

Whitewright High School

2009-2010

Counselor's Handbook



Dear Parent and Student:

This handbook is intended to provide you with information about various matters from graduation plans to transcript requests. I believe that the information will answer many questions that you may have about numerous topics. I will be giving students additional handouts as they go through high school especially when they register for next year's classes and when they are seniors. Please go over this handbook with your child and keep it to refer to in the future. The handbook will be updated every year. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Davis
Counselor

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COLLEGE VISITATION DAYS

- Juniors may request that one day per year be excused
- Seniors may request that two days per year be excused

In order for the absence to be excused, students must submit a request form. This form is available from the counselor. This form must be filled out and signed by the parent and returned to the HS Principal in advance of the proposed visit. The student is then required to provide written documentation from the college upon return to school.

Students who do not follow this procedure will not have their absence excused for college visitation. If a student is planning to visit a college out of this geographic area and must miss more than one day of school, he/she must first get permission from the principal.

DUAL CREDIT COURSES/CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

Dual credit courses are courses that count for both high school and college credit. At the present time, the following courses are offered at Whitewright High School:

- English 1301 & 1302 (English 4)
- US Government 2305
- Economics 2301

These courses are offered through Grayson County College and require that the student apply, register, and pay tuition and fees to that institution. Textbooks must be purchased. If the professor is still using a textbook from the previous year, a student may be able to purchase a used book from a student who has already taken the course. All financial transactions that relate to tuition and the purchase of textbooks are between the student and the college. Students will be reimbursed from Whitewright ISD for tuition only (excluding miscellaneous fees, out of county tuition rates, textbooks etc.) after the last drop date. Students must submit copies of their receipt to the counselor to receive reimbursement. Checks will be mailed to the parents.

Application for admission may be made on-line. Students must then contact an admissions advisor for help with registration for dual credit classes. Students are responsible for submitting the application for admission to Grayson County College and are also responsible for meeting the deadline for registration. If a student fails to meet the deadline, he/she may be removed from enrollment in dual credit courses.

Dual credit courses may be taken for the purpose of obtaining the distinguished achievement graduation plan or may be taken just to get a head start on college work. When letter grades are issued instead of numeric grades, the following grades will be used to determine the grade to be put on the official transcript and figured into the grade point average: A = 95, B = 85, C = 75, D = 65 (failing).

Students who enroll in dual credit coursework must realize that college professors are accustomed to dealing with students who are mature and are not a discipline problem. If a high school student is mature enough to attempt college level coursework, he/she is mature enough to use self-control and self-discipline. Any problem that the college professor has with one of our students may result in that student's removal from the class. This would mean that the student would have to change their schedule back to high school courses and may need to repeat the

course through the high school when it is re-offered and would probably forfeit all tuition payments to the college. Students must be highly organized and will be responsible for tracking and completing assignments that are listed on the course syllabus.

Requirements for enrolling in dual credit courses include the following:

- Students must have parental approval.
- The final approval for concurrent student enrollment will be with the principal at WHS.
- Students must have passed all parts of the Exit-level TAKS tests.
- Students must have taken the THEA test in the summer prior to class if they are not THEA exempt.

EARLY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Students who want to pursue this program should see their counselor. Documentation of intent to pursue the Early High School Graduation program must be on file in the counseling office prior to the beginning of the student's junior year in order to prepare a plan for taking courses to graduate early and to plan to take the exit-level TAKS. Students who graduate early may be eligible for scholarships from the State of Texas.

FINAL TRANSCRIPTS

Seniors will be asked to provide the address of the college to which they want a final transcript mailed. Final transcripts will be available and/or mailed by the end of the third week in June.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Students requesting letters of recommendation from faculty members for the purpose of college admission, awarding of a scholarship or employment purposes should make the request at least one week in advance. Letters of recommendation are done at the discretion of the individual from whom they are requested.

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

Athletes who think they might play any sport in college need to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse during their junior year. The NCAA charges a fee for this.

REGISTRATION FOR CLASSES

The counselor and/or principal will visit 9th, 10th, and 11th grade English classes each spring semester to discuss registration for the next school year's classes. Graduation requirements, college admission policies, financial aid information, and testing requirements are among the topics covered every year.

An orientation/registration session is held at night during the spring semester for all 8th graders and their parents. A parent signature is requested on all course forms. Deadlines will be

set to return these forms to the school. Seniors will be given priority when scheduling classes especially if it is a required course for graduation. Juniors, sophomores, and freshmen will be given priority in that order.

SUMMER SCHOOL COURSES

Whitewright High School does not offer summer school courses. Students who are enrolled in Whitewright High School who want to take summer school courses may attend Sherman High School, Denison High School, or another area high school. The purpose of summer school courses is to enable a student to make up a failed course or to gain extra credit.

Students are responsible for paying the tuition that the schools require for summer school classes. Students must get permission from the principal or counselor before enrolling in summer school classes. There is usually a place for this signature on each school's enrollment form. Students must request the summer school send a transcript of grades and credits to WHS in order to have the course added to their transcript.

TECH PREP/ARTICULATED CREDITS

This is a program that links high school and college programs for college credit. This program prepares students for high-skill, high wage technical occupations. Steps to receiving your Tech Prep credit include the following: complete a Tech Prep course in high school with a satisfactory grade, graduate from high school and qualify to enter a participating college such as Grayson County College or North Central Texas College, and send an official high school transcript to the Tech Prep office.

High school Tech Prep classes are often referred to as articulated courses. Whitewright High School courses linked to Grayson County College are Business Computer Information Systems I and II, Accounting, Introduction to Agricultural Mechanics, and Agricultural Metal Fabrication Technology.

GPA/CLASS RANK

Grade point averages are calculated at the end of each school year for freshmen, sophomores and juniors. For seniors, GPAs are also calculated after the first semester of the senior year. Class rank is recalculated each time GPAs are calculated.

All courses taken during the regular school year shall count toward a student's grade point average except for the following: office aide positions, courses providing local credit, college credits that are not dual credit courses, credit by examination credits, correspondence course credits, and classes such as P.E. and athletics in which a blanket grade is given. Blanket grade means virtually everyone receives the same grade in a class.

Requests for GPAs and class ranking information must be made in writing. Forms are available in the counselor's office.

TRANSCRIPTS

Official transcripts of all high school academic work are kept on file. Students requesting a transcript need to fill out a transcript request form available in the office. Forms may be obtained from the counselor.

Former students and graduates may request transcripts in writing. They should include the name under which they were enrolled, date of graduation or attendance, birth date and signature. Requests may be made in person, by fax, or by mail and will be filled in as timely a manner as possible.

GRADE POINT SYSTEM

In order to reward the efforts of students who choose more advanced coursework, the following weighted grade point system is utilized to determine honor students.

Numeric Grade	Regular Classes	Pre-AP Classes	AP/Dual Credit/Advanced Classes
100	5.0	6.0	7.0
99	4.9	5.9	6.9
98	4.8	5.8	6.8
97	4.7	5.7	6.7
96	4.6	5.6	6.6
95	4.5	5.5	6.5
94	4.4	5.4	6.4
93	4.3	5.3	6.3
92	4.2	5.2	6.2
91	4.1	5.1	6.1
90	4.0	5.0	6.0
89	3.9	4.9	5.9
88	3.8	4.8	5.8
87	3.7	4.7	5.7
86	3.6	4.6	5.6
85	3.5	4.5	5.5
84	3.4	4.4	5.4
83	3.3	4.3	5.3
82	3.2	4.2	5.2
81	3.1	4.1	5.1
80	3.0	4.0	5.0
79	2.9	3.9	4.9
78	2.8	3.8	4.8
77	2.7	3.7	4.7
76	2.6	3.6	4.6
75	2.5	3.5	4.5
74	2.4	3.4	4.4
73	2.3	3.3	4.3
72	2.2	3.2	4.2
71	2.1	3.1	4.1
70	2.0	3.0	4.0

GRADUATION CLASS HONOR STUDENTS

It shall be the policy of the Whitewright Independent School District to calculate the grades of the highest ranking students in the senior class at the end of the fifth six weeks period. The valedictorian, salutatorian, and class honor students will be determined at this time. If a change in class ranking should occur after the final grade calculation at the end of the last semester, the predetermined honors shall not be altered. The final ranking shall be noted only on the student's permanent record and any copy of their academic record.

The valedictorian and salutatorian will be the highest and second highest ranked students in the graduating class and must have been enrolled in Whitewright High School their entire junior and senior years and must have completed the Distinguished Achievement Program. To be designated as a class honor student, a student must maintain a 4-year GPA of 5.0 or above and have completed the Recommended or Distinguished Achievement Program requirements and have been enrolled in Whitewright High School their entire junior and senior years.

Whitewright High School

Graduation Requirements for Class of 2010

Recommended High School Plan (RHSP)

28 Credits
Successful completion of Exit Level TAKS
(with HB3 changes)

English – 4 credits

English 1, 2, 3, 4

Math – 3 credits

Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2

Science – 3 credits

IPC, Biology, Chemistry

Social Studies – 3 ½ credits

World Geography, World History, US History,

US Government (semester)

Economics – ½ credit

Economics (semester)

Speech – ½ credit

Communication Applications (semester)

Language Other Than English – 2 credits

Spanish 1, 2

Physical Education – 1 credits

PE or Athletics or Band[#] (2 semesters)

Fine Art – 1 credit

Choose from Band, Art, Theatre, or
Music History

Electives – 9 ½ credits

Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP)

28 Credits
Successful completion of Exit Level TAKS
4 Advanced Measures¹

English – 4 credits

English 1, 2, 3, Dual Credit English 4[@]

Math – 3 credits

Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2

Science – 3 credits

Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Social Studies – 3 ½ credits

World Geography, World History,

US History, DC US Government[@] (semester)

Economics – ½ credit

DC Economics[@] (semester)

Speech – ½ credit

Communication Applications (semester)

Health – ½ credit

Health or Advanced Health (semester)

Language Other Than English – 3 credits

Spanish 1, 2, 3

Physical Education – 1 ½ credits

PE or Athletics or Band [#] (3 semesters)

Technology Applications – 1 credit

BCIS 1

Fine Art – 1 credit

Choose from Band, Art, Theatre, or
Music History

Electives – 6 ½ credits

Notes:

¹Advanced Measures – any four of the following:

Commended Scholar or higher on PSAT taken as a junior

AP Exam score of 3 or higher

Dual Credit class with a grade of 80 or higher for a semester

*MMA must be taken prior to Algebra 2 to count as a math credit

[@]Dual Credit course grades must be 70 or higher to receive credit, and must be 80 or higher to count as an advanced measure for the DAP

Whitewright High School

4 x 4 Graduation Requirements & HB3
(For students entering high school 2007-2008 and following)

Recommended High School Plan (RHSP)

28 Credits

Successful completion of Exit Level TAKS

English – 4 credits

English 1, 2, 3, 4

Math – 4 credits

Option 1: Algebra 1, Geometry, MMA*, Algebra 2

Option 2: Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus

Science – 4 credits

IPC, Biology, Chemistry and one of the following:

Physics

Anatomy & Physiology

AP Chemistry

Addl. Science offering

Social Studies – 3 ½ credits

World Geography, World History, US History,

US Government (semester)

Economics – ½ credit

Economics (semester)

Speech – ½ credit

Communication Applications (semester)

Language Other Than English – 2 credits

Spanish 1, 2

Physical Education – 1 credits

PE or Athletics or Band# (2 semesters)

Fine Art – 1 credit

Choose from Band, Art,

Theatre, Music History

Electives – 7 ½ credits

Notes:

Each semester of a course with grade of 70 or higher = ½ credit

!Advanced Measures – any four of the following:

Commended Scholar or higher on PSAT taken as a junior

AP Exam score of 3 or higher

Dual Credit class with a grade of 80 or higher for a semester

*MMA must be taken prior to Algebra 2 to count as a math credit

@Dual Credit course grades must be 70 or higher to receive credit, and must be 80 or higher to count as an advanced measure for the DAP

#Each fall semester of Band waives a semester of PE credit

Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP)

28 Credits

Successful completion of Exit Level TAKS

4 Advanced Measures[!]

English – 4 credits

English 1, 2, 3, Dual Credit English 4[@]

Math – 4 credits

Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus

Science – 4 credits

Biology, Chemistry, Physics

and one of the following:

Anatomy & Physiology

AP Chemistry

Addl. Science offering

Social Studies – 3 ½ credits

World Geography, World History,

US History, DC US Government[@] (semester)

Economics – ½ credit

DC Economics[@] (semester)

Speech – ½ credit

Communication Applications (semester)

Health – ½ credit

Health or Advanced Health (semester)

Language Other Than English – 3 credits

Spanish 1, 2, 3

Physical Education – 1 ½ credits

PE or Athletics or Band # (3 semesters)

Technology Applications – 1 credit

BCIS

Fine Art – 1 credit

Choose from Band, Art,

Theatre, Music History

Electives – 4 ½ credits

Changes to the DAP for graduation are pending with the State Board of Education (SBOE).

Freshman Checklist or “What can you do your freshman year to prepare for college?”

STUDENTS

- Remember that every grade starts to count beginning this year. Make as high a grade as possible in all of your classes. The higher your grades, the higher your grade point average and class rank are when you graduate. Students who start off badly have to play “catch up” later as a junior or senior. Consider summer school or correspondence courses if you fail a class instead of trying to fit the failed class into your schedule the next year.
- Four-year universities are looking for students who are ranked in the top half of their class. Universities are also looking for the coursework that is required on at least the recommended graduation plan.
- Get involved in your school and community. Colleges and scholarship committees look for well-rounded students who exhibit leadership skills. They look for students who take an active role in their schools and communities.
- Volunteer. Community service is becoming an important part in the college admission process, and especially in the scholarship awarding process. There are some scholarships available only to students who have done a great deal of volunteer work.
- Begin keeping a list of all of your school activities, honors, awards, volunteer work, employment experience, community activities, etc. Then when you are a senior and you need this information for college and scholarship applications, you won’t rack your brain trying to remember it all.

PARENTS

- Monitor your child’s academic progress.
- Make sure you see progress reports and report cards.
- Provide encouragement and support for your child’s academic efforts and extracurricular activities.
- Help your child start thinking about possible college and career choices. Discuss the various options.

Sophomore Checklist or “What can you do your sophomore year to prepare for college?”

STUDENTS

- Continue to improve grades, to participate in volunteer activities and keep records!
- Take the PSAT in October. This is a practice SAT test. Four-year colleges require either SAT or ACT scores for admission.
- Begin to explore and discuss college options. Use the internet to research colleges.
- Plan your junior year carefully. Know which graduation plan you want to work toward and take the necessary classes.

PARENTS

- Continue to monitor your student’s academic progress.
- Support and encourage your student to take the PSAT, to explore careers, to consider college.

Junior Checklist or “What can you do your junior year to prepare for college?”

STUDENTS

- Continue to improve your grades.
- Take at least one challenging course.
- Continue to be involved in your community and school.
- Volunteer
- Take the PSAT in October. This gives you additional practice for the SAT and allows you to try and qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.
- Take the ACT or SAT in the spring of your junior year.
- Register with NCAA Clearinghouse if you expect to be a college athlete.
- Continue to explore and discuss college options. Visit one or more college campuses.
- Actively participate in a College Fair and Career Fair when offered.
- Plan your junior year carefully. Know which graduation plan you want to work toward and take the necessary classes. Seek classes that will help prepare you for your future career.

PARENTS

- Monitor your child’s academic progress.
- Make sure you see progress reports and report cards.
- Provide encouragement and support for your child’s academic efforts and extracurricular activities.
- Help make your student aware of deadlines.
- Continue helping your child start think about possible college and career choices. Discuss the various options. Begin looking at and visiting colleges.

Senior Checklist or “This is the final year to be Preparing For College”

- Visit the school counselor’s office. There is information available on financial aid, scholarships, colleges, careers, testing, etc.
- Register to take the either the SAT or ACT or both if you have not taken them or if you want to retake them to try and improve your scores.
- Look over brochures, catalogs, and websites from several colleges and choose three or four which interest you the most.
- Call or e-mail each college for admission forms, financial aid forms, scholarship applications, and housing forms. Ask for a catalog. You can also visit each college’s website. Usually all of the information that is in a catalog is available on-line.
- Familiarize yourself with the admission procedures and requirements for each of the colleges you have selected and narrow your search down to 3 to 4 colleges.
- Attend any college fair available. Notices about each of these events will be posted on the bulletin board and publicized during morning announcements.

- Talk with your parents about the colleges which you are considering and the costs of attending each one.
- Visit the campuses of the colleges you are considering if at all possible. Tour the dorms. Talk with professors. Talk with admissions officers and financial aid personnel. Ask questions.
- Ask teachers, principals, counselors, etc. to write letters of recommendation for college admissions or for scholarship applications. Ask at least one or two weeks before you need the letter.
- Complete the FAFSA form by February of your senior year.
- Complete an application form for admission to colleges which you are considering. **MEET ALL DEADLINES!** Most colleges have application forms on their websites. Public colleges in Texas accept the Common Application which is available on-line.
- Have a transcript sent to the colleges which you are considering.
- Review finances with your parents. Decide if financial assistance is needed. If so, complete the necessary forms. **APPLY EARLY!** Note: You must be accepted for admission before you will be considered for financial aid. There are several types of aid available.
- Apply for academic or service scholarships if you meet the criteria. **MEET ALL DEADLINES!** The local scholarship application is usually given to seniors in late February.
- Register to take the THEA test if your Exit Level TAKS scores did not provide an exemption.
- Decide on housing (on-campus or off-campus). Send application and housing deposit. **MEET ALL DEADLINES!**
- Follow up with college Financial Aid Office to make sure they have all the necessary forms to process your financial aid. Ask for additional scholarship applications.
- Provide the address and request for your final transcript be sent to the college after graduation. Fulfillment of this request will be made by the end of the third week in June.

Quick Facts About National Tests

ACT

What is the purpose of the test?

The ACT Assessment is designed to assess high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The tests cover four skill areas – English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

Why take the test?

1. The ACT Assessment may be a predictor of college readiness.
2. The ACT Assessment is curriculum based.
3. The ACT Assessment is frequently accepted for college admission.

When should a student take the test?

Students may take the ACT as often as they wish but most take it in either the 11th or 12th grade, prior to submitting college applications. Students are strongly recommended to take the test in the spring of their Junior year.

What practice test materials are available?

- * *Preparing for the ACT Assessment* – Free booklet available through most high schools/colleges, includes information about the ACT and a practice test with scoring key.
- * *ACTive Prep* software – An electronic test prep for the ACT. Purchase at www.act.org/activeprep/
- * Sample ACT Assessment test booklets – Practice tests. Call ACT customer service at 1-800-498-6065
- * Various ACT practice workbooks and software are available at most bookstores and software stores.
- * Test preparation materials are available in high school counseling offices.

What is the cost of the test?

The cost may change from year to year. Currently the ACT plus writing costs \$47. After students have taken the test they may bring in their receipt to the counselor and they will be reimbursed by Whitewright ISD (up to two tests). The cost of the test includes score reports to four college choices. Fee waivers are available to students who qualify for the free/reduced lunch program; you may pick one up from the counselor.

Contact:

- * School counselors have information about dates and prices.

OR

- * Log on to www.act.org for registration information and testing dates.

SAT

What is the purpose of the test?

The SAT Reasoning Test is an objective, standardized test that measures verbal, written, and mathematical reasoning abilities. The test assesses how a student's reasoning and academic strengths compare with those of approximately two million students each year.

Why take the test?

- * Many colleges and universities use the SAT as one of their admissions criteria.
- * It provides one indicator of a student's ability to handle college work.

When should a student take the test?

Students may take the SAT as often as they wish but most take it in the 11th or 12th grade, prior to submitting college admissions applications. Students are strongly recommended to take the test in the spring of their junior year and retake it if they want to try to improve their scores.

What practice test materials are available?

The best way to prepare for the test is to take challenging academic courses and to do plenty of reading throughout your school years. The College Board offers some test prep products that you might also find useful as you get ready.

- * Visit the College Board's website for practice tests and more information about the test. www.collegeboard.com.
- * Various SAT practice workbooks and software are available at most bookstores and software stores.
- * Test preparation materials are available in high school counseling offices.

What is the cost of the test?

The cost may change from year to year. Currently the SAT Reasoning test costs \$45. After students have taken the test they may bring in their receipt to the counselor and they will be reimbursed by Whitewright ISD (for up to two tests). The cost of the test includes score reports to four college choices. Fee waivers are available to students who qualify for the free/reduced lunch program; you may pick one up from the counselor.

Contact:

- * School counselors have information about dates and prices.

OR

- * Log on to www.collegeboard.com for registration information and testing dates.

PSAT – Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

What is the purpose of the test?

PSAT/NMSQT is a standardized test that provides practice for the SAT. It also gives junior students a chance to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Corporations (NMSC) scholarship programs.

Why take the test?

- * The PSAT is a good practice for the SAT required by many colleges.
- * The test provides the opportunity to assess verbal, math, and writing skills.
- * The PSAT is used to award National Merit Scholarship awards.

When should a student take the test?

Students should take the PSAT in the 10th grade for practice. It is offered again in the 11th grade for students trying to qualify for National Merit scholarships and for students wanting additional practice.

What practice test materials are available?

- * Take the practice test in the PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin that is available from your school counselor.
- * Read general tips and strategies at the College Board website, www.collegeboard.com.

What is the cost of the test?

The cost may change from year to year. Currently the PSAT costs \$13. Whitewright ISD pays for sophomores to take the test. Juniors

Contact:

- * School counselors have information about dates and prices.

OR

- * For additional information log on to www.collegeboard.com.

THEA – Texas Higher Education Assessment

What is the purpose of the test?

The THEA is the new name of the TASP test which was first mandated in the spring of 1987. It provides information about the reading, mathematics, and writing skills of students entering Texas public colleges and universities.

Why take the test?

Students entering Texas public institutions of higher education as a full-time or part-time student in an associate or baccalaureate degree program must take the test before beginning coursework. Students taking dual credit courses while in high school must also take the test.

Students may be exempted from the test based on Exit Level TAKS test scores. If

exempt, the student's Confidential Student Report will indicate that the student has "***Met THECB Standard for Higher Education Readiness***" on the ELA and/or the Math portion of the score report.

When should a student take the test?

Students must take the THEA or show proof of exemption before beginning classes at a public community college, public technical college, or public university in Texas. The THEA is not an admissions test. Students cannot be denied admission to a public institution of higher education based on THEA test scores.

What practice test materials are available?

- * "The Official THEA Test Study Guide" provides a review of the skills that are measured by the test giving a better understanding of what will be covered by the test. You may order a copy of the study guide online or purchase copies at college bookstores or other retailers. College libraries or instructional resources centers have copies available for review. High school counseling offices may also have copies.
- * The student guide includes strategies for preparing for the test and a practice test.
- * A practice test can be found on the THEA website at www.thea.nesinc.com.

What is the cost of the test?

The fee is approximately \$29.00 which is for regular registration for any or all sections of the test. This includes score reports sent up to three institutions.

Contact:

For questions about registration procedure, admission ticket, or score report:

THEA Test National Evaluation Systems, Inc.

P.O. Box 140347

Austin, TX 78714-0347

(512) 927-5397

www.thea.nesinc.com

Questions about general THEA policies:

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

P.O. Box 12788

Austin, TX 78711-2788

www.thecb.state.tx.us