can be filed there.

Here is a brief look at the financial aid opportunities and the timelines for filling out the FAFSA from the Federal Student Aid website:

AID PROGRAM	DEADLINE INFORMATION
Federal student aid	For the 2017-18 school year, you should submit your FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1, 2016. It is not recommended, but you are able to submit it as late as June 30, 2018. There are a few federal student aid programs that have limited funds, so be sure to apply as soon as you can.
State student aid	For the 2017-18 school year, the deadline for Texas public colleges is due by March 15, 2017. Funds are limited, so be sure to apply as soon as possible. You can find state deadlines at www.fafsa.gov or on the paper or PDF FAFSA. For undocumented students, you can find more information at www.aie.org/state/tasfa .
College or career school aid	Check the school's website or contact its financial aid office. School deadlines are usually early in the year (often in February or March).
Other financial aid	Some programs other than government or school aid require that you file the FAFSA. For instance, you can't get certain private scholarships unless you're eligible for a Federal Pell Grant—and you can't find out whether you're eligible for a Pell Grant unless you file a FAFSA. If the private scholarship's application deadline is in early to mid-January, you'll need to submit your FAFSA before that deadline.

Source: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa>

School Timeline for Your Child

It is important to plan ahead for higher education. In order to apply to a four-year university or college, your child will need to take the SAT and/or ACT exam, typically during his or her junior year of high school.

You also should be aware of the admissions requirements for the program(s) your child may wish to attend, so that they can be sure to fulfill all requirements during high school. For example, some universities may require more science or math course credits than your child's high school requires as the minimum. Your child may also need to take elective courses to be adequately prepared for college.

Here is an example of a timeline that can help students stay on track to obtaining an advanced degree or certification:

Middle School Years (Grades 6 – 8)

- Take challenging classes—If possible, enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) Courses, upper level math, science, and language classes. Pre-algebra and English classes that are also college prep classes are good examples.
- Talk with school counselors about which classes to take for acceptance into certain colleges or career paths.
- Explore extracurricular activities. Get actively involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities. Be sure to keep track of the number of hours spent on these activities.
- Figure out options for high school, including charter schools and magnet programs.

Freshman and Sophomore Years (Grades 9 – 10)

- Talk with an assigned guidance counselor about taking college preparatory classes and exploring higher education options.
- Continue getting involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities. Keep track of the number of hours spent on those activities.

- Register and take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT).
- Schedule a tour of a local college to get a feel for what college might be like. These tours are free, and you can call the admissions office to schedule a tour at a time that works best for you.
- Register for classes that will challenge you. Look at admissions requirements for various colleges to understand what high school classes they may require applicants to have completed. Not all high school graduation plans will meet admissions standards set by the college.

Junior Year (Grade 11)

- Continue to be involved in volunteer and extra-curricular activities. This can help you try out different careers you might want to pursue after high school. It is also good to include on college applications.
- Continue to take classes that challenge you.
- Work with your guidance counselor to make a list of the higher education options that you are interested in.
- Begin researching scholarship and financial aid opportunities for your higher education options.
- Register and take the SAT and/or ACT exams.
- If possible, visit the individual college or career training campuses that you will be applying to.
- Start working on your college application essays the summer before your senior year. Essay topics typically stay the same year to year. Check the higher education program's application website for the essay prompt.

Senior Year (Grade 12)

- **August – September**
 - » Narrow down school options, and create a list of application deadlines and required materials. This should include scholarship and financial aid deadlines, essays, letters of recommendation, and transcripts.
 - » Register for or retake SAT and/or ACT exam if necessary.
 - » Begin thinking about whom to request your letters of recommendation from.
 - » Request transcripts from your high school.
- **October – November**
 - » Draft any required college admissions or scholarship essays.
 - » Gather your letters of recommendation, if required. Try to ask for letters of recommendation at least one or two months before the application is due. This gives the recommender time to write a quality letter.
 - » Make sure that your transcripts are correct.
- **December – January**
 - » Final application dates for many schools. However, early decision applications are typically due in November.
- **February – March**
 - » College acceptance letters begin to arrive.
 - » Parents need to file taxes to prepare for filling out the FAFSA or TASFA. Remember to complete the FAFSA or TASFA by your intended college's priority deadline.
- **April – May**
 - » Review your admissions information and submit any required materials to the college or program of your choice. This may include housing information, final transcripts, a tuition deposit, etc.
 - » Check your email regularly and register for the college's online portal, if they have one, to make sure you receive all information in a timely manner.