Work Study Mentor Handbook

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ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is intended to be a *living reference*. That is, it may change and evolve throughout the year. There may be additions or new policies as the program developments. The purpose of this handbook is to clearly outline and define the policies and expectations so that you can begin your year with complete knowledge of the guidelines you have agreed to. Although this is designed to be a reference tool, please contact the Program Coordinator if you ever have a question regarding the regulations or consequences contained in this handbook.

GO CENTER INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

Go Centers

Go Centers provide students with access to information about higher education, while also reaching out to those who may not have previously considered continuing their education beyond high school. More than a clearinghouse of information, they are centers of energy around which students, parents and educators can explore new and exciting options for the future.

Each school that establishes a Go Center is immediately connected to a statewide network of resources and a body of individuals committed to educating the youth of Texas and preparing them to excel in higher education and life beyond the classroom. The Go Center is open to all students on each school campus. Students spend time exploring career options, researching colleges and training opportunities, and learning how to adequately prepare for college during their high school years. Eleventh and twelfth graders spend time getting ready for life after high school by preparing for the SAT/ACT tests, researching scholarships, researching and applying for specific colleges and training programs, and applying for financial aid.

G-Force

The Go Center is the physical hub of energy for college preparation activities and creating a college-going culture within the school. In order to reach out to the student body, a group of students is selected on each campus to be trained as peer educators regarding the career exploration, college preparation, and financial aid processes. This group of students is referred to as the G-Force and is responsible for conducting campus outreach activities as well as working one-on-one with their peers in the Go Center. In addition, higher education institutions have formed their own G-Force teams to assist area high schools with their Go Centers.

COLLEGIATE G-FORCE PROGRAM

A cornerstone strategy is a network of Go Centers in high schools that provide college-going information, motivation, and assistance to students and their families. Over 200 Go Centers have been created since 2003.

Traditional Go Centers are located in educational settings. They generally are located on high school campuses, but can also be found on middle school and/or college/university campuses. ***Satellite*** Go Centers are located in non-educational settings. These can be found in public libraries, local workforce centers, or community centers. ***Mobile*** Go Centers are contained in vehicles outfitted with computers, printers, and internet connectivity. They travel to nontraditional settings (i.e., festivals, sporting events, supermarket or mall parking lots, and schools that do not have Go Centers).

The Collegiate *G-Force* is the peer education component of the Go Center strategy that utilizes students—both high school and college students—and/or volunteers to facilitate the dissemination of the college-going message. The Collegiate G-Force is responsible for mentoring high school students, as well as actively engaging in promotional activities developed to draw students to the Go Centers where college-going activities are the focus (i.e., admission application and FAFSA completion). The G-Force works under the guidance of a designated G-Force Sponsor or On-Site Supervisor. Go Centers must be open during the bulk of the school day and staffed by trained personnel, including some affiliated with the host school and others from the partnering Institute of Higher Education.

The support of college students is invaluable because these college students serve as role models to younger students in their communities, and they often have the ability to engage students that otherwise would be overlooked by the public and/or higher education system.

Anticipated Outcomes

Project outcomes for G-Force mentors include:

- Increased participation of college students in Go Center activities and college-going outreach efforts
- Increase graduation/transfer rates of Collegiate G-Force mentors
- Continued academic success of Collegiate G-Force mentors based on continued academic progress/retention

Project outcomes for High School mentors:

- Increased participation in Go Center activities
- Increased college-going rates at targeted high schools by at least 5% every year

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mentors

Mentors are assigned to a participating campus to assist on site supervisors with already established college access initiatives. They are required to provide college information to students and parents. Mentors should review their schedule with their designated site supervisor and determine a set time when they will be on campus throughout the week (i.e. Monday, Wednesday, Friday from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.)

Mentors will:

- Set weekly schedule with Site Supervisor.
- Prepare timesheets
- Provide individual and/or small group academic advising and college preparation to diverse student populations.
- Plan, organize, and/or implement college prep activities and events including college admission, financial aid, test prep, and career exploration.
- Assist students with researching career, financial aid, and higher education options.
- Research activities and curriculum to engage students.
- Preparation for events, activities, and presentations.
- Develop G-Force program and recruit participants.
- Mentors will ensure that all students that come into the GO Center have signed in properly and mark/notate all items they are there to accomplish.
- Keep accurate data and record keeping of GO Center activities
- Mentors will collect data biweekly and submit the information to designated staff.
- Promote higher education to every student!

On-Site Supervisor

On-Site Supervisors will provide guidance and assistance to mentors in order to adequately serve the campus.
The On-Site Supervisor will:

Provide Campus Access

- Identification (i.e. obtain campus ID, access to students)
- Parking Permits or designation of parking information
- Computer Access
- Introduction of mentor to faculty and staff

Review of Timesheets

- Review and sign on a weekly basis (see sample attachment)
- Notation of actual time and date (i.e. 9/2/08 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.)
- Notation of hours
- Notation of activity (direct service hours vs. indirect/training hours)
- Correct addition and calculation of hours

Training

- Please encourage mentors to attend any training opportunities on your campus that will help them understand and serve your campus efficiently

Discipline

- Report to the Program Coordinator via email or phone call if mentor:
  -does not report for service on their regular scheduled day
  -has not called in a timely manner
  -does not present timesheets for signature at the end of the week
  -exhibits inappropriate behavior

Evaluation

- Perform Mid Term and End of Term mentor evaluation
- Program Coordinator will contact you on a monthly basis to review mentor progress and address any concerns you might have

Program Coordinator

Program Coordinator will oversee and implement the Work Study Mentorship Program.

Supervision

- Meet with the Site Supervisor and mentor on a monthly basis.
- Address any issues, questions, or concerns during the time of service in a timely manner.

Meetings/Trainings

- Will provide ongoing college preparation trainings including quarterly meetings and team building retreats
- Will meet with mentors on a regular basis and keep them informed of scheduled outreach events and activities

Administration

- Collect timesheets and verify mentor hours.

Site Visits

- Perform regular schedule site visits
- Conduct mentor performance evaluations to review mentor progress through formal evaluations at mid-term and end-term.

GO CENTER TIMELINE

The following information is intended as a general guide or framework for Go Center activity. For specific details on working with students at each grade level, be sure to refer to the checklist books.

September

- Testing
- Common Application
- College Admission Process
- Prepare the Go Center for upcoming year; make sure center is stocked with appropriate materials (especially PSAT, SAT and ACT registration forms) and the computers are functioning well
- Develop marketing plan for the Go Center – How will you get the word out to freshmen and new students? What events do you have planned for the fall semester?
- Post SAT and ACT test dates and registration deadlines; make sure Go Center is well stocked with registration packets and practice booklets
- Guide students through the career exploration process
- Assist students in exploring college options – visit college websites, look through college catalogs and guidebooks, organize college visits
- Post information about local college fairs
- Post early admission deadlines for local colleges
- Use 'College Application Checklist' with seniors to guide them through the college application process; keep this checklist in student file and review with each Go Center visit

October

- Parent Information Sessions
- Assist students in researching scholarships and financial aid on the Web
- Continue guiding seniors with 'College Application Checklist' (use in every visit with seniors)
- Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation with 11th -12th graders
- Continue college exploration
- Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders

November

- Speaker Series
- Career Development
- Field Trips
- Assist individual students requesting college catalogs, admissions requirements, and financial aid for colleges of interest
- Continue researching and applying for scholarships
- Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation
- Continue college exploration
- Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders

December/January

- Data Collection/Reporting
- Student Follow up
- Scholarship and Financial Aid Review
- Community Service Opportunities
- Collect information for mid-year report to P-16 Field Specialist/Regional Supervisor through database
- Continue assisting students with scholarship/ financial aid research
- Continue assisting students with the college application process
- Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation
- Continue college exploration
- Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders
- Prepare Go Center for spring semester; make sure center is stocked with appropriate materials i.e. FAFSA forms and Texas Common Applications in both English and Spanish
- Develop marketing plan and activities for Financial Aid Month in February
- Register for PIN (Personal Identification Number)

February

- **FINANCIAL AID MONTH** – Coordinate activities to have seniors complete and submit their FAFSA (encourage students to submit applications online, but allow them to take a hard copy home to complete beforehand)
- Financial Aid/Scholarship
- Financial Aid Saturdays
- Check in with senior students to make sure they have taken the SAT/ACT, have completed and submitted the FAFSA form online, and have identified 3 colleges to which they will apply
- Continue using the 'College Application Checklist' to guide seniors (see sample attachment)

March/April

- College Orientation
- Student Follow up
- Support seniors as they complete college admission applications and FAFSA forms; encourage them to submit copies of their college acceptance letters for file and possible display in Go Center if desired

- Support seniors as they choose the college that is best for them
- Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders
- Continue college exploration

May

- Transition Activity
- End of Year Recognition Ceremonies
- Reporting
- Brainstorm for Upcoming Year
- Continue supporting seniors as they make choices about life after high school
- Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders
- Collect information for end-of-year report to Regional Coordinator (see form)

June/July

- Encourage students to:
- Visit colleges and universities of interest
- Volunteer in the community
- Find a summer job or internship in field of interest

Building Relationships with School Personnel

- Meet with key staff, teachers, introduce yourself to other outreach programs.
- Identify you role and responsibilities
- Be accessible and visible
- Attend a staff meeting to introduce yourself and let them know of what services you can provide
- Collaborate with already existing programs

BASIC GUIDELINES

While each Go Center establishes its own operational process, many schools have asked for some basic guidelines on how the mentoring process should take place. The following outline is a general guide based on discussions with several Go Centers.

Typical Process for a G-Force Mentor when meeting with a Student

Step 1: Arrive at the Go Center

- Ensure student signs in
- Organize any needed materials for session

Step 2: Meet with the Student

- Assess needs (ask student if they need help and in what area)
- Explain general process, if applicable

Step 3: Provide the Student with Basic Information

- Hard copy
- Online version from CollegeforTexans.com

Step 4: Introduce College Checklist

- Indicate appropriate tasks
- Support the student and make it fun

Step 5: Determine Actions and Appropriate Tools

- Develop next steps
- Identify tools that will facilitate tasks

Step 6: Facilitate the Process

- Follow up with the student on agreed assignments
- Provide additional assistance as needed
- Provide appropriate referrals to more qualified individuals as needed

Step 7: Document

- Complete required documentation of activity

NOTE: G-Force mentors are NOT counselors, they are simply facilitators of the process who provide very general information, motivate students to act on that information, help them get started in the process and then refer them to the appropriate resource person for more difficult issues. When peer mentors are able to answer many of the more general questions, the counselor can focus on more difficult issues.

HIGH SCHOOL G-FORCE

Purpose

G-Force is a network of students/volunteers committed to achieving a college-going culture by supporting Go Center efforts.

Developing a G-Force

It is suggested that the school recruit 10 students to serve as the charter mentors of the G-Force. The students must meet the general requirements for G-Force mentors. It is also recommended that the school consider the following additional suggestions:

1. *Choose students from all grade levels.* The older students will provide maturity while the younger students will provide continuity. This also helps sustain the group without the need for constant training. The recommendation is to have at least 2 G-Force Mentors from each grade level.
2. *Choose students from a variety of backgrounds and/or peer groups.* By diversifying your initial group you will be able to reach a larger portion of the student body.
3. *Choose several students who will be first-generation college students.* These students can provide significant insight into the barriers that many first-generation students are facing. These students typically have the most barriers to overcome and likely have few personal role models regarding the pursuit of a college education.

The actual process of selecting G-Force mentors is left to the discretion of the Go Center Sponsor. A variety of methods have been used. Some schools simply appoint G-force mentors based on the recommendations of the counselor and/or principal. Some schools have announced the program to the entire student body or to a select group of students inviting them to go through an application and interview process. Each of these methods has been successful.

Role of G-Force Mentors

Students often need help to maintain the momentum required by the college preparation process to complete their quest to enter college. G-Force mentors help create the drive in other students to go to college. G-Force mentors raise awareness among students and their families on the value of a higher education, show them how to prepare for college both academically and financially, and motivate students to successfully pursue higher education.

The G-Force is a key element of the Go Center. The most successful Go Centers will place the students in a leadership role. The commitment level of the mentors to the Go Center will be directly proportional to the level of ownership they feel.

High School G-Force Requirements

1. Pursue Recommended High School Curriculum (High School only)
2. Maintain an 80% grade average*
3. Maintain a 95% attendance rate
4. Commit to the creation of a college-going culture

*The 80% average pertains to the student's grade average once he/she has entered the G-Force. Many of the targeted students will not have 80% averages initially. However, these students can have the greatest impact on their peers. The 80% requirement begins with the grades subsequent to the student joining the G-force.

Growth and Sustainability

After your initial G-Force is trained and the Go Center is operational, you may discover that the needs of your school are greater than the 10 students you have trained can meet. You will need to develop strategies that will allow you to recruit new students to expand the size of your mentorship and to replace your existing G-Force mentors once they graduate.

1. *Look for opportunities to increase the visibility of G-Force mentors*. Create T-shirts for G-Force mentors and wear them on certain days. Place a group picture of G-Force in the school annually. Many schools place cut-outs of footballs, volleyballs, and other symbols on school lockers to identify students who are participating in those activities. Develop something similar for G-Force mentors.

2. *Look for opportunities to develop benefits for G-Force mentors*. G-Force mentors put a great deal of volunteer effort into making their school academically stronger. Find ways for the school and community to show their appreciation. For example, every Go Center has G-Force mentorship cards. Find merchants in town that will give discounts to students with G-Force mentorship cards.

3. *Look for and facilitate opportunities to identify and validate leadership traits in potential G-Force mentors*. Look for opportunities for students to help other students. After they help the other person, follow up with the student you asked to help. Make sure they understand the role they just played in helping the other student move closer to college. Talk about how good it felt to help someone else and that they have the ability to feel that way all the time as a G-Force mentor. Tell them about the need to get more students into college and that you need more students to help out. Encourage them to consider becoming a G-Force mentor.

G-Force Training

The Program Coordinator provides training for G-Force mentors and sponsors. The training is designed to provide G-Force mentors with the basic skills and knowledge needed to facilitate others in the college motivation and enrollment process. The training is also designed to motivate and inspire the students to be highly committed to the creation of a college-going culture.

The trainings are free and coordinated by the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will provide on-going training opportunities. These continuing education options will be based on discussions with G-Force mentors and their Sponsors.

G-Force Guidelines

A few do's and don'ts that G-Force mentors must adhere to include:

G-Force Mentors **DO**:

- Refer students to the Go Center.
- Encourage students to consider college.
- Develop and disseminate messages to student peers regarding college, including important dates and deadlines.
- Respect other students' decisions and choices regarding post-secondary education.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding academic issues.
- Remind students of Go Center appointments.

G-Force Mentors **DO NOT**

- Advise or make specific recommendations about colleges or universities or discourage students from exploring a variety of options.
- Debate or argue with other students about post-secondary education options.
- Divulge information about other students.
- Fill out any application on behalf of another student i.e. college, financial aid, scholarship
- Write essays or do any other academic work on behalf of another student.

OUTREACH

Outreach Strategies

One of the primary roles of a Go Center is to organize and conduct various outreach projects designed to educate and motivate students and their families to pursue a college education. The Go Center contains several resources that enable parents, educators, and mentors of the local community to take ownership informing students about the opportunities in pursuing higher education credentials. An effective outreach program will be the primary driver of students into the Go Center.

General Outreach

- Play college videos over the campus television system between classes.
- Hang college posters around your school building.
- Promote college night on your campus. Coordinate school bus transportation to the fair if it is off campus. Provide students with a list of questions to ask college recruiters.
- Organize college field trips to area colleges and universities. Have students complete application or interest forms for that particular college to continue their connection with the campus.
- Hold financial aid nights in February in which students and parents can get assistance with their FAFSA forms.

Connecting Back to the Go Center

- Meet with campus department heads (math, English, science, etc.) to come up with creative ways to connect with the Go Centers. English teachers can require students to write a college essay and include a visit to the Go Center as part of an assignment. Math teachers can have students go to the Go Center and research the various expenses associated with attending college i.e. tuition, fees, room and board, etc. and do a comparative analysis between universities. Computer and keyboarding teachers can have a computer-based, virtual "scavenger hunt" for college and financial aid information. They can also have students complete online career interest surveys (on Career Cruising, if available) and report back on a career of interest. Approaching individual departments may be more effective than sending a general message to the entire faculty.
- Consider creating a job posting board in the Go Center with information on part-time positions that are open to students after school or on the weekend.
- Make use of curriculum based activities developed by the Coordinating Board.

Marketing to Select Audiences

- Continually market the Go Center to school faculty. Make presentations at faculty meetings and bring in students to talk about the work they are doing in the Go Center. Have handouts for the faculty (see Attachment B for a sample handout).
- Find creative ways to get parents on campus. One school decided to spice up their financial aid night by having a "Hip Hop Into College" night – students participated in a talent show…with college and financial aid info sessions thrown in for parents and students in the audience! Local businesses donated prizes for the winning act.

- Connect with parent "booster clubs" to spread the message about college. Ask to send a representative to one of their meetings to talk briefly about the Go Center and the need to encourage their kids to attend college.
- FOOD is always a good marketing tool to increase attendance.

Go Center Support

- Make sure you connect with your GEAR UP, Talent Search, Upward Bound, Communities in Schools, Project Stay, Project Grad, and/or AVID advisors and encourage them to use the Go center if they are not doing so already.
- Have college admission counselors/recruiters sign up for specific time slots in the Go Center and allow seniors to sign up for individual admission/advising meetings or interviews.

Local Outreach Projects

Local outreach projects can vary widely ranging from very simple to very involved. The most commonly used outreach project is the delivery of the Go Kit models with classroom presentations. Go Kit presentations are easy to conduct, effective and should be a part of the strategic plan of every Go Center. However, the creativity of several G-Force teams has led to a number of other innovative outreach projects.

Here are a few examples:

Education Go Get It! Flag – Corpus Christi Moody High School made a large flag with the Go logo and tagline printed on it and when the football team scores, G-Force mentors run across the field with the flag to celebrate the score.

TAKS Day Camp – Mineola High School G-force conducts a TAKS day camp. The high school G-force mentors conduct a day long camp for middle school students. The G-Force mentors spend the day with the students conducting various activities that are designed to be fun and educational. The goal of the camp is to convince the students that college is a place they want to go and they need to do well on the TAKS tests to help them get there, and allow the teachers to have TAKS preparation day assessment each student and develop strategies for helping them pass the TAKS test.

Reality Store – Several schools have created the Reality Store at their schools. The reality store gives students insight into finances associated with living in the real world, and informs them about the level of education and income needed to live the type of lifestyle they desire. Some schools have developed their own version of the program while others have arranged for Student Team Ministry to bring the Reality Store to their school.

G-Force Assembly – Quitman High School conducted a school assembly to promote their Go Center. They used presentations from the Go Kit as well as performed sketches they wrote themselves. One character they developed called "G-Force Man" was a big hit.

Career Fair – Several schools with Go Centers in the Lubbock area combined forces to add a Go Center to the regional Career Fair. They set up a Go Center with 20 computers at the fair and conducted career explorations using Careercruising.com for students attending the event. The computers were donated to them by their local workforce center. Each hour they held a drawing from the names of students that had conducted explorations and gave away a computer.

Go Corners – Nine high schools in the Brownsville area created Go Corners in every classroom in their school. A display was erected in the corner of every classroom that contained information on college, FAFSA forms, ACT/SAT Exams, etc.

Go Hallways – Rio Hondo Middle School turned their hallway into an extension of the Go Center. Huge flags of different colleges were hung from the ceiling in the hallway. Students were literally being hit in the head with the college message as they walked down the hall. In one high traffic area the school placed a television that ran continuous loops of college recruiting videos. Every time the students walked by they saw images of college life.

RESOURCES

A wealth of resources is available for your Go Center. The following information is a compilation of some of the more useful resources.

Web Resources

A variety of web resources have proven to be of value to Go Centers. A few of the more utilized resources are listed below:

www.CollegeforallTexans.com – for information regarding admissions and financial aid in Texas.

www.fasfa.ed.gov – (FASFA) Federal Application for Federal Student Aid. The starting point for most forms of financial aid.

www.tgslc.org – TG (Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation) To access this website you need the sponsor's name, e-mail address, phone number, and your school name and address. You also need this information to order publications.

www.edpubs.org/ml (U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid)

This website contains information about financial aid. All you need is an ML #. The sponsor can receive an ML # by calling 1-800-394-7084. Sponsors or students can then log on and order financial aid information.

www.collegeboard.com – for information regarding the SAT

www.thea.nesinc.com - for information on THEA, the placement test used by community colleges

Telephone Resource

Professionals at the **Texas Financial Aid Information Center, 1-888-331-8881**, can answer financial aid and general college admissions questions Monday through Thursday, 7 am – 7 pm and on Friday 7am – 5pm. Bilingual representatives are also available through this number.

Printed Resources

College for Texans offers a variety of print materials that are useful to Go Centers. Each of the documents listed below are available free of charge or for a minimal cost at **www.CollegeForTexans.com** under Additional Resources.

College Access Information

STANDARIZED TESTING/COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

College Entrance Exams

College entrance exams generally are critical element in the admission application process for the majority of four-year institutions throughout the country. Test scores are weighted differently in each college's admissions decisions depending on the school the student decides to attend. Most colleges provide profiles containing information regarding ranges in test scores, GPA, class rank, etc of their admitted applicants, and this information is usually located on their website. It is recommended that students take an entrance exam more than once in order to improve his/her chances for a higher score. Fee waivers are available if the student meets specific guidelines. Most students on free or reduced lunch will be able to receive a waiver. Please review the following test types and become familiar with which tests are applicable to students at your school.

PSAT

This is a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test. It helps familiarize students with the kinds of questions and the exact directions seen on the SAT. It also gives students a chance to enter the National Merit Scholarship programs.

The PSAT measures:

- Critical reading skills
- Math problem-solving skills
- Writing skills
- The test includes
- Two 25-minute critical reading sections
- Two 25 minute math sections
- One 30 minute writing skills section

The entire test requires two hours and 10 minutes to complete. Students up to Grade 11 can take this test. Only students in the 11th grade are considered for National Merit Scholarships, and their names also are competitions. This is a nationally-administered test offered on two specific dates in October each year. This test is $12 bust costs may vary from school to school. Fee waivers are available for economically disadvantaged 11th grade students. Some schools offer it to all their students for free. Extensive score reports will be provided to the students as well as the school.

Website: www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat

ACT

This multiple-choicetests cover four skill areas:

English, mathematics, reading, and science

The Writing Test is a relatively new addition to the ACT. ACT offers the following information about the new option.

www.actstudent.org

The ACT test consists of:

English Section	75 Questions	45 Minutes
Math Section	60 Questions	60 Minutes
Reading Section	40 Questions	35 Minutes
Science Sections	40 Questions	35 Minutes
Writing Section	Single Prompt 30 Minutes	

The English, Math, Reading and Science Sections are scored on a 1-36 scale. The current ACT composite is an average of the first four sections. The optional Writing Section is scored on a 2-12 scale.

The standard price of the test is $29.00. The writing section is an additional $14.00, for a total of $43 total.

SAT

According to The College Board web site (collegeboard.com):

"The SAT Reasoning Test is the most widely used and most rigorously researched college admissions test in history. Virtually every college in the United States accepts the SAT as a measure of the critical thinking skills students need for academic success in college. The SAT assesses how well students analyze and solve problems-skills learned in school that are needed in college. The test also provides and independent measure of a student's college readiness that is standardized across all students, schools, and communities, providing a common and objective scale for comparison."

The web site also contains the following information:

The critical reading section measures a student's ability to identify genre, relationships among parts of a text, cause and effect, rhetorical devices, and comparative arguments. Questions assess such reading skills as identifying main and supporting ideas, determining the meaning of words, understanding authors' purposes, and understanding the structure and function of sentences. Reading passages are taken from different fields, including natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and literary fiction. Sentence completion questions primarily measure reasoning and vocabulary.

Question Types/Content/# of Questions/Time

Question types:

Passage-based reading 48

Two 25-mintue sections and one 20-minute section

Sentence completions 19- Total 67

Content:

Extended Reasoning 42-50

Literal Comprehension 4-6

Vocabulary in Context 12-16

Critical Reading Score: 200-700 70 minutes total

Writing

The writing section measures a student's mastery of developing and expressing ideas effectively. The essay, which is always the first question on the SAT, measures a student's skill in developing and expressing a point of a view on an issue. The multiple-choice questions assess the ability to use language in a clear, consistent manner and to improve a piece of writing through revision and editing. Questions ask students to recognize sentence errors, to choose the best version of a piece of writing, and to improve paragraphs.

Question Types/Content/# of Questions/Time

Question types:

Essay 1 25 minutes

Multiple Choice 49/35 minutes (one 25-minute, and one 10-minute section) – Total 50

Content:

Improving Sentences 25

Identifying Sentence Errors 18

Improving Paragraphs 6

Writing Score: 200-800 60 minutes total

Essay Subscore 2-12

Multiple Choice Subscore 20-80

For students, a tremendous amount of information related to the test, test registration, test preparation, scores, test taking tips, sample tests, etc. can be found at www.collegeboard.com. High school personnel, college personnel and parents will also find an enormous amount of information at this site. Access advisors should thoroughly review the site to find information and free resources that you can utilize as you help your students prepare to register and take the SAT The standard price for the test for 2006-2007 is $41.50.

SAT Subject Tests

The College Board also offers SAT Subject Tests. The information below is available at www.collegeboard.com: "The SAT Subject Test (formerly SAT II: Subject Tests) are designed to measure students' knowledge and skills in particular subject areas, as well as their ability to apply that knowledge. The test are independent of any particular textbook or method of instruction, and many colleges use them for admission, for course placement, and to advise students about course selection. The SAT Reasoning Test is administered seven times in a school year in the United States, beginning in October, and six times a year internationally. All Subject Tests except languages and World History are given six times a year. Language Tests with Listening are given only in November. Visit collegeboard.com or review the registration booklets for more information about specific Subject Tests."

The standard price for the 2006-2007 year is $18 for the registration fee and $8.00 for each area test. Language tests with listening must add $19. Additional detailed information regarding Subject Tests is available at www.collegeboard.com.

Texas Success Initiative (TSI)

The Texas Success Initiative (formerly TASP) is a state-legislated program designed to improve student success in college. There are two components of the program:

(1) an assessment to diagnose students' basic skills in reading, mathematics, and writing, and

(2) developmental instruction, to strengthen academic skills that need improvement.

Approved Assessments:

The following assessment instruments are approved by the Board:

(1) ASSET and COMPASS offered by ACT;

(2) ACCUPLACER offered by The College Board

(3) Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) (formerly TASP Test) offered by National Evaluation Systems, Inc.

Fee may vary at institutions. Please check with the institution to find out what test is accepted and what process is in place for fee waivers if any.

Texas Success Initiative Exemptions:

- Any student who has a composite Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I) score of 1070 or above with a minimum of 500 verbal and math scores. SAT scores are valid for five years.
- Any student who has a composite American College Test (ACT) score of 23 with a minimum English and math score of 19. ACT scores are valid for five years.
- Any student who has a TAKS minimum scale score of 2200 on the math section and 2200 English/Language Arts (ELA) section, with a writing sub-score of at least 3. TAKS scores are valid for three years
- Students who are active military duty for at least 3 years preceding enrollment.
- A student who previously attended any institution and has been determined to have met readiness standards by that institution.
- A student who on or after August 1, 1990 was honorably discharged , retired or released from the US Military, Texas National Guard or as a mentor of the reserve component of the armed forces of the United States.
- Any student who has completed an Associate's or a Bachelor's degree from a college or university.
- Students who have college level work in the areas of Reading, Math, and Writing.
- Students enrolled in a certificate program with fewer than 42 semester hours. Students enrolled in a certificate program may accumulate only six college-level hours outside their certificate program before becoming liable for all Success Initiative requirements.

COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS

Types of Colleges

The following list of the descriptions is often used to distinguish types of colleges:

Four Year-Colleges or universities that issue a Bachelor of Arts or Science Degree upon completion of all required coursework for a major, usually requiring four-year timeframe.

Two Year- Colleges that issue an Associate of Arts or Science degree upon completion of all required coursework for a major, usually requiring a two-year timeframe. These colleges often contain the word "community" or "junior" in their name. Two-year diplomas or certificates will be issued.

Public- Colleges or universities that receive state supported subsidies for residents of that stat who enroll. Lower tuition costs are often associated with these colleges because the state support can allow the institutions to reduce the fees charged to students.

Private- Colleges that are self-supporting and receive no direct subsidy from state funding. These colleges often are labeled as "independent" colleges as well. Higher tuition costs are often associated with these colleges based on their self supporting status.

Proprietary- College that is privately owned and poised to make a financial profit for owners or share-holders. Many of these colleges/schools will offer degrees/diplomas for technical career fields.

Open- Colleges or universities that may require only a high school diploma or GED for admission purposes. Many community colleges fall into this category and may not even require any diploma or GED if they have an alternative entry option. There usually are no minimum academic standards required.

Common Application

Students can apply to a majority of Texas Public Universities and some two-year colleges by using the Common Application online at applytexas.org. The Common Application will allow students to apply to several schools at one time.

Be sure to refer to the website to see which schools will accept this application. You also need to check if any additional forms need to be completed with the student at the schools they want to attend.

If a student is planning to attend an out of state university or college, visit that schools website to find their admission process.

Deadlines

With the exception of some open admission colleges, most institutions will have deadlines related to the admissions process for first-year students.

Rolling Admissions-students complete applications and are notified within a matter of days to a few weeks regarding the admissions decision.

Regular Admissions-students usually must complete applications by midwinter and are notified of the admission decision on or about April 1. Institutions that use this process are often more selective and/or highly competitive.

Early Action-students usually must apply by early- or mid-November. Students are usually notified by January 1st regarding the admission decision. If admitted, early action applications are non-binding and allow students to wait until May 1st to commit.

Early Decision-students must usually apply early in the fall. Students are normally notified by January 1st. Early Decision plans are binding. Students considering this process should be sure that, if they are admitted, they will attend that particular institution. If admitted, the student must agree to withdraw all other applications and commit to that college. It is strongly suggested that students only apply Early Decision to one college and Early Action to others if need be. If denied, colleges will have the option of deferring the student to the Regular process or denying them admission completely.

Additional Information requested/required as part of the admissions application process may include but is not limited to:

1) High School Transcript-Institutions often require an official transcript with the application and upon graduation for each applicant.

2) ACT/SAT

Institutions that require test scores as part of the admissions process will usually want them provided directly from ACT, Inc or The College Board.

3) Extracurricular Activities/Community Service/Work History

Colleges may provide sections of their application or request attachments for the student's use in providing a summary of extracurricular activities/community service or work experience while

in high school. Colleges are looking for a comprehensive snapshot of the students that indicates the students is well-rounded and involved because their goal is to attract applicants with diverse backgrounds. When working with students in grades 9th-11th, encourage them to participant in extracurricular activities and take on leadership positions which will help them develop a good high school "resume" to use in their senior year. This information is helpful for admission and scholarship processes.

4) Essay/Personal Statements- Most four year institutions will require students to write a personal essay or written statement. It is critical that students put forth their best effort. Many English teachers have students write this essay in their classes, so students may have this ready. In the "Apply to College" section of The College Boar website www.collegeboard.com, there are suggestions and tips on essay writing for students.

Fee Waivers

Students from economically disadvantaged families may need assistance with the admission application fees. Students eligible for the free or reduced lunch program are eligible for fee exemptions/waivers. The College Board provides schools with fee waivers for both the SAT test and the college application fees. If a student meets this requirement, a student is allowed two fee waivers, one for the end of their junior year and, one to be used during their senior year. It is important for you to coordinate with the Go Center Sponsor or Counselors to be sure the students are more than their allocation. The test registration will be denied if a student has used more than one waiver in their Senior year. If they use a College Board fee waiver, they will be able to receive 4 college admission fee waivers to apply toward any 4 schools that accept this waiver. If a school does not use this waiver, find out what waivers they will use. This can include a written letter from their counselor certifying reduced/free lunch eligibility.

Essay Writing

Essays are written for scholarships, general admission, admission in to certain majors/programs, and also for other programs such as study abroad, honors programs, etc. All of these types of essays ask for very specific writing samples, they will define what should be explained in the essay, and how much room a student has to complete the essay. Students must absolutely follow those guidelines. Essays are easily discarded because they do not follow the simple instructions. Also, students should be encouraged to learn to write about themselves. The people that review these essays look for substance first and content, also they look for things they can not find on the application or resume. Instruct students to use this time to demonstrate who they are outside of grade point averages and any extra-curricular organizations included in their applications. This is a good time for a student to demonstrate hardships that may have hindered them from achieving a higher grade point average. Use their essay as the vehicle to discuss family hardships, non-academic interests, and goals.

FINANCIAL AID

There are four basic forms of aid which include scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study.

1) Scholarships-awarded on the basis of academic, talent or leadership abilities. Scholarships may also be awarded on the basis of financial need.
2) Grants-these funds are usually awarded based on financial need. Grants do not need to be repaid. The federal Pell Grant is the most recognized grants program. Students qualify for grants when they apply for the FAFSA. Universities and colleges will determine if the student is eligible for a grant by reviewing the student's needs based on the amount of tuition, fees, living arrangements, and the parents EFC.
3) Loans-must be repaid and come from federal, institutional or private sources. Both students and parents may borrow to support the cost of post-secondary education.
4) Work-Study-funds are usually awarded on the basis of financial need. This program provides students with part-time jobs either on campus or off campus to enable students to earn funds to help with educational expenses. Students will have to find a job on campus and will typically work up to 20 hours a week. Their earnings are taxed.

Applying for Financial Aid

Most questions regarding financial aid should be dealt with by a financial aid professional. Refer students to the local financial aid offices at area colleges or to the financial aid college at the school of their choice to answer specific questions. The following information is general information and should be used to help students find more information.

To apply for financial aid students must go to: www.fafsa.ed.gov

- Apply for a Personal Identification Number (PIN) used to apply and to sign the application. Students and parents should obtain a PIN. The PIN is an electronic access code number that serves as an identifier. Students can use the PIN to apply online and to sign either an original or Renewal FAFSA on the Web application
- Complete the FAFSA and provide the required signatures.
- It will take us 3-5 days to process your FAFSA and send you a Student Aid Report (SAR).
- Your SAR will summarize the data you report on your FAFSA. Check the SAR carefully to make sure it is accurate.
- Keep a copy of your SAR.
- If your FAFSA information is complete, an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will be printed in the upper right corner. Your EFC is based on the financial information you provide on the FAFSA.
- Your school will use your EFC to award your financial aid.
- For additional help filling out the FAFSA, you can go to our link: Completing the FAFSA on the Web site at studentaid.ed.gov/students/publications/completing_fafsa/index.html.

TEXAS RESIDENTS, Non US Citizens: Certain categories of foreign-born and immigrant students in the state of Texas can meet state requirements for residency. Such students are able to pay the resident tuition rate while attending public institutions of higher education in Texas. In

addition, by meeting this residency requirement, such students are eligible to apply for some **state** student financial aid programs.

Please Note: You must be classified as a Texas resident in order to qualify for **state** student financial aid. Also, keep in mind that state definitions of residency have **NO** impact on a student's eligibility for **federal** student financial aid, nor as eligibility to work in Texas or the United States.

Please reference the information provided at www.collegefortexans.com under the TASFA (Texas Application for Student Financial Aid).

Mentor Policies & Procedures

Rules of Conduct

Mentors are responsible to uphold the following rules and regulations as designated by their institution.

As a mentor, you are expected to, at all times while acting in an official capacity:

1. Comply with the rules and standards of the host site
2. Demonstrate mutual respect toward others
3. Follow directions
4. Direct concerns, problems, and suggestions to their Program Coordinator

The following acts constitute a violation of the Program's rules of conduct:

1. Unauthorized tardiness
2. Unauthorized absences
3. Repeated use of inappropriate language (i.e., profanity) at a service site
4. Failure to wear appropriate clothing to service assignments
5. Stealing or lying
6. Engaging in any activity that may physically or emotionally damage other mentors of the program or people in the community
7. Unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance or illegal drugs during the term of service
8. Consuming alcoholic beverages during the performance of mentor activities
9. Being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs during the performance of service activities
10. Failure to notify the program of any criminal arrest or conviction that occurs during the term of service

If the mentor violates any of these rules and regulations, the Program will do the following:

1. For the mentor's first offense, an appropriate program official will issue a verbal warning to the mentor.
2. For the mentor's second offense, an appropriate program official will issue a written warning and reprimand the mentor.
3. For the mentor's third offense, the mentor may be suspended for one day or more without compensation. (Program will notify mentor in writing of the number of days of suspension)
4. For the fourth offense, the Program Coordinator may release the mentor from the program.

The program will notify the mentor of any violation and action being taken in writing. Notification signed by both the mentor and program supervisor will be kept in the mentor's file.

Timesheets

Mentors are responsible for filling out all timesheets getting it to the Program Coordinator each week.

If something comes up, and you must leave, please let your on- site supervisor know, as well as the Program Coordinator.

** Please review your timesheets carefully and be attentive to their accuracy.

Sick and Personal Leave

It is the responsibility of the mentor to make contact with **both your on-site and Program Coordinator**. The desired method of contact is a phone call before or close to the time at which you are to report to your site. However, if circumstances do not allow for a phone call, an email to all concerned parties can be substituted. Please keep in mind when you are absent, it is your responsibility to make up the time missed. It is of vital importance that all affected parties be notified of a mentor's absence from their site. Schedules must be changed. Plus, if no one hears from you, and you don't show up, we will be worried! Mentors who do not contact their site or Program Coordinator will reprimand accordingly.

At your School

Of course, the bulk of your service will be conducted at your school site. During the first few weeks you can take time to integrate yourself successfully into this new environment. In general, your on-site supervisor will be your guide at the school. Site supervisors are busy people, so it is important to make an effort to set-up meetings with them in advance, and come prepared with a list of questions and concerns. You may participate in additional trainings at your service site if it's available.

Each site will be different in the amount and type of training given to mentors. As always, contact the Program Coordinator with any questions or concerns.

Evaluations

Evaluations provide mentors with valuable feedback on their work, so you may be evaluated during the year. Evaluations help mentors improve skills and performance, improve program quality, and assess progress toward achieving goals.
Mentors can be evaluated twice a year by the Program Coordinator and Site Supervisors. The Program Coordinator will complete the evaluations after speaking with site supervisors, and will go over them with you. You will then have a chance to add feedback. Both the mentor and the Coordinator will sign the evaluations.

Email

Email may be the primary mode of communication. It is the best way to get in touch with the Program Coordinator and other mentors. Each mentor will have access to a computer at their school. Please check your email at least once or twice a day to keep up with updates, any program announcements or changes, important information and paperwork that might be sent to you.

Conflict Management

Conflicts and differences in opinion are normal and often arise in the work environment.
Prevention is the key:

1. Always use common courtesy.
2. Be careful about teasing, sarcasm and jokes. Teasing and sarcasm can be thinly veiled aggression. Even if it is meant with the best intentions, teasing and sarcasm can be easily misinterpreted. Know your audience!
3. Ask! Check in with your coworkers and teammates.

If conflicts occur:

1. Try to resolve them one-on-one. Go directly to the person you are having issues with and talk. It is important to refrain from gossip about the person with whom you are having conflict. Word spreads fast, and gossip can be poison.
2. Approach the Program Coordinator. We can't help you or offer advice if we don't know what is happening!
3. Formal Mediation with the Program Coordinator will be provided if both parties cannot come to a mutual understanding.

Discipline for Improper Conduct

In the event that a mentor does not follow the program rules and regulations, he or she will move through the discipline procedure. On-site supervisors will report any improper conduct to the Program Coordinator and program disciplinary action will be enforced. Mentors are subject to be released from the program at time.

Professionalism

As mentors you will be in the spotlight at many different levels. Personal hygiene and appropriate language, dress and behavior are all-important components of professionalism. It is a good idea to discuss expectations of professionalism with the other mentors at your site. It is good to try and find some agreement about standards of professionalism with those you work most closely with. This will help you develop a sense of team unity and enable your team to have a consistent presentation to teachers and students.

Although you are a mentor, you are expected to maintain the level of professionalism that would be expected at any job. This includes: being on time, communicating professionally, building successful working relationships, and displaying behavior consistent with other school employees in order to provide continuity for the students in your school.

Some components of professionalism:

- Maintaining a positive attitude despite frustrations.

- Not losing control to anger, despondency, frustration or other negative emotions.

- Consistent politeness

- Never complain about anyone else.

- Never gossip

- Resolving problems as they occur

Confidentiality

As a mentor, you will have access to sensitive student information. **Do not** share any student information with others. Please use discretion when discussing a student with anyone on or off your site.

Dress

Though we respect the rights of others to dress in what is comfortable and appealing to them, the supervisor and students whom you work with may have different expectations of the image we should portray at high school sites. Please follow your school's employee dress code. It is important that you create a positive identity in the community, so dress appropriately and professionally and wear a name tag/badge while at your high school site.

NOTES/UPDATES: