



Elijah Academy
A Ministry of Calvary Chapel Denton

...he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. 2 Timothy 2:21b

College Entrance Guidance

The student and parents looking forward at college may be concerned with how to pay for it. Doing well in high school is the first step. Scholarships are available for highly motivated students with a good academic record and portfolio of achievements. A significant academic scholarship can easily outweigh the savings from many summer jobs. Additionally, students can start earning college credits while in high school. These will be the cheapest credits you will ever pay for.

There are three things a student can do to maximize their opportunities:

- 1) The first step toward college is to have a good high school record (transcript). One way to make your transcript look good is to select tough courses. Elijah Academy offers homeschool students the opportunity to qualify for “honors” designation on high school courses where a motivated student puts additional time into studying supplemental texts - covering additional topics and a greater depth of subject matter. This distinction recognizes additional effort on a high-school level course material.

AP courses, with curriculum certified by the College Board, mirror the content covered by a college course. These courses (or the similar IB courses from the International Baccalaureate Organization) look great on a transcript, and afford you the opportunity to take a test for college credit. These exams, or dual enrollment at a local college, are a great way to get a jump start on actually earning college credits while in high school. Note that you don’t have to take a certified course to take AP exam for college credit, but to have “Advanced Placement” marked on your transcript, the course materials must be audited and approved by the College Board. Dual enrollment is another option for earning college credit in high school. Dual enrollment often requires PSAT or SAT scores showing that the student is ready for college-level courses. Some colleges also accept CLEP exam scores of a certain level for college credit.

All of these college-level coursework options are a mark of distinction. Other advanced measures include a third year of a foreign language, National Merit commendation from high scores on the PSAT test taken in your Junior year, or approved original research project of significant merit. Elijah Academy recognizes “Distinguished Achievement” for earning four such advanced measures.

- 2) A second important step is to do well on college entrance exams (the PSAT/SAT/ACT). Because grading scales vary, colleges use these exams in the admissions process as external validation of the high school transcript. These exam scores are often used in scholarship funds as well.

The PSAT is a practice test that is also a “National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test” (NMQT). Commendation for National Merit is only for the top 5% of students taking the PSAT in the 11th grade. Semifinalist and Finalist distinction for very top percentile is a further distinction that is more rewarding. The PSAT is also good practice for the SAT, and will indicate areas to focus on in preparing for the SAT. Unless your college of choice prefers the ACT, we recommend the SAT test. This should be taken in your Junior year of high school (spring semester). This leaves time to re-take the test in the fall of your Senior year for a chance to improve your score. It is worthwhile to study for this test – even in lieu of summer job or sports opportunities.



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- 3) A third step is to have a good portfolio of extra-curricular interests and pursuits. Our one-year Achievement Record form is a guide for this.

Finally, of course, you have to fill out the right applications at the right time. This includes selected scholarship applications, college admissions applications, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), etc. Keeping organized and on top of the various deadlines is necessary especially in your Junior and Senior year of high school.

Here is our advice for college-bound students by each grade level:

9th Grade:

- Take a rigorous course load of high school subjects. Make a four-year course plan and aim high.
- Start investigating career options. It may be helpful to take an Aptitude Test to assess your inherent competency. These tests can be found free online or in career guidance books at the library. They may help to reveal or confirm which career types are a good fit for your natural talents and inclinations.
- Review the optional One-year Achievement Record as soon as possible, and compare it to national scholarship applications such as Elks Most Valuable Student Award or Walmart Foundation. Make a plan for long-term activities and pursuits that can be included in your portfolio.

10th grade:

- Take at least one AP course, and take the exam at the end of the year.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT test in October if you wish. This will not count toward National Merit scholarship, but it will give you an idea of where you stand and what to work on before next year. You should set this up with the testing center by JUNE of the year prior to make it easy on them to order the right amount.
- Participate in community service or volunteer opportunities that interest you.
- Fill out the One-year Achievement Record, and compare it to a national scholarship application such as Elks Most Valuable Student Award or Walmart Foundation. Make a plan for activities and pursuits in the next year that can be included in your portfolio.
- Take SAT or other required tests if planning on dual enrollment courses in 11th grade.
- Take SAT prep courses in Spring or Summer of 10th Grade.
- Decide on a track for high school courses – S.T.E.M. Academics, General Academic, or General Diploma if vocational/technical career if your goal. Update the Four Year Plan form.
- Keep investigating career options. Read books about career selection, take an aptitude test, and interview professionals in fields that may interest you.

11th Grade

- Take two AP courses, or dual enrollment.
- Take the PSAT in October. If you score in the top 5% you will be National Merit Commended scholar. If you score in the top 1 or 2% you will be semi-finalist or finalist. Scholarships will come from this.
- Participate in community service and volunteer opportunities that interest you.
- Fill out the One-year Achievement Record, and compare it to national scholarship applications such as Elks Most Valuable Student Award or Walmart Foundation. Make a plan for summer portfolio activities and reading lists to fill out your portfolio.
- Select colleges that will result in good credentials for your career choice, and research their admissions requirements as well as AP, CLEP, and dual enrollment transfer credit policies.
- Take the SAT (or ACT if your college prefers it) in the Spring



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- If your school of choice accepts CLEP exams for credit, take appropriate CLEP exams for subjects that apply to your program of study.
- Prepare for taking the SAT a second time, if necessary.
- Make a list and schedule for scholarship and college applications. Many applications are due in the fall semester of your senior year. Remember to give enough time for Elijah Academy to send transcripts. Be early.
- Keep investigating career options. Read books about career selection, take an aptitude test, and interview professionals in fields that may interest you.

12th Grade

- Take as many AP Exams as you can. Eight or more total AP credits could get you out of a full semester of college coursework.
- It is worth considering a reduction in extra-curricular activities to focus on AP exams and other preparations for life.
- Take the SAT (or ACT if your college prefers it) again in October if you wish.
- Apply to colleges of your choice. Remember to give enough time for Elijah Academy to send transcripts. Be early.
- Apply to as many scholarship funds as you wish. If essays are required, make them your best work! Be strategic, and target the best opportunities for you.
- FAFSA deadline is February 15th of senior year, have results sent to the schools of your choice.
- Keep investigating career options. Read books about career selection, take an aptitude test, and interview professionals in fields that may interest you.

Various books can be found at the local library for college and career selection and available scholarships. Scholarships are available to students who can write well, make a case for themselves that demonstrates motivation and achievement. Many college programs also have endowments that are available for high performing students. Some of these are granted to high-performing freshman students, but some are available for prospective students as well. Look into scholarships specific to your college of choice.

The following pages are links that will be helpful for the various college-preparation activities from aptitude testing, to school selection, and scholarships:

www.aptitude-test.com/

www.coca-colascholars.org/

www.collegeboard.com

www.colleges.com

www.collegescholarships.com

www.college-scholarships.com

www.elks.org/enf/scholars/mvs.cfm

www.fastweb.com

www.free-4u.com

www.guaranteed-scholarships.com

www.mycollegescholarship.org

www.petersons.com

www.scholarshipcoach.com

<http://www.scholarships.com>

www.supercollege.com

<http://www.walmartfoundation.org>