



GRADUATION HANDBOOK

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Table of Contents

District Contact Information	2
Timeline and Checklist	3
Overview of Popular Colleges	7
College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)	8
SAT - ACT - TSIA 2 Information	9
Vocational Schools	10
Military Information	11
Advanced Placement (AP) Scores	12
College Visits	12
College Fairs	12
Transcript Request Form	13
Letters of Recommendation	13
FAFSA	13
NCAA Administration	14
College Application Process	15
Life School Grade Point Average (GPA) Calculations	16
Scholarship Opportunities	18
College Automatic Admissions	19
College Application Checklist	19
College Waivers	19
Texas FIRST Diploma	20
Graduation Information	21
APPENDIX A	14
APPENDIX B	24

In our efforts to promote non-discrimination, Life School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.



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COLLEGE PLANNING: GRADES 9-10

Once you enter high school, there are steps you can take to prepare for life after high school graduation. This timeline checklist will help you navigate that process.

- ☐ **Think about what life after high school will look like for you.**
 - ☐ Discover your interests, both the things you like and dislike.
 - ☐ Talk to your counselor, teachers, parents, and other members in your community about careers you find interesting.
 - ☐ Are you interested in going to a college or university?
 - ☐ Are you interested in going to a vocational school to earn a trade certificate?
 - ☐ Are you interested in the military?
- ☐ **Visit the ASVAB Career Exploration Program website and take the assessment.**
 - ☐ ASVAB includes an aptitude test and interest assessment. The results can be used to guide career exploration. Life School offers ASVAB to 11th and 12th grade students during the Fall.
- ☐ **Work with your counselor to create a four-year high school plan.**
 - ☐ Be sure your course work aligns to your post-secondary goal.
 - ☐ Consider what level courses you will need to get into colleges or universities.
- ☐ **Participate in extracurricular activities.**
 - ☐ Explore your interest in a sport, school club, music or drama group, or community volunteer activity.
 - ☐ Colleges would rather see real involvement in one activity than a loose connection to several.
- ☐ **Take the PSAT™ when it is offered in 10th Grade.**
 - ☐ Life School offers the PSAT™ during the school day in grades 10 and 11. It is optional in 10th grade at a cost. All students will take the PSAT™ in 11th grade at no cost.
 - ☐ Download the free Daily Practice for the New SAT® app to get a feel for the kinds of questions you might face on test day.
- ☐ **Tour college campuses.**
 - ☐ If possible, take advantage of vacation or other family travel time to visit colleges and see what they're like. Even if you have no interest in attending the college you are visiting, it will help you learn what to look for in a college.
- ☐ **Visit the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) website and take the aptitude assessment if you think you might be interested in the military. Life School will also provide an opportunity on campus to take the ASVAB assessment.**
 - ☐ The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military. It is administered annually to more than one million military applicants, high school, and post-secondary students.
 - ☐ Visit: <https://www.officialasvab.com/>
 - ☐ Visit: <https://www.military.com/>
- ☐ Explore AP courses you want to take your junior year.
 - ☐ Get the facts at www.apstudent.collegeboard.org/exploreap. If you're in AP classes, register for the AP Exams given in May.

COLLEGE PLANNING: GRADE 11

College planning kicks into high gear your junior year! Use this timeline checklist to stay on track.

- ❑ **Identify your strengths and interests.**
 - ❑ Begin to think about things you want to study in college.
 - ❑ Begin to think of jobs you would enjoy doing for a living.
- ❑ **Learn about colleges and technical schools.**
 - ❑ Locate colleges you might be interested in attending. Make a list of your top 5 of top 10.
 - ❑ Identify the admission requirements for colleges and download college applications to familiarize yourself with the process.
 - ❑ Visit College Board College Search: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>.
 - ❑ Plan to visit college campuses you are interested in attending.
 - ❑ Make a file folder to organize your top colleges, assessment data, and application data.
- ❑ **Take the PSAT™ when it is offered in 11th Grade.**
 - ❑ Life School offers the PSAT™ during the school day in grades 10 and 11. All students will take the PSAT™ in 11th grade at no cost.
 - ❑ Download the free Daily Practice for the New SAT® app to get a feel for the kinds of questions you might face on test day.
- ❑ **Take the SAT® in the spring.**
 - ❑ To prepare for the SAT®, you can access free SAT® practice tools at www.satpractice.org.
 - ❑ Life School provides the SAT to all juniors at no cost.
 - ❑ Download The SAT® Subject Tests Student Guide, which offers testprep advice, from www.SATSubjectTests.org.
- ❑ **Start applying for scholarships.**
 - ❑ [Apply for Scholarships using Xello](#)
 - ❑ Visit the College Board Scholarship page: <https://opportunity.collegeboard.org/>
- ❑ **Register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).**
 - ❑ Register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center if you are an athlete plan to continue playing a sport in college: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net.
- ❑ **Create a resume.**
 - ❑ Be sure to include your academic accomplishments, extracurricular activities, and work experiences since you started high school.
- ❑ **Meet with your school counselor for college advising.**

College Board *College Planning: 11th Grade*: [click here](#)

College Board *College: How to Get from There to Here*: [click here](#)

COLLEGE PLANNING: GRADE 12

- ☐ **Narrow your list of colleges to between five and 10.**
 - ☐ Meet with a counselor about your college choices and, if you haven't done so yet, download college applications and financial aid forms. [Plan to visit](#) as many of these colleges as possible.
- ☐ **Create a master list or calendar that includes:**
 - ☐ Tests you'll take and their fees, dates, and registration deadlines
 - ☐ College application due dates
 - ☐ Required financial aid application forms and their deadlines (aid applications may be due before college applications)
 - ☐ Other materials you'll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.)
 - ☐ Your high school's application processing deadlines
- ☐ **Ask a counselor to help.**
 - ☐ Reach out to your school counselor if you can't afford application or test fees.
 - ☐ **Work with a counselor** to resolve any admission or financial aid problems.
- ☐ **[Take the SAT® one more time.](#)**
 - ☐ Many seniors retake the SAT in the fall. Additional course work since your last test could help you boost your performance. Plus you already know what to expect on test day.
 - ☐ Be sure to have your SAT scores sent to the colleges you're applying to.
- ☐ **[Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\).](#)**
 - ☐ Seniors are required to complete their FAFSA before graduation. Oct. 1 is the first day you can file the FAFSA. Inform your school counselor once you complete your FAFSA.
- ☐ **Continue to apply for scholarships that are applicable to you.**
 - ☐ [Apply for Scholarships using Xello](#)
- ☐ **[Complete the CSS PROFILE®.](#)**
 - ☐ PROFILE is an online application used by certain colleges and scholarship programs to determine eligibility for their aid dollars.
- ☐ **Prepare.**
 - ☐ Review the [early decision/early action or rolling admission applications](#) as soon as possible. Colleges may require test scores and applications between Nov. 1 and Nov. 15 for early decision admission.
- ☐ **[Ask a teacher or counselor for recommendations.](#)**
 - ☐ Give each teacher or counselor an outline of your academic record and your extracurricular activities. For each recommendation, provide a stamped, addressed envelope and any college forms required.
- ☐ **Write first drafts of your essays.**
 - ☐ Ask teachers and others to read them if you're submitting essays. If you're applying for early decision, finish the essays for that application early so you have enough time to get feedback and revise them.
- ☐ **Apply.**
 - ☐ Complete at least one college application by Thanksgiving.
- ☐ **[Get transcripts.](#)**
 - ☐ Login to Xello to request your transcript. (Link above)
 - ☐ Ask counselors to send your transcripts to colleges. Give counselors the proper forms at least two weeks before the colleges require them.
 - ☐ Have your high school send a transcript — it is sent separately by mail to colleges if you apply online to colleges.
- ☐ **Keep active in school.**

- ☐ [If you are waitlisted](#), the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and the time you learned of its decision.
- ☐ **Visit your final college before accepting.**
 - ☐ You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April. Notify your counselor of your choice. If you have questions about housing offers, talk to your counselor or call the college.
- ☐ **Communicate back to colleges.**
 - ☐ Inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid by May 1. Colleges cannot require your deposit or your commitment to attend before May 1. Talk to your counselor or adviser if you have questions.
 - ☐ Send your deposit to one college only.
- ☐ [Take any AP® Exams.](#)
 - ☐ Show what you've learned in your AP classes. A successful score could even earn you credit, advanced placement, or both in college.
- ☐ [Waitlisted by a college?](#)
 - ☐ If you intend to enroll if you are accepted, tell the admission director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask whether funds will be available if you're accepted.
- ☐ [Review your financial aid awards.](#)
 - ☐ Not all financial aid awards are the same, so it's important to choose the aid package that's best for you and your family. Be sure to note what you have to do to continue receiving financial aid from year to year, and how your aid might change in future years.

College Board *College Planning: 12th Grade*: [click here](#)

OVERVIEW OF POPULAR COLLEGES

Click on each image to be taken to that college's admission website.



For preview dates and tour information click the link below:

[Tarleton](#)

[UH](#)

[NAVARRO](#)

[Texas State](#)

[SHSU](#)

[SMU](#)

[ACU](#)

[Texas Tech](#)

[UTA](#)

[DCCCD](#)

[TJC](#)

[TSU](#)

[DBU](#)

[BAYLOR](#)

[Texas A&M](#)

[UMHB](#)

[TSTC](#)

[PV](#)

[BLINN](#)

[UT](#)

[SAGU](#)

[UTSA](#)

[UNT](#)

[TWU](#)

[Commerce](#)

[Ogle School](#)

[SFA](#)

COLLEGE, CAREER, AND MILITARY READINESS (CCMR)

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has a goal that by the year 2030, at least 60% of Texans ages 25-34 will have a certificate or degree. [Link to more information about 60x30TX](#). In support of this goal, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Life School are committed to every graduate being college, career or military ready (CCMR) as defined by the new state accountability system.

Students are considered **College Ready** when they satisfy at least one of the following criteria:

- Meet criteria of 3 or higher on an AP exam
- Meet College Entrance exam requirements on SAT, ACT or TSI exams
 - o 530 on SAT Math; 480 on SAT Evidenced Based Reading
 - o TSIA
 - Tests taken prior to January 2021 (TSIA)
 - 350 on Math; 351 on Reading
 - Tests taken after January 2021 (TSIA2)
 - 950 on Math = 950; 945 on ELAR & Essay 5-8
 - o 19 on ACT Math AND 23 Composite; 19 on ACT English AND 23 Composite
- Complete dual credit courses: 9 or more hours or more in any subject or 3 hours in ELAR and/or mathematics
- Earn an Associate's degree
- Successfully complete College Prep classes (English and/or Math) their senior year

Students are considered **Career Ready** when they satisfy the following criteria:

- Earn Industry-Based Certification(s)

Students are considered **Military Ready** when they satisfy at least one of the following criteria:

- Enlist in the United States Military

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

SAT

The SAT is an achievement test, not an aptitude test, allowing students an opportunity to improve their scores, their study, and focused practice. It is used by most colleges and universities as one element of its admissions process.

The SAT is useful beyond admissions; data show that SAT scores are important predictors of student retention to the second year and as a strategy to intervene academically for students at-risk for departure.

College Board in partnership with Khan Academy provides students with free and effective resources to prepare for the SAT.

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register>

ACT

The ACT is accepted by admission by all 4-year universities in the United States and over 225 universities around the world. It is also the only admissions test that offers a science section and score. The ACT science test includes a STEM ranking to show students how their STEM scores compare to other students.

The ACT knows students need more than a score for the university process. This test also gives students tools to help them plan for the future using ACT Interest Inventory, the Student Profile Section, the Career Map, and the Career Readiness Indicator.

<http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html>

TSIA2

The TSIA2 is a series of placement tests for students enrolling in public colleges and universities in Texas. The tests help Texas high schools determine whether you're ready for college-level courses in the areas of reading, writing, and math.

<https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/students/prepare-for-accuplacer/tsia-texas-success-initiative-assessment>

VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

What if I want to go straight into the workforce?

United States Department of Labor has created a [listing](#) and the following information for marketable jobs:

- Training and education needed
- Earnings
- Expected job prospects
- What workers do on the job
- Working conditions
- Job market
- Job search tips

TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE (TSTC)

<https://www.tstc.edu/campuses/northtexas/>

Life High School Waxahachie and Life High School Oak Cliff

TSTC partners with high schools across Texas to provide premium technical dual enrollment opportunities. These partnerships help to fill the workforce needs of Texas. Courses are offered as hybrid and online, which begin the student's junior year of high school.

Entrance Requirements for TSTC:

- Requires a two-year commitment
- Application and counselor approval required
- Parent permission
- Teacher recommendations
- Students must be passing all classes and must be in good standing with daily attendance.
- Students are required to pay the costs of tuition and needed equipment.

Due to enrollment and teacher availability, not every class may be offered every year.

Programs offered through Life School:

Diesel Equipment Technology (Hybrid)	HVAC Technician (Hybrid)	Structural Welding (Hybrid)	Cybersecurity Technology (Online)
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MILITARY INFORMATION

Click on the images to learn more about each branch of the military.



Interested in joining the military?

- Research what [job](#) you want to do for the Military and its requirements.
- Study for the [ASVAB](#).
- Visit [USA.GOV](#) website.

DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM

Dual Credit courses allow high school students to earn high school credit and college hours for one course. Dual credit enrollment is offered to qualified high school students through the Dallas County Community College System (DCCCS) or Navarro College.

Credit for successfully completed college course(s) shall be earned in one-half credit increments. A one-semester, three-hour college course will be equal to a one-semester high school course. The grade must be a minimum of "C" to qualify for high school credit. Students earning a grade below a "C" from a dual credit class or electing to withdraw from any course will be removed from the dual credit program in the subsequent semester. Students interested in reentry into dual credit must meet counselor approval and community college requirements. Students with excessive absences or tardies in regular education or dual credit classes may be removed from the dual credit program and placed back in regular courses.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) SCORES

Earn College Credit and Placement

Your AP score could earn you college credits before you even set foot on campus. In fact, most AP students who enroll in four-year colleges start school with some credit. “AP” on your high school transcript shows colleges you're motivated to succeed, and taking the exam demonstrates your commitment to tackle and complete college-level work. Taking AP classes can also increase your GPA if you do well in them. Life School offers AP courses as a weighted (Level 3) GPA opportunity.

Learn more about AP here: <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/what-is-ap>

How to send your AP score(s): <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/sending-scores>

COLLEGE VISITS

Juniors and Seniors are allowed two (2) days per year to visit colleges and universities. These visits will not count against exam exemptions if all procedures below are followed:

Procedures:

- 1) Print College Visit Form: [click here](#) to print or a copy can be obtained from the front office. There is also a printable version of the *College Visit Form* in Appendix B of this handbook.
- 2) Notify teachers of the absence prior to visit; pick up homework assignments and/or submit work due during absence.
- 3) Obtain approval from counselor or assistant principal prior to visit
- 4) Secure official documentation of visit
- 5) Submit documentation within 5 days after visit

COLLEGE FAIRS

College Fairs are offered all around both Dallas and Ellis Counties. Life School has a partnership with Ellis County College Fairs. Notifications of the date and process will be provided by each campus.

TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM

A high school transcript is a detailed report of your education for each semester and how you ranked within your student body. Colleges require proof of your education to make an informative decision regarding your college preparedness.

Students may request a copy of their transcript. Official transcripts are only mailed directly from the high school directly to colleges. An official transcript may also be requested for merit-based scholarships.

[Click here](#) to submit the Xello *Transcript Request Form*. You will need to have an application on file in Xello to initiate this request.

[Click here](#) to submit the electronic *Transcript Request Form*. There is also a printable version of the *Transcript Request Form* in Appendix A of this handbook.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

There are three typical reasons for when a student may need a letter of recommendation:

- 1) When the college application packet includes forms for teachers/counselors input - Teacher Recommendation Form, Counselor Recommendation Form, or Secondary School Report
- 2) When a student does not meet the stated admission guidelines for a particular college and wants to impress the college.
- 3) When scholarship applications require a recommendation letter.

How to request a recommendation letter:

- 1) Email your counselor/teacher requesting a recommendation letter. Please keep in mind a teacher/counselor is not required to complete a recommendation letter. This is a request.
- 2) Please give at least a two-week notice on requests MINIMUM.
- 3) To better serve you please include any extracurricular activities you are involved in, any community service you have participated in, and list any organizations you are involved in.
- 4) Include what sets you apart from the other applicants.

FAFSA

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** is a form completed by current and prospective college students (undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to determine their eligibility for student financial aid.

Life School offers FAFSA Parent Night to help students and parents complete their FAFSA application forms. Dates and times are announced on campus. Please see your school counselor for more information.

To apply, complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA automatically calculates your Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The financial aid office at the college or university the student applied to will notify the student if he/she is eligible.

<http://www.everychanceeverytexan.org/funding/aid/txtexas.php>
<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

NCAA ADMINISTRATION

COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT-ATHLETE

A prospective student-athlete desiring to enter either an NCAA division I or II or NAIA college or university must read the “NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete” or the “NAIA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete”. These are the most important publications for all high-school athletes preparing to compete at the college level. These publications summarize the rules and regulations in an easy-to-read form. They include guidelines which relate to recruiting, financial aid and college freshman eligibility requirements for NCAA Divisions I and II / NAIA institutions.

Copies of these publications can be obtained online at:

<http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/CBSA.pdf> or
https://www.naia.org/fls/27900/1NAIA/membership/NAIA_GuidefortheCollegeBoundStudent.pdf

Student-athletes planning to attend an NCAA or NAIA college or university must register with the appropriate Clearing House in order to be able to participate in intercollegiate athletics.

Please be sure to notify your counselor when you have created your NCAA or NAIA account for transcript uploads to complete your application review process.

NCAA Registration <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

NAIA Registration <https://play.mynaia.org/>

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

Applying for colleges can be intimidating, however, having a starting point will direct you to the path of planning and making good decisions that line up with your goals.

- 1) **FINISH TESTING:** Make sure you have taken the necessary steps for college admission testing by registering to take the SAT, ACT, or TSAI2.
- 2) **HAVE A LIST:** Make a list of the top 5 colleges, at minimum, that peak your interest and offer your degree plan. Research the colleges, visit their websites and campus to make informative decisions.
- 3) **KNOW YOUR DEADLINES:** Many colleges have multiple deadline options for early action, regular decisions, FAFSA, and more. Research your college's deadlines. Stay in contact with the college advisor.
- 4) **APPLY:** Fill out applications carefully. Make sure you meet their admission requirements. If the college requires an essay, craft your essays with a well thought out narrative.
- 5) **SEND DOCUMENTATION:** Pay attention to documents that need to be submitted to complete your college application. Know how to send your official transcript, SAT/ACT/TSAI2 scores, and recommendation letters. Your school counselor can help you.
- 6) **FOLLOW UP:** Check your emails and check college accounts to make sure that required documents have been submitted and received. A month after you submit your application, call the college and make sure your application is complete and check your admission status.
- 7) **FINANCIAL AID:** Check with your college for specific aid deadlines. Complete your FAFSA in a timely manner. Get with your school counselor on scholarship opportunities and deadlines.
- 8) **MAKE A CHOICE:** Try to visit and revisit the colleges you've been accepted before committing. Once you make your decision and commit, inform your school counselor so final documentation can be submitted.
- 9) **COMPLETE:** Complete all submissions with the college of choice, finalize registration, accept financial aid options, register housing, attend freshman orientation, stay in contact with college advisor, and pack!

Helpful Websites

https://www.applytexas.org/adappc/gen/c_start.WBX

<https://www.commonapp.org/>

<https://secure-media.collegeboard.org>

LIFE SCHOOL GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) CALCULATIONS

Life School provides three different types of Grade Point Average (GPA) calculations on student transcripts: Straight 4.0 GPA, Unweighted 4.0 GPA, and a Weighted 5.0 GPA.

Standard 4.0 GPA

This type of GPA is converted to a 4.0 un-calibrated scale, which is used for demonstration of the GPA calculation commonly used by colleges and universities. The following shall apply to the Straight 4.0 GPA only.

Grades 100-90	A	4.0
Grades 89-80	B	3.0
Grades 79-70	C	2.0

Example for Calculating the Straight 4.0 GPA:

A sample ninth grade schedule will be used to demonstrate how to calculate the Straight 4.0 GPA in the chart below. Each numerical semester grade will be given “grade points” based upon the scale above. Calculating the Straight 4.0 GPA uses the un-calibrated 4.0 GPA table in the Life School Course Guide. This table converts a numerical score into an alphabetical grade with corresponding grade points similar to college transcripts. A 92 in the un-calibrated table converts to an A, this grade receives 4.0 grade points. Record the grade points for each semester grade for each class (local credit courses are not included in the calculation). Total the grade points and total the number of grades. The GPA is equal to the total grade points divided by the total number of grades.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Semester 1</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>	<u>Semester 2</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>	<u>4.0 GP Total</u>
English 1	89	3.0	91	4.0	7.0
Algebra I	75	2.0	75	2.0	4.0
AP Human Geo	83	3.0	78	2.0	5.0
Spanish II	95	4.0	82	3.0	7.0
PE	97	4.0	96	4.0	8.0
Honors Biology	95	4.0	82	3.0	7.0
AVID	98	4.0	100	4.0	8.0
Art	93	4.0	91	4.0	8.0
TOTAL	8 grades		8 grades		46.0
GPA = 46.0/16 = 2.875					

Unweighted 4.0 GPA

The Unweighted 4.0 GPA counts all courses as a level 1 course when assigning grade points. The following grade point scale example shall be used for the student's unweighted 4.0 GPA.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Semester 1</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>	<u>Semester 2</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>	<u>4.0 GP Total</u>
English 1	89	2.9	91	3.1	6.0
Algebra I	75	1.5	75	1.5	3.0
AP Human Geo	83	2.3	78	1.8	4.1
Spanish II	95	3.5	82	2.1	5.6
PE	97	3.7	96	3.6	7.3
Honors Biology	95	3.5	82	2.6	6.1
AVID	98	3.8	100	4.0	7.8
Art	93	3.3	91	3.1	6.4
TOTAL	8 grades		8 grades		46.3
GPA = 46.3/16 = 2.8938					

Weighted 5.0 GPA

The Weighted 5.0 GPA places courses on a Level of 1-5 depending on the course. The more challenging the course the more grade points earned. The following example used the weighted scale for advanced courses like Honors, AP, Dual Credit, & CTE Practicum courses.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Semester 1</u>	<u>Grade Point</u>	<u>Semester 2</u>	<u>Grade Points</u>	<u>4.0 GP Total</u>
English 1	89	2.9	91	3.1	6.0
Algebra I	75	1.5	75	1.5	3.0
AP Human Geo	83	3.3	78	2.8	6.1
Spanish II	95	3.5	82	2.1	5.6
PE	97	3.7	96	3.6	7.3
Honors Biology	95	4.0	82	2.7	6.7
AVID	98	3.8	100	4.0	7.8
Art	93	3.3	91	3.1	6.4
TOTAL	8 grades		8 grades		48.9
GPA = 48.9/16 = 3.0562					

Ranking of Students

Students graduating from Life School are ranked following the end of the second semester of the senior year. The student's cumulative weighted GPA will determine a student's academic rank in class, with the first and second ranked students designated Valedictorian and Salutatorian, respectively. In the event of a tie in the ranking of students, the total number of Honors /AP/Dual Credit courses completed will be counted; if the students took the same number of Honors /AP/Dual Credit courses, the GPA for those courses will then be considered. If grade points are tied for those courses, then a co-ranking for that position will be awarded.

To be eligible for Valedictorian and Salutatorian, a student must have attended Life School for the four semesters immediately preceding graduation. Courses taken only during the fall and spring semesters will be considered in determining class rank. Dual credit courses taken during the summer will be considered in determining the class rank and grade point average if it is the first time taking the course and not repeating a course due to previous failure. Summer courses (except dual credit), correspondence courses, online courses, and credit by exam, are not calculated for class ranking or considered part of the grade point average. High school courses taken prior to 9th grade will not be calculated for class ranking nor be part of the grade point average. All grades received remain part of the permanent record or transcript.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Some scholarships for college are merit-based; might be awarded based on academic achievement or on a combination of academics and a special talent, trait, or interest. Other scholarships are based on financial need. There are many opportunities to apply for scholarships before your senior year. Life School utilizes Xello to provide students with many resources for scholarships. Please login to [Xello](#) to find and apply for scholarships. School counselors are always on the lookout for additional scholarship opportunities, and will communicate them with you as they are brought to our attention.

Try these free sources of information about scholarships:

- the financial aid office at the college or career school of interest
- Your school counselor scholarship list
- FAFSA [Federal Agencies](#)
- [state grant agency](#)
- foundations, religious or community organizations, local businesses, corporations, local chamber of commerce groups, lions clubs, or civic groups
- Organizations and athletic or professional associations related to your field of interest
- ethnicity-based organizations
- your employer or your parents' employers

Helpful Websites:

<https://login.xello.world/>

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>

<https://www.scholarships.com/>

<https://www.raise.me/join/1334033747> (Oak Cliff)

<https://www.fastweb.com/>

<https://www.collegexpress.com/>

<https://studentscholarships.org/>

COLLEGE AUTOMATIC ADMISSIONS

The Distinguished Level of Achievement Plan replaces the current Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP) as the highest graduating plan in the state of Texas for students entering high school in 2014-15 and beyond. This is the default graduation plan for Life School students.

In order to be considered for Top Ten Percent Automatic Admission in Texas Public Universities, graduates **MUST** earn a Distinguished Level of Achievement diploma.

A student may earn a distinguished level of achievement by successfully completing:

- A total of 4 credits in mathematics, which must include Algebra II
- A total of 4 credits in science
- 2 elective credits in addition to foundation graduation requirements
- The remaining foundation curriculum requirements
- The curriculum requirements for at least one endorsement

<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/graduation-information/automatic-college-admission>

*UT Austin: Senate Bill 175, passed by the 81st Texas Legislature, allows The University of Texas at Austin to limit automatic admission to 75 percent of the university's enrollment capacity designated for first-time resident undergraduate students. The University has determined that it will automatically admit all eligible summer/fall 2024 and spring 2025 freshman applicants who rank within the top 6% of their high school graduating classes. This [letter](#) from University President Jay C. Hartzell explains more about this bill.

COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Create an **application checklist** to track where you are in each of your college's application process. You can also check off things as you complete them so you know what you completed and what you still need to do. Be mindful of deadlines.

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-checklist>

COLLEGE APPLICATION & TESTING WAIVERS

Every income-eligible student who takes the SAT/ACT with a fee waiver or as part of a district or state program while in high school, can choose from over 2,000 [Participating Colleges](#) and apply to colleges for free. These waivers will be delivered online to eligible students through their College Board or ACT accounts.

Fee Waivers:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-fee-waivers>

<https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/RequestForWaiverForm.pdf>

TEXAS FIRST DIPLOMA

This prestigious opportunity enables high school students to graduate early with the Distinguished Level of Achievement AND receive a scholarship for college. As one of Texas' top students, you may be eligible to accelerate your path to college and receive a scholarship for one or two semesters at a Texas university. Students interested in this program will need to see their counselor for more information.

Fast Track Your Path to Texas Universities

Texas First Diploma

We're excited to introduce the **TEXAS FIRST DIPLOMA**. This prestigious opportunity enables you to graduate early with the Distinguished Level of Achievement AND receive a scholarship for college.

As one of Texas' top students, you may be eligible to accelerate your path to college and receive a scholarship for one or two semesters at one of these Texas universities:

- Texas A&M University
- Texas State University
- Texas Tech University
- The University of Texas at Arlington
- The University of Texas at Austin
- The University of Texas at Dallas
- The University of Texas at El Paso
- University of Houston
- University of North Texas
- The University of Texas at San Antonio

For more information, scan the QR code below!



Talk to your counselor today to see if this exciting new opportunity is the right path for you!

THE FINE PRINT

Here are the eligibility requirements:

- Texas residency
- FAFSA completion
- At least 22 high school credits and a final GPA equivalent to 3.0 or higher
- Additional academic requirements, including college readiness test scores, STAAR exam participation, and demonstration of mastery in various subjects

Scan the QR code above for a detailed list of eligibility requirements.

If you graduate two or more semesters early, you'll receive a two-semester scholarship, worth several thousand dollars, to a participating university.

If you graduate one semester early, you'll receive a one-semester scholarship to a participating university.

You may also be eligible for additional financial aid at most of these institutions!

The Texas First Diploma does not guarantee automatic admission for students. Consult your counselor for guidance on whether your grade point average at graduation qualifies you for automatic admission under the state's top 10 percent law.

You can apply to any college or university you choose. However, the scholarship will only apply toward participating universities, listed above.

Use it or lose it! The scholarship offer will expire at the end of the first academic year following your graduation, so we encourage you to attend college directly after high school.

Don't forget to talk to your counselor to see if this is the right path for you!

THECB

**Texas Higher Education
COORDINATING BOARD**

GRADUATION INFORMATION

Graduation Requirements – Class of 2023 & Beyond

Students who enter the ninth grade in 2019-2020 and beyond must enroll in courses necessary to complete the *Foundation High School Program with an endorsement*. Students may also earn *Distinguished Level of Achievement* by including and successfully completing Algebra II in their selected coursework.

Course	Foundation	+ Endorsement	Notes
English Language Arts	4		English I (EOC) English II (EOC) English III English IV or Advanced English
Mathematics	3	1	Algebra I (EOC) Geometry Algebra II Advanced Math
Sciences	3	1	Biology (EOC) IPC or Chemistry Chemistry or Physics Advanced Science
Social Studies	3		World History or AP Human Geography U.S. History (EOC) Economics (.5 credit) Government (.5 credit)
Language Other Than English (LOTE)	2		Language Course 1 Language Course 2
Fine Arts	1		Course 1
Physical Education	1		Course 1
Electives	5	2	Must be state approved courses and satisfy curriculum requirements for the endorsement. <i>Freshmen students at Life School are required to participate in one of the following 3 courses:</i> 1. Dual Credit; 2. AVID; OR 3. Dollars & Sense (0.5 credit) and Professional Communications (0.5 credit)
Total Credits	22	26	

****Note:** Graduating Class of 2027 are not required to take Dollars and Sense and Professional Communication.

GRADUATION RECOGNITIONS

College, Career, Military Readiness (CCMR) is represented by the multicolored cord for graduates that have met the state accountability system

Valedictorian is represented by the valedictorian medallion; graduate is ranked #1

Salutatorian is represented by the salutatorian medallion; graduate is ranked #2

Magna Cum Laude is represented by the double-knotted gold cord; graduates ranked in top 10%

Cum Laude is represented by the double-knotted navy cord; graduates ranked in top 25%

National Honor Society is represented by the medallion (and seal on diploma)

Performance Acknowledgement is represented by white collars for outstanding achievement based on at least one of the categories:

- 1) By successfully completing: 1) at least 12 hours of college academic courses, with a grade of the equivalent of 3.0 or higher on a scale of 4.0 or 2) an associate degree while in high school
- 2) Completing recognized accomplishments in bilingualism and bi-literacy
- 3) Earning a score of 3 or above on a College Board advanced placement examination
- 4) Earning an achieving score on the PSAT®, the ACT-PLAN®, the SAT®, or the ACT®
- 5) Earning a Nationally or Internationally Recognized Business or Industry Certification or License

Carter Blood Donor is represented by the red cord based on two donations

Industry Based Certifications (CTE) are represented by lapel pins

APPENDIX A

Life High School Transcript Request Form

Transcripts are not issued until all records are clear at the school. Student records are confidential and transcripts are issued only at written request of the student/parent. Official transcripts are mailed to institutions ONLY. Students may request an unofficial copy for their records. Please allow 3-5 business days for processing from time of request. Turn in completed form to the Help Desk.

Last Name

First

Middle Initial

Grade

Graduation Year

Phone

Due to enactment of a new Federal Law define, "Family Education Rights and Privacy Act", effective November 20, 1974, it will be impossible to forward any records of grades, rank, test scores, etc., to any other high school, college or university without signed permission from parents of a student under 18 years of age or from the student if he/she is 18 years of age or older. While students are currently enrolled at Life School, we will always require a signature of both the parent and student. Therefore, I release the records of _____ to be sent to all identified institutions as listed below.

Circle One	Circle One	Name of Institution	College Admissions Address (do not list high school address)
Official / Copy	Mail / Pick Up		
Official / Copy	Mail / Pick Up		
Official / Copy	Mail / Pick Up		
Official / Copy	Mail / Pick Up		
Official / Copy	Mail / Pick Up		

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

OFFICE USE ONLY

Processed by: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

Life High School College Visit Form

Complete and turn in this signed form to the attendance office. Keep a copy for your records.

Student Name _____ ID # _____

Date of Visit _____ Date of Request _____

Juniors and Seniors are allowed two days per year to visit colleges and universities. These visits will not count against exam exemptions if all procedures below are followed:

- ☐ Notify teachers of the absence prior to visit. Students are responsible for picking up homework assignments and/or submitting work due during absence.
- ☐ Obtain approval from the counselor or assistant principal prior to visit.
- ☐ Secure official documentation of visit and turn it into the attendance office within 5 days after the college visit.

Name of College/University: _____

Reason For Visit:

- ☐ College Visit
- ☐ Other _____

Required signatures prior to college visit:

Parent _____

Assistant Principal/Counselor (will sign upon receipt of this form) _____

Upon return to school, verification of attendance from the college must be presented to the attendance office, i.e. Program, letter from school official, email by Office of Admission, etc.

If official verification is not available, provide a college representatives information with a signature below:

University/College Contact Person: _____

Phone number: (_____) _____

Email: _____

University/College Contact's Signature: _____

VERIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE FROM THE COLLEGE MUST BE RETURNED TO THE ATTENDANCE OFFICE WITHIN FIVE (5) DAYS OF THE ABSENCE(S) FOR THE ABSENCE TO BE EXCUSED.