

*Set-up on website as question/answer format. Click question and it will show answer.

Top Questions that Parents and Students Ask!

What is GPA and class rank and why is it so important?

GPA stands for grade point average. It is determined by dividing the yearly average in English, math, science, social studies and foreign language classes by the number of credits attempted in each of those courses. Class rank shows where a student stands academically in relation to other member of his/her graduating class. A student's GPA and class rank are among the first things considered for college admission. The higher the GPA and class rank, the greater the college and scholarship opportunities.

Should I graduate on the Recommended or Distinguished Plan and what is the difference?

The Recommended Graduation Program includes a specific core of required courses that provide a well-balanced, rigorous academic program with elective course options. All students who successfully complete the Recommended Program are prepared for college-level work. The purpose of the Distinguished Achievement Program is to recognize students who have performed at a level clearly beyond that expected of high school students. The course requirements include all of the courses required for the Recommended Program and an additional unit of the same foreign languages. In addition to the course requirements, students must complete four advanced measures that focus on performance at the college or professional level.

What are Pre AP and AP courses and why should I take these?

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program is a cooperative, educational endeavor of secondary schools, colleges and the College Board. Pre AP courses introduce skills, concepts, and assessment methods to prepare students for success when they take AP courses. The AP Program provides motivated high school students with the opportunity to take college-level courses in the high school setting. Students who take part in the program will gain college-level skills and, by meeting certain AP testing criteria, are able to earn college credit while they are still in high school.

What state tests are required at each grade level and how important are these tests?

The state of Texas mandates that students enrolled in Texas public schools take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test. Ninth grade students take tests in reading and math. Tenth grade students are tested in English language arts, math, science, and social studies. Eleventh grade students must pass the Exit level English language arts, math, science, and social studies tests. Each student must pass all sections of this test to receive a high school diploma, as well as, complete all other graduation requirements.

I am not in the top 10% of my graduating class. Will I qualify for college admissions?

Colleges and universities **will** admit students that are not in the top 10% of their graduating class. However, if you are in the top 10% of your class, you are guaranteed admission in to a Texas public university if you complete the application process and meet university deadlines. If you are not in the top 10% of your class, you may be admitted in to your prospective school by meeting the admission requirements. The university/college will look at a variety of things, including SAT/ACT scores, high school coursework, class rank, essays, resume, letters of recommendation, and special circumstances.

How are credits awarded and what should I do if I fail a required course?

Courses that are not completed successfully will not receive high school credit. In determining credits, teachers will average the two semester grades of students and if the average of the two semester grades is 70, or above, the student will receive on full credit for the course. When the two semester grades are averaged and the average is below 70, the student will receive on half credit for the semester grade that is 70 or above. If neither semester grade is 70, or above, no credits will be awarded. We offer numerous opportunities for students to recover credits. The NovaNET Program is designed to provide remediation and credit recovery. Students are able to utilize this program during a NovaNET period, at night school or during summer school. If the student is unable to take the course through NovaNET or is unsuccessful with the program, we will place the course in the student's schedule and drop an elective.

What if I can't afford to go college?

Every student can go to college. There is money called financial aid to help you pay for college. The aid can come from different places including the Federal Government, the state of Texas, your college of choice, loans and community/local scholarships. College-bound students can receive a combination of grants, loans, scholarships or work-study jobs to help reduce the cost of college. Your only job is to plan ahead and apply!

When should I begin looking at scholarships & financial aid?

You should apply for financial aid after January 1 of your senior year. Start scholarship searches when you enter high school. You must complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to apply for federal student aid and to apply for most state and college aid. You may submit you FAFSA early, but not before January 1 of your senior year. Check with your high school counselor or your college's financial aid administrator for state deadlines. **DO NOT** wait until your senior year to learn the process of financial aid and what specific college deadlines are. Be sure to keep your resume updated with your honors and awards. Research the local scholarships first. Remember that the smaller the geographical area a scholarship covers, the better your chances of winning. Check with your counselor for these types of scholarships. You can also research state and national scholarships using online resources such as fastweb.com and scholarships.com.

I want to go to a competitive university. How do I get ready?

One of the top things that colleges consider when evaluating students is the rigor of coursework. You should take challenging courses and not slack off your senior year. Make sure you are a well-rounded student with extra-curricular activities. Students should check the admission requirements of the college/university you might like to attend early in high school. Take and prepare for the PSAT and College Entrance Exams. (ACT & SAT)

What is the PSAT & when should I take it?

PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test™. It also gives you a chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship programs. This test is only given in October. You should take this test your freshman, sophomore and junior years.

What is the SAT & when should I take it?

The SAT Reasoning Test is a measure of the critical thinking skills students will need for academic success in college. The SAT tests how well you analyze and solve problems. The SAT Reasoning Test is typically taken by high school juniors and seniors. The SAT Subject Tests are used to measure your knowledge and skills in particular subject areas and your ability to apply that knowledge. If a college you are considering requires Subject Tests, you will need to take these tests your senior year by the college deadline.

What is the ACT & when should I take it?

The ACT is a national college admission examination that consists of subject area tests in: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science Reasoning. The ACT Plus Writing includes the four subject area tests and a 30-minute [Writing Test](#). ACT results are accepted by virtually all U.S. colleges and universities. The ACT test is typically taken by high school juniors and seniors.

SAT or ACT? Which one should I take?

Both. Colleges and universities have found that both tests are good predictors of success at their institutions. The two tests are very different and many students have higher scores on one test or the other. Student A will have better scores on the ACT while Student B scores higher on the SAT. Our advice: take both.

What is the THEA & when should I take it?

The Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) is an exam that all students entering a Texas public college or university must take before enrolling in any college-level coursework. If you plan on enrolling in college courses that count for both high school and college credit you are required to meet the eligibility requirements. For information about whether you are exempt from THEA testing, contact your counselor. It is suggested that sophomores and juniors take the THEA in early spring for eligibility in college courses for the summer proceeding their junior or senior year.

How do I apply for college?

Make sure to check the websites of your college choices before your senior year. University/college admissions and scholarship deadlines vary from school to school. The Common Application is used by public universities in Texas. The student will complete it once (computer or paper/pencil) and then mail copies of the same application to any school that participates. Colleges accept the application online and some have an additional supplement that must be submitted.

What is our high school code and why does it matter?

Each high school is assigned a high school code. You will be asked for a high school code at various times throughout your high school career, including for PSAT, SAT, and ACT registration. Additionally, some college sites ask for a high school code. Mabank High School's code is **44410**.