

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS:

Guidelines to help with your decisions about college and
take some of the mystery out of the process.



Park Vista Community High School
7900 Jog Road
Lake Worth, FL 33467
561-491-8400
WWW.PVCHS.COM

SCHOOL CODE: 101923

for SAT & ACT Reports

Park Vista is a testing center for the SAT & ACT

Main Office: 561-491-8400

Guidance Office: 561-491-8420

Fax: 561-493-6853

COUNSELORS:

Peter Tarini (A-C) peter.tarini@palmbeachschools.org

Theresa Varano (D-I) theresa.varano@palmbeachschools.org

Mary Turner (J-M) mary.turner@palmbeachschools.org

Rick Dewalt (N-Si) rick.dewalt@palmbeachschools.org

Betsy Lyon (Sk-Z) elizabethbetsy.lyon@palmbeachschools.org

Dear Park Vista Student,

This packet was put together to help you in your college decision-making and application process. Please be sure to share this document with your parents.

The first thing you need to do is keep your grades up!

Next, you will need to decide what is important to you with regard to college. If you need help sorting that out, please see page 6 and 7, questions 2 and 11.

Then, you need to take some action:

1. Explore and obtain information about many colleges.
2. Learn as much as you can about those colleges that seem to satisfy your needs.
3. Narrow your choice to a group of colleges, perhaps 10 to 15, to study in greater depth.
4. Choose colleges (at least 4 recommended) to apply to, adhering to necessary timetables.
5. Apply for financial aid, if you and your family will need help to pay for college.
6. Once you elect to attend a particular college, feel confident that it is the right choice for you.

There is a timeline in this packet for your junior year and a separate one for your senior year of high school. Read this over. It might be helpful to put some key dates in your agenda book. Please read the Frequently Asked Questions pages before focusing on the Junior and Senior Timelines.

If you can stay organized, you will lower some of your stress. We are here to assist you with your goals! Let's work together and make these next couple of years an exciting time in your life.

If you have determined what is important to you in choosing a college, and if you have investigated a group of colleges that seem to have what you want, your decision will have been made wisely and the prospect for success will be greater!

We wish you the best in all of your future endeavors! Good luck!

The Park Vista Community High School
Guidance Department

RESOURCES AVAILABLE in Guidance:

- College catalogs and viewbooks
- Reference books on a variety of college-related topics, including directories of many colleges
- Financial aid information and forms
- Experienced and knowledgeable staff

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JUNIOR YEAR TIMELINE.....	4
SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE.....	5
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/ COLLEGE ADMISSIONS.....	6
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/ TESTING.....	9
ACT AND SAT TEST DATES AND REGISTRATION DEADLINES.....	10
ACT VS. SAT SCORE COMPARISON.....	12
SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM.....	13
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/ COLLEGE CAMPUS VISITS.....	14
COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET.....	15
CAMPUS VISIT WORKSHEET.....	16
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/ FINANCIAL AID.....	17
BRIGHT FUTURES ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS/ FLORIDA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS AWARD.....	19
BRIGHT FUTURES ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS/ FLORIDA MEDALLION SCHOLARS AWARD.....	20
BRIGHT FUTURES ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS/ FLORIDA GOLD SEAL VOCATIONAL SCHOLARS AWARD.....	21
HELPFUL WEBSITES.....	22

JUNIOR TIMELINE

August – October Start the year with a good attitude and **rigorous courses**. Keep working hard! Begin research on what your needs and wants are regarding college. Read college guides and search online. Prepare and then take the PSAT. Read the Frequently Asked Questions about Testing on page 9 of this packet for more information about the PSAT.

November Start your college search online, and through reading guides and directories. Many of these are available in the Guidance Office.

December – February Consider taking an SAT prep class. Register for the SAT (Test dates are in January, March, May and June). Register for the ACT, if you are planning on taking it (Test dates are in February, April and June). Talk to parents, teachers, old friends and guidance counselors about colleges. Discuss finances and college selection process with your parents. Study hard and keep your grades up!

March – April Sort through college mail. Keep doing your research and begin narrowing your list to 20 – 25 colleges. Begin visiting colleges, while they are in session, and/or make plans to visit during the summer. Take the SAT Reasoning Test or ACT, if scheduled. Register for the June SAT Subject Tests or ACT, if necessary. Start thinking about your extracurricular activity list and resume.

May Narrow your college list to 10 – 12 schools and continue scheduling visits. Take any SATs, ACTs, and AP tests. Work on a rough draft of your extracurricular activity list and resume. (See your counselor with questions or to see samples.)

June Take SAT Subject Tests and/or ACT. Relax a bit. Throw yourself into your summer job, internship or course work. Start summer college visits.

July Continue college visits. Fine-tune your list of colleges. Talk to friends about ones they are interested in. Begin work on college essays. Prepare for fall SATs, ACTs or SAT Subject Tests, if necessary.

SENIOR TIMELINE

August Start the year with a good attitude and **rigorous courses**. Keep working hard! Prepare for fall standardized tests, if necessary. Write your application essays. Meet with your counselor. Continue college visits.

September Consider applying Early Decision, if you have one clear top-choice college. Consider applying Early Action. Get application forms from colleges or their websites. Register for October, November and/or December SAT, SAT Subject Tests and/or ACT, if necessary. Ask teachers to write recommendations and provide them with the necessary forms and envelopes. Begin scholarship search and continue this throughout the year. Check the Scholarship Bulletin and the PVCHS website. If applying for Early Decision/Early Action, register to receive the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE at www.collegeboard.org.

October Continue visiting colleges. File Early Decision/Early Action applications, if applicable. Decide on a final list of schools to apply to. Get a copy of your transcript and check it over. Talk with your counselor. Continue distributing teacher recommendation forms. Check and double-check deadlines for admissions, financial aid and housing. Take SATs and/or ACT, if scheduled. If applying early anywhere, file the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE.

November File applications with December deadlines. Continue distributing teacher recommendation forms. Continue working on applications. Continue searching for scholarship opportunities. Take the SATs, if scheduled. November is the only testing date that offers SAT Subject Tests in a foreign language with the listening portion.

December Apply for Bright Futures. File applications with January deadlines. Politely check with teachers and counselor to be sure recommendations and transcripts have been sent. Register to receive the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE at www.collegeboard.org. Get the paper version of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and ask your parents to begin collecting tax information from the year that is ending. If you still need to take SATs or ACT, this is the last date to do so and still make January and February college application deadlines.

January - February Continue to file applications. Send transcripts to colleges. Call Admissions Offices or check online to verify that applications are complete. File the FAFSA and CSS/PROFILE using paper forms or online at www.fafsa.ed.gov and www.collegeboard.org. Watch the details and follow up wherever needed. Mail necessary financial aid documentation directly to colleges; do forms well before their deadlines to maximize financial aid. Take final SAT and/or ACT.

March - April Receive decision letters. Look over financial aid packages with your parents, and call the schools directly if you have any concerns. Talk to your counselor. If you are wait-listed, follow up with a letter of continued interest and additional information and/or recommendations. Schedule last-minute visits to colleges where you have been accepted or wait-listed. Many schools have events especially for admitted students; go, if you are able. Begin searching for summer jobs and/or internships. May 1st is the national intent-to-enroll deadline.

May Take AP exams and/or SAT Subject Tests, if scheduled, and send the scores to your final choice college. Write thank you notes to people who wrote recommendations for you. Arrange to have your final transcript sent to your college. Graduate and take a deep breath! You did it!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

1. When will I apply to college?

Students should apply for post-secondary educational opportunities during the fall of their senior year...the earlier, the better. Most colleges have a February or March deadline. However, chances for admissions are better the earlier you apply. You should plan to have all applications in to four-year universities before the winter holiday of your senior year. Early Decision and Early Action deadlines are in some cases as early as October 1st. Community colleges have an open admissions policy and will generally accept applications somewhat later.

2. What can I do between now and the time school starts in the fall to obtain information about specific colleges?

- a. References such as Peterson's Four Year Colleges, Barron's Profile of American Colleges, Fiske Guide to Colleges and The College Handbook are useful resources which list specific information, such as admissions requirements and costs. Websites you should visit include www.facts.org, www.princetonreview.com, www.collegeboard.com, and www.act.org.
- b. Contact specific schools' Offices of Admissions to request catalogs and other information. This can easily be done online.
- c. Visit the campuses of schools you are considering.
- d. Talk with friends and relatives about the schools they attended.
- e. Register online to take the ACT and/or SAT. You may register through the mail, but it takes longer.

3. How do I obtain a college application or catalog?

- a. Request this information through the specific college's website. Keywords to look for are 'Prospective Freshmen,' 'Admissions,' 'Undergraduate Admissions,' and/or 'Contact Us.'
- b. If you are considering a state supported university in Florida, you may obtain an application online at the school's website, through www.facts.org, or you may obtain a hard copy in the Guidance Office. Before you submit your application, be certain it is letter perfect!
- c. Local community college applications are also available online and in Guidance.

4. What do I need to take into consideration when filling out an application?

- a. Read directions carefully. Answer questions accurately and clearly.
- b. Fill out your application neatly. The neatness of your applications will help determine the impression you make on the admissions office representative. Copy/download the application; this is your 'working copy' or rough draft. Once completed, transfer to your final application and submit via the Internet or mail. Make sure your application is free of typos.
- c. Send along any information requested by the college. If a transcript is required, fill out a request form in the Guidance Department. (Sample request forms are included in this booklet.)
- d. Do not wait to mail your application until college entrance test scores are available. These will be sent directly to the college from the testing service, when you indicate the appropriate college code number on your SAT/ACT application.
- e. Most applications **do not** require letters of recommendation. If needed, recommendations should be requested at least **two weeks** before they are to be sent. It is best to make requests in writing and attach your resume to the request. Sample request letter and sample resumes are available in Guidance.

5. Exactly what is a transcript and what information does it include?

A transcript is a copy of your school record from grade nine through grade twelve. It includes the courses taken, semester grades, level of classes, honor point average, class rank, credits and standardized test scores. **Community service hours will also be included, if you have turned them in to your counselor.** Courses taken at previously attended high schools will be listed on your transcript, in addition to courses taken at Park Vista.

6. How do I arrange to have a transcript sent to a school?

Fill out a transcript request form in the Guidance. Electronic transcripts can be sent to public universities and colleges in Florida. Samples of those two forms are in this packet.

Fees are due at the time of request at

\$3.00 for hard copies and

\$1.00 for each electronic transcript.*

***Some exceptions do apply.**

7. Is it necessary to put my student number on the request form?

YES. To expedite your transcript request, your student number is needed.

8. What do most competitive colleges look for?

Most colleges require 18 **core** academic credits including:

- a. at least four years of English;
- b. **at least** four years of mathematics at or above the Algebra I level;
- c. **at least** three years of science;
- d. **at least** two years of social science courses;
- e. an approximate GPA of 3.0 or higher;
- f. an approximate SAT score of 1100 - 1200 or higher, combined Critical Reading and Math, out of 1600;
- g. an approximate ACT composite of 22 - 26 or higher;
- h. **at least** 2 sequential years of the same foreign language.

9. What if I don't meet the criteria listed above?

- a. Your high school graduation requirements are designed to provide a solid academic background in preparation for college entrance. Success in your required academic courses will help you compete with other candidates.
- b. Some schools, such as our Florida community colleges, have open admissions policies. This provides an opportunity for a high school graduate to enter college, regardless of test scores or GPA, as long as a high school diploma is earned.

10. What is the Talented 20 Program?

The Talented 20 is a part of the Governor's —One Florida|| initiative, which guarantees admission at one of our eleven state universities to the top 20% of each high school graduating class. To qualify, you must complete all eighteen college preparatory credits as specified in State Board of Education Rules (see www.facts.org for details), be ranked in the top 20% of your class and take the ACT or SAT. It does not, however, guarantee admission to the university of the students' choice. Students must apply to 3 state universities under traditional admission policies, and be denied admission, before enforcing the Talented 20 option. Students should see their guidance counselor for detailed information.

11. What factors should I consider when choosing a college?

- a. Area of study – Does the college offer a complete and quality program in the area you wish to study? If you are undecided, does it offer a variety of programs from which you could choose?
- b. Size – Do you prefer a large campus, or are you more comfortable in a smaller environment with a smaller student body?
- c. Location – What part of the country do you prefer? Do you feel most at ease in an urban, suburban, or rural environment?
- d. Cost – Can your family afford the tuition and fees at an expensive school? Have you considered financial aid? Are you eligible for a scholarship?

e. Athletics and extracurricular activities - What activities are important to you? Sports, student government, the arts, social organizations, religious groups? Does the school offer what you want?

f. Admissions Requirements – Is this school a realistic choice in terms of your qualifications? What are your chances for success at this school?

Students typically apply to between 4 and 7 schools. It is recommended that a student's final list include schools from each of the following categories:

Reach A student's top choice schools. It is fine to include a couple of 'long shots'. These are your "reaches."

Realistic Schools that possess the significant features a student desires and at which the probability of admission is even to slightly better than even. These are categorized as "realistic" schools.

Safety Schools that have most of the features a student desires and at which the probability of admission is "highly likely" to "certain". We refer to these as "safety" schools.

12. What is Early Decision?

If there is ONE school that you feel is best for you and your qualifications are excellent, you may want to consider applying through the early decision program. Applying early decision comes with an early application deadline, usually in October or November, and it is a **BINDING** application. In applying for early decision, students are expressing their intent to attend that particular college if accepted. Early decision applicants are required to withdraw all applications to other colleges once the early decision college has accepted the applicant. If admitted to a college on an early decision status, the student is notified before February of his/her acceptance. SAT/ACT should be taken during spring of Junior Year in order to apply for early decision. No public university in Florida has this as an option.

Even if you decide to apply to your top choice college early, please keep investigating other schools and work on other applications. Should you be deferred to the regular admissions pool, or denied admission outright to your early decision school, you want to be prepared with other options.

13. What is Early Action?

Early Action applicants also have early deadlines, and receive a determination of acceptance by the college before the typical spring notification date. However, the applicant is not required to make a commitment to enroll until a later specified date, usually May 1st. If your first choice school offers an early action choice, and you feel you are a strong candidate, you may want to consider this option. You are under no obligation to enroll if accepted. Deferred candidates are added to the regular admissions pool. SAT/ACT should be taken during spring of Junior Year in order to apply for early action. No public university in Florida has this as an option.

14. What should I do if my early application is deferred?

Every school's policy toward deferred applicants is different. It may even vary from one year to the next, depending on the number of strong, regular-deadline applications received. In addition to continuing to work on applications to other schools, you should show your first choice school that you are still interested. Send them any new information that will add to your file in a favorable way.

15. What should my resume include?

Everything you do outside of the classroom should be included on your activities resume. This includes extracurricular activities, community service, honors and awards received, interests and hobbies, summer experiences and employment. This resume needs to be detailed, easy to read and organized. You need to include precise details to show your level of involvement and responsibility to each of your activities. Go ahead and brag! You do not need to be modest on your resume. At the same time, do not lie. As busy as they are, admissions officers will notice discrepancies. The combination of your "activities and interests" and your essay(s) should paint a full and rich picture to the college admissions committees. Tell them who you are, what is important to you and what you spend your time doing.

16. What do I need to know about application essays?

Many college applications ask questions requiring short answers and also ask one or two essay questions, requiring longer answers. Frequently, you will be able to choose from several topics for your longer essay. You should read more on this subject, either online or from one of the books available in the guidance office. The most important things to remember when writing your application essays are:

- Answer the question!** Do not use one essay for every application, unless the question asked is exactly the same.
- Show, don't tell!** Write in a way that let's the reader see your great qualities. Don't just say —I love chocolate. I really love chocolate.|| Write about how you love chocolate so much that you called twelve levels of managers at Hershey before you found one who would agree to your doing a summer internship in Research and Development at their headquarters, and then lived with your mother's crazy Aunt Sally in Pennsylvania for 8 weeks while you learned everything you could about inventing new chocolate confections!
- Pick a topic that lets the reader know you.** Your grades and SAT scores are one side of who you are, but your essays need to show your qualities and personality. A school cheerleader who started coaching a Special Olympics cheer squad after neighbors asked her to babysit their handicapped 8 year-old daughter has something different to write. The math/science guy who plays bass in a retro-punk band all over the region on weekends has a unique story to tell.
- Make it personal.** This is about you, be the star of the story! Don't write about global warming or immigration reform, unless those are issues you have been actively working to solve.
- Start with a catchy first sentence.** Admissions officers read so many essays; keep them interested and reading. Make them want to know more about you.
- Keep it short.** Read the directions carefully! If the application says you may attach an extra sheet of paper, if necessary, only attach ONE extra sheet.
- DON'T underestimate the importance of good grammar. Proofread!** Typos, using the name of a different college by accident, or spelling mistakes overlooked by your spellchecker (using `_there` for `_their`, for example) are unacceptable. Readers are looking at grammar and writing ability, in addition to your topic and what you reveal about yourself.
- DON'T use gimmicks, clichés or foul language.**
- DON'T write confessions of kleptomania, pyromania, or sexual activity.**
- DON'T try to be funny, unless that is truly part of your personality.** Humor, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: TESTING

All colleges require an entrance examination. The two most often required are the SAT Reasoning Test and/or the ACT. Some colleges recommend or require SAT Subject Tests, as well.

1. What type of tests are the SAT and ACT?

The SAT Reasoning Test is designed to measure the reading, mathematical and writing abilities important for success in college. The ACT gives estimates of students' current level of educational development in knowledge and skill areas, including English usage, mathematics, reading and science, with an optional writing test available.

2. When do most high school students take the SAT or ACT?

Generally, students take the tests during the spring of their junior year and the fall of their senior year. Please see the chart on the next page for testing dates and registration deadlines.

3. May I take the SAT or ACT more than one time?

Yes, you may take the exams as many times as you wish. Most colleges will accept your highest score(s).

It is suggested that students retake the type of test that they did better in. Most students will feel more comfortable with one test or the other. There are a few colleges that will average scores after the third administration. Check with the individual colleges' websites for their particular requirements.

4. How do I know whether I should take the SAT or ACT?

Most colleges will accept either test. However, you should research the colleges you're interested in to see if there is a preferred test. If you have not made a college choice by the fall of your senior year, it is a good idea to take both tests.

5. How do I register for the SAT or ACT?

Registration packets may be picked up in the Guidance Office, with detailed directions for registration, what to expect on the test day, sample questions, and how to have scores sent to colleges. You may register online for the SAT at www.collegeboard.com and for ACT at www.actstudent.org. Applications mailed to the testing company by the registration deadline will take longer to process; be sure to send them at least 3 to 4 weeks before the deadline.

6. What are SAT Subject Tests?

Also known as SAT IIs, SAT Subject Tests are required or recommended by many selective colleges, in addition to the SAT Reasoning Test or ACT. Nearly two dozen SAT Subject Tests are offered in different academic areas, including history, literature, science, math, and foreign language. Some colleges require as many as three subject tests. Check colleges' catalogs or online for specific requirements. These tests cannot be taken on the same day as the SAT Reasoning Test. A maximum of three SAT Subject Tests may be taken on one testing date.

7. How do I register for the SAT Subject Tests?

The SAT application form allows you to register for the Reasoning Test or Subject Tests. See question 5 above.

8. Will the Guidance Department or my teachers personally remind me to take the SAT, ACT or SAT Subject Tests?

NO. It is your responsibility to obtain the application and be aware of the testing dates. Testing dates and registration deadlines are posted in the Guidance Office and included in this booklet; see the chart below for 2010 – 2011 dates.

9. What are the testing dates and registration deadlines for the SAT and ACT?

ACT Test and Registration Dates

ACT Test Dates:	Regular Registration Deadline:	Nonrefundable Late Fee Required From:
September 11, 2010	August 6, 2010	August 7 – 20, 2010
October 23, 2010	September 17, 2010	September 18 – October 1, 2010
December 11, 2010	November 5, 2010	November 6 – 19, 2010
February 12, 2011	January 7, 2011	January 8 – 21, 2011
April 9, 2011	March 4, 2011	March 5 – 18, 2011
June 11, 2011	May 6, 2011	May 7 – 20, 2011

SAT Program Test Calendar

Test Dates	Registration Dates	Late Registration Dates
October 9, 2010	September 10	September 24
November 6, 2010	October 8	October 22
December 4, 2010	November 5	November 19
January 22, 2011	December 23	January 7
March 12, 2011	February 11	February 25
May 7, 2011	April 8	April 22
June 4, 2011	May 6	May 20

***Not available at Park Vista on this date.**

NOTE: Park Vista Community High School is an SAT and ACT test center.
Always verify dates and locations through the test websites
www.collegeboard.com or www.actstudent.org,
or on your test admission ticket.

10. Which test is required by the Florida public 4-year colleges?

Florida universities accept either test.

11. Which test should I take if I plan on attending a community college?

The ACT is recommended by Florida community colleges. The English and math scores are used for correct placement in the freshman English and math classes. Out-of-state schools may have other requirements. PBCC administers the Computerized Placement Test (CPT), if you haven't taken the SAT or ACT. Your score on the CPT provides information about your skill level in reading, English and mathematics.

12. How do I get my SAT & ACT scores sent to a college?

There is a place on SAT & ACT applications to indicate the college(s) to which you wish your scores to be sent. You may request additional colleges after taking the test by using an —Additional Score Report|| form that comes with your admissions ticket. It is also obtainable from the Guidance Office. The easiest way to have additional colleges receive your test scores is through the testing service's website.

13. Will your high school receive a copy of all test scores?

It is very important that your school receive a copy of your results. Be sure to enter your high school code on the registration application. Test scores will then be posted on your transcript.

Park Vista Community High School's code is 101923.

14. What is the CLEP?

The CLEP, or College Level Examination Program, allows students to earn credit by examination. Many colleges do not give credit for the CLEP. However, they may use the results for placement. Check your college catalog for specifics. The Bright Futures Scholarship used to require CLEP tests as part of its acceptance procedure. This was repealed by the Florida Legislature in 2003. For current Bright Futures requirements please check with your college choice for information or visit www.firn.edu/doe/brfuture.

15. What is an AP test?

The AP, or Advanced Placement test, provides a means by which a secondary school student may demonstrate his/her readiness to take advanced courses as an entering college freshman. Many colleges award credit for an AP exam of 3 or above. The score which must be earned to receive credit is the decision of the individual college. *Most highly competitive colleges require a score of 4 or above. If you take an AP course at school, you will take the AP test for that class in the spring and will receive your score in July. You must request that your score be sent to a college at the time you take the exam or call (609) 771-7300 or (888) 225-5427 (toll-free in the U.S. and Canada) after you take the exam. More information is available at www.collegeboard.com.

AP Exam Dates for School Year 2010 – 2011 are in May, 2011.

16. Is there a way to compare the scores of the ACT and the SAT?

Please see the Florida Department of Education chart on the next page for a general comparison.

17. Is there a best time to take these tests?

If you are considering applying Early Decision or Early Action to a very selective college, it is best to take the SAT Reasoning Test and/or the ACT in the spring of your junior year. If you are going to take the test more than once, you should retest in the late spring of junior year or in the fall of senior year. SAT Subject Tests cover particular academic subjects, and the best time to take those is while the course material is fresh in your mind. Therefore, the June test date at the end of junior year is usually optimal.

18. Is there anything else I should know about testing?

The earlier you register to take a standardized test, the better your chance of being able to take it at your first choice testing location. The later you register, even within the registration window, the more likely it is you will have to drive to your second or third choice testing center.

SAT vs ACT Score Comparisons

SAT Composite Score (Verbal & Math)	ACT Composite Score
1600	36
1560-1590	35
1510-1550	34
1460-1500	33
1410-1450	32
1360-1400	31
1320-1350	30
1280-1310	29
1240-1270	28
1210-1230	27
1170-1200	26
1130-1160	25
1090-1120	24
1060-1080	23
1020-1050	22
980-1010	21
940-970	20
900-930	19
860-890	18
810-850	17
760-800	16
710-750	15
660-700	14
590-650	13
520-580	12
500-510	11

Source: College Board, Data Extrapolated

**PARK VISTA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL
COLLEGE TRANSCRIPT REQUEST**

Please allow 72 hours for your transcript materials to be prepared.

STUDENT NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

STUDENT #: _____ **SOCIAL SECURITY#:** _____

Student Phone #: _____ * **Payment is due upon request** *

_____ **SEND ELECTRONICALLY NOW \$1.00 each**

(Any Florida Public

University or Community College)

_____ **MAIL FOR ME \$3.00 each**

(please list schools below with complete mailing

address)

_____ **I WILL PICK**

UP & mail myself \$3.00 each

(please indicate # of transcripts needed)

SEND ELECTRONICALLY for \$1.00 (additional schools on back)

Please check the box next to the college(s) where you would like your transcript sent

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Florida A & M University
(I00014800001) | <input type="checkbox"/> Palm Beach Community College
(I00015120000) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Florida Atlantic University
(I00014810000) | <input type="checkbox"/> University of Central Florida
(I00039540000) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Florida Gulf Coast University
(I00325530000) | <input type="checkbox"/> University of Florida
(I00015350000) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Florida International University
(I00096350000) | <input type="checkbox"/> University of North Florida
(I00098410000) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Florida State University
(I00014890000) | <input type="checkbox"/> University of South Florida
(I00015370000) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> University of West Florida
(I00039550000) |

PLEASE MAIL FOR ME (Private & Out of State) for \$3.00

(please provide complete mailing

1) College: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

2) College: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

3) College: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: _____ **Time Received:** _____ **Transmission Date:** _____ **Mail Date:** _____

Transcript to Student: _____ **Time:** _____ **Fee paid \$** _____ **Sent by:** _____

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: COLLEGE CAMPUS VISITS

1. Do your homework before visiting the college. You want to go there as an informed prospective student. Either read the viewbook or look at the school's website.

Important things to discover before your visit include:

- Size – undergraduate and total; percentage of males and females
- Type – private, public, two or four year, coed or not, religious affiliation
- College terms – semester, quarter, trimester, winter term available, study abroad, etc.
- Accreditation – regional and professional
- Admissions criteria – required high school courses, SAT or ACT minimum scores, recommended or required grade point average (GPA), class rank, extra-curricular activities, recommendations required
- Cost – tuition, books, room, board, travel, miscellaneous, personal
- Financial aid – scholarships available (especially —no need|| or merit variety), loans, academic, athletic or artistic scholarships, required forms to apply for aid.
- Deadlines – for admissions and financial aid applications
- Teaching Assistants or Professors – who actually teaches the undergraduate classes?
- What is the average class size? What is the faculty-student ratio?
- Housing – deadlines, types and locations, deposits and refund policies
- Programs of study – majors, double majors, minors, accelerated programs
- Credit by examination – AP, IB, CLEP, institutional
- Foreign language – requirements to get your degree
- Deposit – to hold your place in class (refundable?)
- Miscellaneous – Co-op Program available, study abroad, special services, early action, early decision, dual enrollment, special graduation requirements (e.g. must attend a summer session), campus maintenance, etc.

2. **If you will miss school to visit a college, please make sure to bring back a signed document from the college to excuse your absence. Students are allowed up to 5 days of excused absences for college visits.

3. What else should I do?

- Write down any questions that you have that you could not answer with your research. Have those handy for when you are on your campus visit.
- If you are interested in a particular department or major, find out if you can take a tour specific to their facilities while you are on campus. Make those arrangements and write down the name and phone number of that contact person. Write down where and when that tour will take place.
- You might want to download and print directions to the Admissions building from the school's website.
- If you will be touring a few schools in a short period of time, you might want to take photos while on your tours. Looking at the photos later will help you remember important features of each school.

4. Do campus representatives ever come to Park Vista?

YES. Check in guidance weekly and listen for announcements. Interested students **must sign up at least 3 days** in advance in guidance.

COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

(Please make copies, if needed.)

College Name

College Name

LOCATION

- Distance from home

SIZE

- Enrollment
- Physical size of campus

ENVIRONMENT

- Type of School (2yr or 4 yr)
- School setting urban
rural
- Location & size of nearest city
- Co-ed, male/female
- Religious affiliation

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Deadline
- Tests required
- Average test scores, GPA, rank
- Notification

ACADEMICS

- Your major offered
- Special requirements
- Accreditation
- Student-Faculty ratio
- Typical class size

COLLEGE EXPENSES

- Tuition, room, board
- Estimated total budget
- Application fee, deposit

FINANCIAL AID

CAMPUS VISIT WORKSHEET
(Please make copies, if needed. One for each school you visit.)

College/University

Visitation Date

Admissions Contact

Financial Aid Contact

1. Try to visit during the week when you will be able to observe normal daily activities. Check when the college vacations occur – they are usually different from ours.
2. If possible, attend a class in the academic area in which you plan to major.

Comments:

3. Take a campus tour, if possible, with a student already attending the college. Be sure to see the following: Dorms, library, dining hall (eat there), student center, classrooms, and recreational/athletic facilities.

Comments:

4. Find out about campus and public transportation, if you will not have your own car. Some schools do not allow freshmen to have cars on campus. Find out the details!

Comments:

5. Ask the questions you need or want answered. Some things to consider:
 - a. Are faculty members easy to reach outside of class?
 - b. Do most people graduate in four years?
 - c. Do many people bring their laptop computers to class?
 - d. What do students do for fun?
 - e. How big a deal are the fraternities and sororities to this school's social life?
 - f. Do many people leave campus for the weekends?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: FINANCIAL AID

1. How does financial aid work?

Financial aid comes in a variety of forms: scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study programs. A majority of financial aid programs are funded by the federal government. Please go to <http://studentaid.ed.gov> for details on all the U.S. Department of Education financial aid programs. Financial aid can also come directly from the college you attend or from independent sources.

- Students seldom receive all the financial aid that they qualify for.**
- Seventy percent (70%) of all college students will need some financial assistance.**

a. Loans – Loans may come from the federal government by way of the university, or from private financial institutions. Money is loaned to the student or to his/her parents. Interest rates for most educational loans are very reasonable.

b. Work-Study Programs – These programs allow students to work part-time to earn money toward their education while they're going to school. Students usually work on campus and may get a job that is related to their field of study.

c. Scholarships and Grants – These are 'gift' monies given to the students from a variety of sources. They do not have to be repaid.

2. How do I apply for financial aid?

First, submit admission applications to the schools you are considering. When requesting an admissions application, also request the school's aid application and any information they can send you about expenses and student aid. You may be able to request a financial aid application directly from the school's website. Fill out the aid application and return it by the school's deadline.

3. What forms are necessary when applying for financial aid?

In order to apply for financial aid, your parents must fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In addition, some colleges will require the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE (available in Guidance) or their own individualized form, if you want to apply for funds from the school itself. Financial aid each year will be based on your and your parents' previous year's income tax information.

4. What form should I use, even if I don't think I am eligible for aid?

Use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for all schools, which is available in Guidance at the beginning of December. You may also fill this form out on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The FAFSA should be submitted after Jan. 1st. Also, contact each school you're applying to about additional required forms. Apply for financial aid. You'd be surprised.

5. Where do I find information about available scholarships?

- Write or email colleges for available scholarships specific to that school.
- Check with parents' employers for scholarships they may sponsor.
- Read the Scholarship Bulletin every week and look for opportunities for which you are eligible.
- There are lots of websites with scholarship information. Please see a partial listing on page 22 of this packet.

6. Where can I obtain additional information?

The U. S. Department of Education publishes a free student guide: Call 1-800-4-FED-AID for a copy. Visit the websites listed in this packet on page 22.

7. What is the Bright Future Scholarship?

—Bright Futures refers to a State of Florida scholarship program for students who continue their post-secondary education in the State of Florida. See pages 19, 20 and 21 for criteria. In order to apply for this scholarship and other state scholarships, the student must fill out the Florida Financial Aid Application. **Students must apply at online beginning December 1st of their senior year.** The Bright Futures Scholarship Program can also be reached by calling **1-888-827-2004** or on line at www.firn.edu/doe/brfutures.

* Bright Futures requires student SAT and/or ACT scores, as well as social security number, date of birth and community service hours. This information must be entered into the transcript. This is the responsibility of the student to have standardized test scores sent to Park Vista. It is suggested that each student order a transcript to verify accuracy of this information.

9. What are the eligibility requirements for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program?

There are three levels of awards, Florida Academic Scholars, Florida Medallion Scholars, and Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars. Each level has its own award amount, GPA requirement, required high school credits, community service hours, and SAT or ACT scores. The Florida Legislature is authorized to change these requirements. Please check www.firn.edu/doe/brfutures for the most up-to-date eligibility requirements. Requirements for the Class of 2011 are listed on the next few pages of this packet, as copied from myfloridaeducation.com.

10. Can the Bright Futures Scholarship Program be used in addition to the Florida Prepaid College Plan?

You should talk to a financial aid officer of the college you would like to attend. However, the Florida Department of Education Bright Futures' brochure for 2011 graduates says the Bright Futures scholarship award —can be used to cover the college expenses your prepaid plan does not cover.||

11. What are the Pathfinder Awards? How much money are they worth?

— Pathfinder High School Scholarship Awards are presented each year to seniors in Palm Beach and Martin Counties who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in 18 academic, vocational and athletic categories.|| College scholarships in the amounts of between \$2,500 and \$750 are given by the Palm Beach Newspapers, Inc. (Parent company of the Palm Beach Post, Daily News, La Palma and Pennysaver newspapers.) Each high school may submit one candidate per category; a student cannot be nominated in more than one category.

Nomination packages with supplemental materials are due in January, with judging in March and awards given in early May. Judges are selected by the Palm Beach Post from both the public and private sectors of our community; three judges per category, based on their credentials and expertise.

The eighteen categories are: Academic Excellence, Art, Business, Communications, Community Involvement, Computer Science, Drama, Foreign Language, Forensics/Speech, History/Political Science, Literature, Mathematics, Music/Instrumental, Music/Vocal, Reach for Excellence, Science, Sports, and Technical/Vocational/Agricultural.

12. What is the deal with scholarship scams?

You should **be wary of any offer that guarantees or promises scholarship money** or low-interest loans. Most of these scams require you to pay an up-front processing fee in return for their finding you scholarship money. Legitimate scholarship search websites will never require you to pay a fee and there are no guarantees that you will win any scholarship you apply for. Legitimate scholarship search engines, like www.scholarships.com, www.collegeview.com or others listed on page 22, may ask you to register a user name and password. They may ask for contact information or require you to look at advertisements. They will not ask, and you should never give, any financial information such as credit card numbers or bank account information. You should not give your social security number to scholarship search websites.

BRIGHT FUTURES/FLORIDA ACADEMIC SCHOLARS AWARD

Award Level - *Amounts will differ at quarter or clock hour institutions

1. **Public Institution** - an amount approximately equal to 100% of tuition (actually less).

2. **Private Institution** - Fixed award amount based on approximately 100% of the average tuition covered at a comparable Florida public institution.

Grade Point Average (GPA) - (Note: GPAs are not rounded.)

1. Weighting for more challenging higher level courses is prescribed by law as .50 per course per year
2. 3.5 weighted GPA using the credits listed below, combined with the test scores and community service hours listed below.

Required Credits

See the **Comprehensive Course Table** to identify courses that count toward each award level.

Courses must include 15 credits of college preparatory academic courses.

- 4 English (3 with substantial writing)
- 2 Mathematics (Algebra I and above)
- 2 Natural Science (2 with substantial lab)
- 2 Social Science
- 2 Foreign Language (in the same language)

Total of 15 Credits May use up to three additional credits from courses in the academic areas listed above and/or AP, IB, or AICE fine arts courses to raise the GPA.

Community Service - 75 hours, as approved by the district or private school

Test Scores

1. Best composite score of 1270 SAT I/SAT Reasoning Test (1280 for SY 2013 and 1290 for SY 2014) based on the combined Critical Reading and Math sections only or 28 ACT (29 for SY 2014)
2. The new written subtests for both the SAT and ACT will not be used in the composite
3. SAT Subject Tests exams are not used for Bright Futures eligibility
4. ACT scores are rounded up for scores with .5 and higher; SAT scores do not require rounding
5. Subsections of the SAT or ACT from different test dates may be used to meet the test criteria
6. For spring eligibility evaluations, test dates through January 31 will be admissible
7. For summer eligibility evaluations, test dates through June 30 will be admissible

Other Ways to Qualify

The other ways to qualify listed below must also meet the community service hour's requirement.

1. National Merit or Achievement Scholars and Finalists
2. National Hispanic Scholars
3. IB Diploma Recipients
4. Students who have completed the IB Curriculum with best composite score of 1270 SAT or 28 ACT
5. AICE Diploma Recipients
6. Students who have completed the AICE Curriculum with best composite score of 1270 SAT or 28 ACT
7. Students who have attended a home education program according to s. 1002.41, F.S., registered with the district during grades 11 and 12, and have a best composite score of 1270 SAT or 28 ACT
8. GED with best composite score of 1270 SAT or 28 ACT and a 3.5 weighted GPA in the above 15 required credits
9. Early Admissions with best composite score of 1270 SAT or 28 ACT and a 3.5 weighted GPA in curriculum courses completed
10. 3-year standard college preparatory program with best composite score of 1270 SAT or 28 ACT and a 3.5 weighted GPA in the above 15 required credits

BRIGHT FUTURES/FLORIDA MEDALLION SCHOLARS AWARD

Award Level - *Amounts will differ at quarter or clock hour institutions

1. **Public Institution** - an amount approximately equal to 75% of tuition (100% if used at a community college).
2. **Private Institution** - Fixed award amount based on approximately 75% of the average tuition and fees covered at a comparable Florida public institution prorated by term and hours.

Grade Point Average (GPA) - (Note: GPAs are not rounded.)

1. Weighting for more challenging higher level courses is prescribed by law as .50 per course per year
2. 3.0 weighted GPA using the credits and test score listed below.

Required Credits

See the **Comprehensive Course Table** to identify courses that count toward each award level.

Courses must include 15 credits of college preparatory academic courses.

- 4 English (3 with substantial writing)
- 4 Mathematics (Algebra I and above)
- 3 Natural Science (2 with substantial lab)
- 3 Social Science
- 2 Foreign Language (in the same language)
- Total of 15 Credits** - May use up to three additional credits from courses in the academic areas listed above and/or AP, or IB, or AICE fine arts courses to raise the GPA

Community Service - No requirement

Test Scores

1. Best composite score of 970 SAT Reasoning Test (980 SY 2012, 1020 SY 2013 and 1050 SY 2014) based on the combined Critical Reading and Math sections only) or 20 ACT (21 SY 2012, 22 SY 2013 and 23 SY 2014)
2. The new writing sections for both the SAT and ACT will not be used in the composite
3. SAT Subject Tests exams are not used for Bright Futures eligibility
4. ACT scores are rounded up for scores with .5 and higher; SAT scores do not require rounding
5. Subsections of the SAT or ACT from different test dates may be used to meet the test criteria
6. For spring eligibility evaluations, test dates through January 31 will be admissible
7. For summer eligibility evaluations, test dates through June 30 will be admissible

Other Ways to Qualify

1. National Merit or Achievement Scholars and Finalists and National Hispanic Scholars who have not completed 75 hours of community service
2. Students who have completed the IB Curriculum with best composite score of 970 SAT or 20 ACT
3. Students who have completed the AICE Curriculum with best composite score of 970 SAT or 20 ACT
4. Students who have attended a home education program according to s. 1002.41, F.S., registered with the district during grades 11 and 12, and have a best composite score of 1070 SAT or 23 ACT
5. GED with best composite score of 970 SAT or 20 ACT and a 3.0 weighted GPA in the above 15 required credits
6. Early Admissions with best composite score of 970 SAT or 20 ACT and a 3.0 weighted GPA in curriculum courses completed
7. 3-year standard college preparatory program with best composite score of 970 SAT or 20 ACT and a 3.0 weighted GPA in the above 15 required credits

BRIGHT FUTURES/FLORIDA GOLD SEAL VOCATIONAL SCHOLARS AWARD

Award Level - *Amounts will differ at quarter or clock hour institutions

1. **Public Institution** - an amount approximately equal to 75% of tuition.

2. **Private Institution** - Fixed award amount based on 75% of the average tuition and fees covered by comparable Florida public institutions, prorated by term and hours.

Grade Point Average (GPA) (Note: GPAs are not rounded.)

1. Weighted for more challenging higher level courses is prescribed by law as .50 per course per year

2. 3.0 weighted GPA using the 15.5 core credits required for high school graduation with a 4-year diploma (listed below), and a 3.5 unweighted GPA in a minimum of three vocational credits in one vocational program, and test scores listed below.

Required Credits

See the Comprehensive Course Table to identify courses that count toward each award level

Credits must be in the 15.5 core credits required for high school graduation with a 4-year diploma.

- 4 English
- 4 Mathematics
- 3 Natural Science
- 3 Social Science (Am. Hist., World Hist., Am. Govt. and Economics)
- 1 Practical Arts; OR 1 Performing Arts; OR .5 credit in each
- .5 Life Management Skills
- .5 Personal Fitness
- .5 Physical Education
- Total of 15.5 Credits**
- Plus a minimum of three Vocational Job-Preparatory or Technology Education Program credits in one vocational program

Community Service - No requirement

Test Scores

1. SAT or ACT. Composite scores are not accepted. A student must qualify on the ACT alone, the SAT alone, or the CPT alone. Test types cannot be combined.

CPT:

Reading 83
Sentence Skills 83
Algebra 72

OR

SAT Reasoning:

Critical Reading 440
Math 440

OR

ACT:

English 17
Reading 18
Math 19

2. For spring eligibility evaluations, test dates through January 31 will be

admissible. For summer eligibility evaluations, test dates through June 30 will be

admissible. Subsections of the SAT, ACT, or CPT from different test dates may be used to meet the test criteria

Other Ways to Qualify

1. The other ways to qualify listed below must also include a 3.5 unweighted GPA in a minimum of three vocational credits in one vocational program and minimum test scores listed above

2. GED with 3.0 weighted **GPA** using the core credits required for your selected high school graduation option (standard, career, or college)

HELPFUL WEBSITES

General Information & Research

What are your needs and wants with regard to college? What is the best learning environment for you? What do certain colleges offer?

1. At Adventures in Education, www.aie.org, you'll find news about the college experience from national publications, financial aid timelines and answers to frequently asked college-planning questions in both English and Spanish.
2. Looking to go to college outside the United States? www.braintrack.com has contact information for more than 8,000 universities around the world.
3. If you want a feel for a campus before you visit—or a reminder of the campus you saw in a rushed tour—try Campus Tours, www.campustours.com. Here, you can search for a school and access its virtual tour, Web site, photographs and map.
4. Sort between myths and reality at www.collegeispossible.org. College Is Possible (CIP) is the American Council on Education's K–16 youth development program that motivates middle and high school students from underserved communities to seek a college education.
5. Helpful publications for anyone seeking information on higher education are available to preview or purchase at www.fiskeguide.com.
6. At the Next Step Magazine's site, www.nextstepmagazine.com, you can check out the College Match Wizard, which lets you search for schools that match your criteria. Create a profile of yourself, and send it to college recruiters. You can also read about more than 100 different careers.
7. Want to attend a National College Fair? Check out the National Association for College Admission Counseling, www.nacacnet.org, for dates and locations.
8. Peterson's Guide, www.petersons.com is a portal that will lead you to SAT prep programs, financial aid, and admissions essay help!
9. Explore schools and careers, improve your test scores, and find out about scholarships at www.princetonreview.com. After registering, be sure to try —Counselor-o-Matic|| to

find schools that match your grades and important criteria.

Financial Aid

1. Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Every student looking for aid must check this site. www.fafsa.ed.gov. Required viewing for parents, too!
2. After a brief registration process, www.fastweb.com, will direct you to a list of scholarships and internships for which you may be eligible. You can also opt to receive email reminders when scholarship application deadlines approach.
3. For a good estimate of your EFC (Expected Family Contribution), go to www.finaid.org and use their free online EFC calculator. You can also calculate what your future monthly loan payments will be at this site, dependent on how much you borrow for school.
4. Log onto www.tcci.naviance.com/pvchs to search for scholarship opportunities and college information
5. Check out the Latino College Expo's scholarship (deadline is in March) at www.latinocollegeexpo.org. Details on the next Latino College Expo, held in April, where you can meet representatives from more than 100 colleges are available there, also.

6. On student-loan lender Nellie Mae's Website, www.nelliemae.com, you can learn about and apply for student loans, and learn how to borrow money wisely.

7. Saving, schmaving, right? Wrong. You need to start planning for college expenses early, and www.savingforcollege.com can help you decipher your options. They do not sell investments or offer individual investment advice.

8. The Federal Student Aid site, <http://studentaid.ed.gov>, is a Department of Education-run site that has detailed college-planning timelines, access to the online version of the FAFSA, and all kinds of tips for borrowing money (and paying it back).

Testing

1. Check the official American College Testing, ACT, page, www.act.org, for registration information, tips, fees, and answers to your most-asked questions.
2. Register for the SAT, answer sample test questions, confirm test dates, and get requirements at the official College Board site, www.collegeboard.com. The college search feature is a great way to begin exploring colleges!

Florida-Specific Information

1. **Florida Academic Counseling and Tracking for Students (FACTS):** www.facts.org will help you determine career objectives, learn about higher education opportunities in Florida, apply to college online, choose the right major, access college transcripts, and more.
2. **Florida Prepaid College Board:** www.florida529plans.com Information on the Prepaid College Plan and the College Investment Plan. They are both sponsored by the State of Florida and are managed by the Florida Prepaid College Board.
3. **Florida Department of Education:** www.fldoe.org Provides information and links to Florida's public and independent colleges and universities, and access to a variety of grant, scholarship, and loan programs.
4. **Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program:** www.firn.edu/doe/brfutures This Florida Lottery-funded scholarship rewards students for their academic achievements during high school by providing funding for them to pursue postsecondary educational and career goals in Florida.

5. **Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA):** www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/osfahomepg.htm OSFA serves as the administrator of Florida's scholarship and grant programs. This site provides students and parents access to student financial aid programs information. In addition, visitors can view application requirements and procedures, monitor award status, and authorized certifiers can perform administrative responsibilities.

Career Information

1. Want to talk to an adult working in the type of career you might like after college? Apply to get an e-mentor (you'll talk over e-mail instead of in person) at www.netmentors.org.
2. At www.readyminds.com, you can sign up for your own personal career counselor. Your counselor can help you determine your strengths, a major that will fit your interests and career ideas for after graduation. This is a fee-based service.

U. S. Military Recruiters

At these sites, you can talk to recruiters, learn about the educational benefits service people receive, read diaries from active service men and women and discover the types of jobs available.

Air Force ROTC: www.afrotc.com

Air National Guard: www.goang.com

Army National Guard www.arng.army.mil

Naval ROTC:
<https://www.nrotc.navy.mil/>

U.S. Air Force: www.airforce.com

U.S. Army: www.goarmy.com

U.S. Coast Guard: www.gocoastguard.com

U.S. Navy: www.navy.com

U.S. Marines: www.marines.com

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□ Cohen, Katherine, Ph.D., *Rock Hard Apps*, New York, NY, Hyperion Books, 2003.

□ Fiske, Edward B., and Hammond, Bruce G., *The Fiske Guide to Getting into the Right College*, New York, NY, Random House, 1999.

□ Rogers, Brandon, *10 Things You Gotta Know about Paying for College*, New York, NY, Spark Publishing, 2005.

□ Websites listed in this pamphlet were also used for collecting specific information and were checked for functionality, May 2006.

NOTES TO REMEMBER:

This document, with functioning links to websites, is also available online at www.pvchs.com and through Edline.