

Rockdale County Public Schools



Class of 2013

(Students Entering the 9th Grade During the 2009-2010 School Year)

Student Planning Handbook

Student Planning Handbook for the Class of 2013

Table of Contents

Welcome from the Superintendent.....	1
RCPS ~ Mission, Belief Statements, Parameters, Objectives, and Strategies.....	2
Planning the High School Program.....	4
The Six-Year Plan.....	5
Graduation Requirements for Students Entering the 9th Grade During the 2009-2010 School Year.....	6
RCPS Graduation Requirements for Students Entering the 9th Grade During the 2009-2010 School Year At A Glance.....	6
RCPS Graduation Requirements for Students Entering the 9th Grade During the 2009-2010 School Year (Table).....	7
Rockdale County Public Schools Advisement Sheet.....	8
Completing the Rockdale County Public Schools Worksheet.....	9
Rockdale County Public Schools Worksheet.....	10
Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education - Career Areas and Pathways	11
School/Student/Parent Partnership.....	12
General High School Information.....	13
Benchmark Exams.....	13
Course Credit - Carnegie Units.....	13
Credit for Work in Other Schools.....	14
End of Course Tests (EOCT).....	14
Grade Placement.....	15
Grading System - Academic Honors.....	15
Grading System - Advanced Placement and Joint Enrollment.....	16
Graduation Requirements	17
Report Cards - Reporting to Parents.....	18
Schedule Changes.....	18
Tests Required for Graduation - GHSGT and GHSGWT.....	18
Other Learning Opportunities.....	19
Alpha Academy.....	19
Career Centers/Career Searching.....	19
Community-Based Learning Experience	19
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).....	19
Extracurricular Activities	20
Sports.....	20
Clubs and Organizations.....	20
Governor’s Scholarship Program	20
Hospital/Homebound.....	20
I-Parent.....	20
JROTC.....	20
Open Campus.....	20

Opportunities for Students with Disabilities	21
Post-Secondary Options	21
Advanced Placement (AP) Classes.....	21
Articulated Credit	22
Early Admissions to Post-Secondary Institutions	22
Joint Enrollment (Dual Enrollment)	22
Rockdale Career Academy	22
Rockdale Virtual Campus	22
Special Education	23
Summer School, Intercession, Credit Recovery	23
Test Preparation Information.....	23
Youth Apprenticeship Program	23
After High School Planning Assistance.....	24
College/Post-Secondary Education	24
Employment.....	24
Military	24
Technical/Vocational Schools	24
Planning Beyond High School	25
Post-Secondary Planning Calendar.....	26
Post-Secondary Admission Standards.....	27
Post-Secondary Admissions Testing.....	28
PSAT/NMSOT.....	28
SAT (SAT I)	29
SAT-II Subject Tests.....	30
PLAN	31
ACT	31
AP Tests.....	32
Schedule for College Admissions Testing.....	33
Financial Assistance.....	34
HOPE Grant.....	34
HOPE Scholarship.....	34
Other Types of Financial Aid	35
Additional Sources for Financial Aid Information	35
Accel Program	36

Welcome to High School

To help students plan their high school education to meet their future goals, the Rockdale County Public Schools has developed this Student Planning Handbook. This handbook provides graduation requirements for entering freshmen and offers a worksheet to be certain students remain on track for graduation. In addition, this handbook provides information relative to promotion guidelines, testing, and planning for post-secondary experiences including college, technical schools, or entering the job market.

Promoting Student Success in High School

A continuing goal of our Board of Education and school system is promoting higher standards and greater student achievement. For America to remain strong and maintain its position as the leader of our world, more demands must be made on students to excel educationally and to do their best every day. Student achievement is the top priority of Rockdale County Public Schools. Our curriculum is designed to be challenging and motivating for every student.

Planning Your High School Career

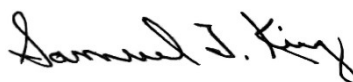
Please read the Student Planning Handbook carefully and use it when registering for courses you will take in high school and for choosing the program you will follow after high school. Parents should take an active role in ensuring that their children are enrolled in courses that meet their educational needs and goals. Under the current advisement system, each student with the assistance of his/her parents is given the opportunity and responsibility for choosing courses wisely.

The high schools in Rockdale County operate on the semester system. Credit is established by earning Carnegie units. A course that meets a minimum of 75 clock hours per semester carries one-half Carnegie unit of credit. Some courses offered do have prerequisites. A prerequisite is a course that you must take before you can take another course.

Each student will receive assistance in registering for courses by a school counselor. Counselors will work directly with students to ensure that each student receives a comprehensive high school education experience that appropriately prepares the student for experiences beyond high school.

The school system administrators and staff expect each student to enjoy a successful high school career that leads to lifelong learning and to the ability of each student to choose his or her course in life.

Sincerely,



Samuel T. King, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Rockdale County Public Schools

Mission, Belief Statements, Parameters, Objectives, and Strategies

Mission

The mission of the Rockdale County School System, the boundless learning community where students aspire to their dreams and success is expected of all, is to ensure that each student performs at his/her highest academic level and is a successful, participatory member of our democratic society, through a system distinguished by:

- fearless advocates for students;
- community alliance for students' success;
- empowering students to shape their own future;
- infinite learning opportunities for all;
- customized measures of individual student success.

We believe that . . .

- family is the most important factor in the development of the individual;
- a safe and orderly environment is essential to community;
- education is the most important asset in maximizing the opportunities of an individual and community;
- every person is worthy of respect;
- all human beings have the capacity to learn;
- every person deserves the opportunity to succeed;
- each person is responsible for his or her own actions;
- faith gives meaning and purpose to life;
- true success comes from within;
- diversity is a strength.

Parameters

- We will make all decisions based solely on the best interest of the student.
- We will always honor the worth and integrity of each person.
- We will not engage in any activity that does not directly support our primary-secondary instructional program.
- We will not allow external factors to adversely affect our pursuit of excellence.
- We will demand the best of everyone.

Rockdale County Public Schools

Mission, Belief Statements, Parameters, Objectives, and Strategies

Objectives

- All students pass local, state, and national assessments at levels which exceed established standards.
- All students identify their dreams and be limitless in their individual pursuits.
- 100% of our students graduate and succeed in their endeavors in higher education, the workforce, and/or the community.
- 100% of our students are responsible citizens, serve the community, and demonstrate highest ethical standards.

Strategies

- We will design and create learning opportunities that will allow each student to reach his/her highest level of achievement.
- We will expose all students to experiences and opportunities that will enable them to pursue limitless aspirations.
- We will provide support systems for all students, staff, and families that enable them to achieve their highest potential.
- We will provide safe and orderly learning environments in order to enhance the potential of each student.
- We will have safe and well-maintained facilities necessary to maximize teaching and learning.
- We will fully unify all stakeholders toward student success.
- We will embrace uniqueness and diversity in our community.
- We will acquire and make best use of necessary resources to accomplish our mission and objectives.
- We will provide the highest quality instructional, support, and administrative staff that will embrace, facilitate, and celebrate our mission and objectives.

Planning the High School Program

The Six-Year Plan

Planning is a vital part of a well-designed program. Toward the end of the eighth grade, freshmen course selections are made upon the recommendations of the eighth grade teachers with consent of the parents. During the first year of high school, counselors and/or teachers will meet with freshmen to develop a Six-Year Plan of study. The purpose of the Six-Year Plan is to familiarize students with graduation requirements, diploma options, and to begin planning for post-secondary options. With the appropriate selection of electives and requirements, freshmen will have opportunities to receive the preparation needed to reach desired goals.

While administrators, counselors, teachers, and parents have an important role to play in the planning process, ultimately it is the responsibility of the student to register for and pass all courses required for graduation. As students register for each semester, teachers and counselors will advise students about course selection based upon prior performance in the subject area and their academic goals.

It is important to remember that the Six-Year Plan is a planning tool. Like any other plan, it is meant to be changed and/or modified as students progress through high school. If students or parents are unsure of how particular course selections affect progress toward graduation, then consultation with administrators, counselors, or teachers may be appropriate.

Graduation Requirements Established for Students Entering the 9th Grade During the 2009-2010 School Year

In September 2007, the State of Georgia introduced new graduation requirements to be effective for students entering the 9th grade during the 2008-2009 school year. The new Graduation Rule – passed unanimously by the State Board of Education – eliminated Georgia’s “tiered” diploma in which there were different expectations for students. While the state sets the minimum requirements for graduation, local systems can add requirements above the state requirements – and Rockdale County has raised the bar for our students.

What’s Different?

The state requires 23 units for graduation. Rockdale County Public Schools requires our students to have 24 units. (RCPS requires four units of social studies while the state requires three.) Our goal is to assure that our students have the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue the world of work, higher education, or both.

Students who have met diploma requirements with a cumulative weighted GPA of 3.5 or higher will receive an Honor Seal on their diplomas.

CTAE/Fine Arts/Modern Language/Latin

Students who wish to receive industry certification in certain areas under Career/Technical/Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs must follow specific pathways. To be eligible for certification, a student must earn three units in the same pathway. Any student planning to attend a University System of Georgia college or university must take a minimum of two years of the same modern language or two years of Latin to meet admission requirements. CTAE, Fine Arts, Modern Language, and Latin are grouped in the same graduation area in the State Board Rule and on the Graduation Requirements chart below. Students who are planning to complete a Career Technical Agricultural Education Pathway Program (recommended for all students) and attend college, will need to devote two of their four elective credits to foreign language or Latin courses to meet college/university entry requirements.

RCPS Diploma Options

- Regular diploma - 24 credits
- Magnet diploma - 24 credits
- Employment Preparatory Diploma
- Life Skills Preparatory Diploma
- High School Performance Certificate (complete all degree requirements except graduation test)

More Information

During the first few weeks of the 2009-2010 school year, 9th graders will meet with counselors to review their high school course choices. They will receive a student handbook to take home to record their progress during high school. Parents should review this handbook and discuss the program of study with their students.

RCPS Graduation Requirements for Students Entering the 9th Grade During the 2009-2010 School Year At a Glance

	State	RCPS	Magnet
English/Language Arts	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4 (Magnet Math)
Science	4	4	4 (Magnet Science)
Social Studies	3	4	4
CTAE♦ and/or Fine Arts and/or Modern Language/Latin♦♦	3	3	2**
Health and Physical Education	1	1	1
Electives	4	4	5 (Prescribed)
 Total Units (Minimum)	 23	 24	 24

♦ For pathway completion, students must complete three courses (units) in the same sequence or pathway AND pass the End of Pathway Exam.

♦♦ Students planning to attend a college or university must take a minimum of **two** years of the same Modern Language or Latin to meet admission requirements.

**Magnet students are required to take two units of the same Modern Language or Latin.

RCPS Graduation Requirements for Students Entering the 9th Grade During the 2009-2010 School Year

Subject Area	Rockdale County Public Schools	Rockdale Magnet School for Science and Technology
English/ Language Arts*	4 units, must include: 1 unit 9th Grade Lit./Comp. and 1 unit American Lit./Comp.	4 units, must include: 1 unit 9th Grade Lit./Comp. and 1 unit American Lit./Comp.
Mathematics*	4 units	4 units Magnet Math
Science*	4 units	4 units Magnet Science
Social Studies*	4 units, must include: 1 unit World Geography 1 unit U.S. History 1 unit World History 1/2 unit Economics 1/2 unit Government	4 units, must include: 1 unit World Geography 1 unit U.S. History 1 unit World History 1/2 unit Economics 1/2 unit Government
CTAE* and/or Fine Arts and/or Modern Language/ Latin**	3 units	2 units**
Health/Safety	1/2 unit (or 2 units ROTC)	1/2 unit (or 2 units ROTC)
Physical Education	1/2 unit (Personal Fitness)	1/2 unit (Personal Fitness)
Technology/Career Education	None	None
Electives	4 units	5 units - Prescribed
Total	24 units	24 units
1 Unit = 2 semesters of credit Promotion requirements to: Grade 10 = 5 units Grade 11 = 11 units* Grade 12 = 16 units		

- ♦ For pathway completion, students must complete three courses (units) in the same sequence or pathway AND pass the End of Pathway Exam.
- ♦♦ Students planning to attend a college or university must take a minimum of two years of the same Modern Language or Latin to meet admission requirements.
- ** Magnet students are required to take two units of the same Modern Language or Latin.

Rockdale County Public Schools Advisement Sheet Six-Year Plan

Student _____ Student Number _____

Teacher/Advisor _____

Keep a record of the courses you take on this sheet. Refer to the Graduation Requirements on Pages 6 and 7 for details. The Worksheet on Page 10 will help you keep track of your requirement as well.
Be sure to check off each requirement as you complete it.

9th Grade – Year 1			
First Semester	Second Semester	Notes First Semester	Notes Second Semester
Eng/LA _____	Eng/LA _____		
MA _____	MA _____		
SC _____	SC _____		
SS _____	SS _____		
CTAE/FA/FL _____	CTAE/FA/FL _____		
H/PE _____	H/PE _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		

10th Grade (5 units required for entry into the 10th grade) – Year 2			
First Semester	Second Semester	Notes First Semester	Notes Second Semester
Eng/LA _____	Eng/LA _____		
MA _____	MA _____		
SC _____	SC _____		
SS _____	SS _____		
CTAE/FA/FL _____	CTAE/FA/FL _____		
H/PE _____	H/PE _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		

11th Grade (11 units required for entry into the 11th grade and must pass all required courses in English math, science, and social studies) – Year 3			
First Semester	Second Semester	Notes First Semester	Notes Second Semester
Eng/LA _____	Eng/LA _____		
MA _____	MA _____		
SC _____	SC _____		
SS _____	SS _____		
CTAE/FA/FL _____	CTAE/FA/FL _____		
H/PE _____	H/PE _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		

12th Grade (16 units required for entry into the 12 grade) – Year 4			
First Semester		Second Semester	
		Notes First Semester	Notes Second Semester
Eng/LA _____	Eng/LA _____		
MA _____	MA _____		
SC _____	SC _____		
SS _____	SS _____		
CTAE/FA/FL _____	CTAE/FA/FL _____		
H/PE _____	H/PE _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		
EL _____	EL _____		

After High School – Years 5 and 6		
Post-Secondary Goal		Workforce Goal
2-Year College _____	Major _____	Career Choice _____
4-Year College/University _____	Undergrad Degree _____	Training Required _____
Technical College _____		

Student Signature _____ **Parent/Guardian Signature** _____

Completing the Rockdale County Public Schools Worksheet

All units shaded on the Worksheet on page 10 must be included in the 11 units earned to be classified as an 11th grader (Junior).

Georgia High School Graduation Test Scores:

- English/Language Arts _____
- Math _____
- Science _____
- Social Studies _____
- Writing _____

Rockdale County Public Schools Worksheet

RCPS				Magnet			
English/Language Arts 4 units				English/Language Arts 4 units			
9A _____	9B _____	_____	1	9A _____	9B _____	_____	1
10 A _____	10B _____	_____	1	10 A _____	10B _____	_____	1
11A _____	11B _____	_____	1	11A _____	11B _____	_____	1
12A _____	12B _____	_____	1	12A _____	12B _____	_____	1
Mathematics 4 units				Mathematics 4 units			
Math 1 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1	Magnet Math 1 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1
Math 2 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1	Magnet Math 2 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1
Math 3 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1	Magnet Math 3 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1
Math 4 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1	Magnet Math 4 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1
Science 4 units				Science 4 units			
Science 1 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1	Magnet Science 1 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1
Science 2 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1	Magnet Science 2 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1
Science 3 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1	Magnet Science 3 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1
Science 4 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1	Magnet Science 4 (or equivalent)	A _____	B _____	1
Social Studies 4 units				Social Studies 4 units			
Government	_____	_____	½	Government	_____	_____	½
World Geography	_____	_____	1	World Geography	_____	_____	1
World History	A _____	B _____	1	World History	A _____	B _____	1
U.S. History	A _____	B _____	1	U.S. History	A _____	B _____	1
Economics	_____	_____	½	Economics	_____	_____	½
CTAE* and/or Fine Arts and/or Modern Language/Latin** 3 units				CTAE* and/or Fine Arts and/or Modern Language/Latin** **2 units			
_____	_____	_____	1	_____	_____	_____	1
_____	_____	_____	1	_____	_____	_____	1
_____	_____	_____	1				
Health ½ unit				Health ½ unit			
_____	_____	_____	½	_____	_____	_____	½
Physical Education ½ unit				Physical Education ½ unit			
_____	_____	_____	½	_____	_____	_____	½
Electives*** 4 units				Electives (Prescribed) 5 units			
_____	_____	_____	1	_____	_____	_____	1
_____	_____	_____	1	_____	_____	_____	1
_____	_____	_____	1	_____	_____	_____	1
_____	_____	_____	1	_____	_____	_____	1
Total Units = 24				Total Units = 24			

- ◆ For pathway completion, students must complete three courses (units) in the same sequence or pathway AND pass the End of Pathway Exam.
- ◆◆ Students planning to attend a college or university must take a minimum of two years of the same Modern Language or Latin to meet admission requirements.
- ** Magnet students are required to take two units of the same Modern Language or Latin.
- *** CTAE, Fine Arts, Modern Language, and Latin are grouped in the same graduation area in the State Board Rule and on the Graduation Requirements chart below. Students who are planning to complete a Career Technical Agricultural Education Pathway Program (recommended for all students) and attend college, will need to devote two of their four elective credits to foreign language or Latin courses to meet college/university entry requirements.

Career, Agricultural, and Technical Education

Career Areas and Pathways

Agriculture

Agriscience Career Pathway
Plant Science/Horticulture Career Pathway

Architecture, Construction, Communication & Transportation

Architectural Drawing and Design Career Pathway
Broadcast/Video Production Career Pathway
Collision Repair Technology Career Pathway
Construction Career Pathway
Graphic Design Career Pathway
Transportation Logistical Support Career Pathway

Business & Computer Science

Administrative/Information Support Career Pathway
Computing Career Pathway
Computer Networking Career Pathway
Computer Systems and Support Career Pathway
Financial Management - Accounting Career Pathway
Financial Management - Services Career Pathway
Interactive Media Career Pathway
Small Business Development Career Pathway

Engineering & Technology

Electronics Career Pathway
Energy Systems Career Pathway
Engineering Career Pathway
Engineering Graphics and Design Career Pathway
Manufacturing Career Pathway

Family and Consumer Sciences

Culinary Arts Career Pathway
Early Childhood Education Career Pathway
Interior Design Career Pathway
Nutrition and Food Science Career Pathway
Teaching as a Profession Career Pathway

Government & Public Safety

JROTC Career Pathway
Law and Justice Career Pathway

Healthcare Science

Therapeutic Services - Emergency Services Career Pathway
Therapeutic Services - Medical Services Career Pathway
Therapeutic Services - Nursing Career Pathway

Marketing, Sales & Service

Fashion Marketing Career Pathway
Marketing Communication and Promotion Career Pathway
Marketing & Management Career Pathway
Sports & Entertainment Marketing Career Pathway

School/Student/Parent Partnership

Many educational opportunities are available to students in Rockdale County Public Schools. To make the most of these opportunities, it is essential to carefully plan educational experiences. Counselors, teachers, parents, and most importantly, students have roles to play in this process. With appropriate choices of electives and requirements, students will have the opportunity to reach desired goals.

School's Role

- Plan instruction appropriate for each student's academic needs.
- Make every effort to support excellent attendance.
- Encourage each student to achieve his or her academic goals.
- Provide resources to enhance the learning process.
- Provide an environment conducive to learning.
- Maintain regular contact with home about student progress.
- Help students identify and enhance career interest.

Student's Role

- Master objectives at each grade level.
- Register for and pass all courses required for graduation.
- Demonstrate acceptable work habits and attitudes.
- Explore and develop career interest areas.
- Be actively involved in personal education and career development.
- Be persistent in getting the information and help needed.
- Utilize all available career resource materials including online sources.

Parent's/Guardian's Role

- Be an active participant in your student's education.
- Provide opportunities for the student to explore his/her career interest areas.
- Establish strong work habits and attitudes in your student.
- Read all materials that come home from the school and discuss with your student.
- Be in touch with school personnel about your concerns and questions.
- Become informed about state and system standards for promotion, graduation, and post-secondary admissions.
- Be proactive in getting the information you need.

General High School Information

Benchmark Exams

Benchmark exams are administered for courses which require an End of Course Test (EOCT). The primary purpose of these assessments is to determine areas of strength and weakness for individual students, schools, grade levels, and subject areas. These assessments are valuable tools for ensuring that our students are being equipped for success on high stakes State assessments. Furthermore, results of these assessments are valuable means of determining areas in need of instructional support. One exam is administered each semester.

Course Credit - Carnegie Units

Carnegie unit credit is granted only for courses that include concepts and skills based on the State Curriculum for grades 9-12. Carnegie unit credit will be awarded for successful completion of a course based on a minimum of 150 clock hours of instruction over the school year. One-half unit of credit will be granted for the successful completion of a semester course with a minimum of 75 clock hours of instruction.

Carnegie units of credit may be granted to students for out-of-school work as part of an approved Work-Study (Co-op) Program. The maximum number of units earned in this way is two per year.

Any Work-Study Program for which such credit is granted must be part of the approved High School Program of Studies for Rockdale County and must meet guidelines of the Georgia Board of Education. Students who are high school juniors or seniors and meet the qualifications as specified in Policy IDCH (Joint Enrollment Programs) may earn Carnegie unit credit for successful completion of college courses as part of an approved college joint enrollment program. A course shall count only once for satisfying any Carnegie unit requirement for graduation. The same course cannot be used to satisfy a Carnegie unit requirement in more than one core area of study.

Carnegie units of credit for graduation shall be awarded to high school students participating in any eligible joint enrollment course using the ratio delineated in Policy IDCH (Joint Enrollment Programs).

A student shall meet the graduation requirements in effect at the time of enrollment in the ninth grade, regardless of the changes in requirements affecting subsequent classes.

Carnegie units will be awarded when the student has successfully demonstrated:

1. The required competencies contained in the course taken.
 - A. Units will be awarded on a 1/2-unit basis for a semester course successfully completed.
 - B. Unit credit will be given for successful completion of a course transferred from another accredited secondary school.
 - C. Unit credit will be awarded for the successful completion of a local school approved joint enrollment course.
2. Minimal completion of all required work in a course as demonstrated by the minimum of a 70 average for class, homework, and test requirements.

Credit for Work in Other Schools

In accordance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Standard 3.4.9, Rockdale County Public Schools will validate competency, by course, before awarding Carnegie unit credit for work completed at a home school or private school that is not accredited by SACS, one of the SACS equivalents, the Georgia Accrediting Commission, or the Georgia Private School Accreditation Council (GAPSAC). Specifically, Rockdale County Public Schools accepts at face value credit transferred from the New England, Middle States, Southern, North Central, Northwest, and Western Associations, as well as the Georgia Accrediting Commission and GAPSAC.

For students entering Rockdale County high schools from a non-accredited school or a home school program, either for the first time or upon re-entry, the following guidelines, which are identical to guidelines in policy JBCA-R, shall apply:

1. Any student from a home study program or a non-accredited school entering or re-entering grades 9-12 will be required to pass a school administered nationally-normed or locally written system test in each required content area unless the courses are sequenced.
2. Students scoring above the 50th percentile on a nationally-normed test or 70 or above on a system test will be awarded Carnegie unit credit for which we have documentation.
3. For courses which are considered sequential, students will be accepted on a probationary status. Students will be evaluated at the end of the first semester in the next course of the sequence. Acceptance of student transfer grades and course credit will be determined at that time, based on satisfactory student performance of a score of 70 or above in the course for which the student is currently enrolled.
4. All students meeting the criteria to receive Carnegie unit credit will be given a P (pass) on their transcript. Those not meeting the criteria to receive Carnegie unit credit will be given an F (fail). No credit will be awarded for an F.
5. P (pass) on a student's transcript does not affect a student's cumulative GPA.
6. No credit will be given for course work obtained in a home study program or nonaccredited school unless comparable course work is offered as a part of the local school system curriculum.
7. All students enrolled in a public school are evaluated on a periodic basis in order to assess student achievement and program effectiveness. Students entering or re-entering the Rockdale County Public Schools will be required to participate in all state or local testing programs when applicable (i.e., graduation exam).

End of Course Tests (EOCT)

End of Course Tests (EOCT) are State assessments for core subjects. EOCT is administered at the end of the second semester for all courses except Economics which is a ½ year course. The EOCT exam for Economics is administered at the end of the semester in which the course is taken. EOCT's are administered for the following eight courses:

Mathematics: Math I and Math II

Social Studies: United States History and Economics/Business/Free Enterprise

Science: Biology and Physical Science

English/Language Arts: Ninth Grade Literature and Composition and American Literature and Composition

Students enrolled in courses for which an EOCT exists must participate in the EOCT in order to obtain credit for those courses.

Grade Placement

Grade placement in high school is based on the following units:

5 units = 10th grade 11 units = 11th grade* 16 units = 12th grade

*In addition to 11 Carnegie units, a student must have earned at least two units each in math, science, English, and social studies to be promoted to the 11th grade. Class placement is made at the beginning of each academic year based on the number of units at that time.

Grading System - Academic Honors

Effective with entering ninth grade classes of 1995-96 and later, the system procedures for determining valedictorian, salutatorian, honor graduates, and the Superintendent's Academic Awards are as follows:

1. Each school will have a valedictorian and salutatorian at graduation. These will be determined as the students in the graduating class with the first and second highest-ranking cumulative GPA through the second semester of the senior year. In case of a tie with the GPA on a four-point scale, the cumulative mathematical average through the second semester of the senior year will be used.

In order to be eligible for valedictorian and salutatorian, a student must:

- Be enrolled in the school from which he/she graduates for the two full semesters of the senior year, and
- Successfully complete the classes that are the equivalent of four semesters or six quarters of AP and/or joint enrollment courses, or any equivalent combination thereof.

The principal reserves the final choice as to whether there shall be speakers at graduation ceremonies and, if any, who they shall be. This honor does not go automatically to the valedictorian and/or salutatorian. Valedictorians and salutatorians shall be recognized and shall have the opportunity to have an active part in graduation ceremonies.

2. Honor graduates will be determined based on the cumulative GPA through the second semester of the senior year. The cumulative GPA must be 3.50 or higher with no rounding allowed. Only Advanced Placement and joint enrollment course grades are weighted (provided AP test is taken).

Grades are weighted in the following manner:

A = 5.2 B = 4.2 C = 3.2 D = 2.2 F = 0.0

3. Superintendent's Academic Awards will be given to the top ten students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades at each high school and the Magnet School. The top ten students will be determined based on their cumulative GPA through the end of the first semester. In case of a tie with the GPA, the mathematical percentage average will be used. In order to be eligible to receive the Superintendent's Academic Award, a student must have been enrolled in the high school for a minimum of two years.
4. All academic honors are based on a four-point scale, with quality points added only for Advanced Placement (provided AP test is taken), joint enrollment, Magnet math, Magnet science, and Magnet research classes.

Grading System - Advanced Placement and Joint Enrollment

In the Rockdale County high schools, the following letter grades are awarded for the numeric scores listed below:

90 - 100 = A 80 - 89 = B 75 - 79 = C 70 - 74 = D Below 70 = F (failure)

Quality points are used to calculate the grade point average (GPA) of each student. Students may have two GPAs: a regular "non-weighted" GPA, and a "weighted" GPA. The non-weighted is based on a four-point scale (A=4, B=3, etc.) in which the grades for each class, regardless of level, earn the same number of quality points. The weighted GPA gives an additional 1.2 quality points (A=5.2, B=4.2, etc.) for grades received in Advanced Placement (provided AP test is taken), joint enrollment, Magnet math, Magnet science, and Magnet research classes. Since colleges and universities generally do not recognize weighted GPAs, but require the unweighted GPA for admission, all Rockdale County high schools have eliminated extra quality points for most classes. Extra quality points are given only for Advanced Placement (provided AP test is taken), joint enrollment, Magnet math, Magnet science, and Magnet research classes.

Note: HOPE eligibility weights only AP and IB (International Baccalaureate) courses up to a maximum grade of 4.0.

Graduation Requirements

The Board of Education defines as a major role of secondary schools the responsibility for providing the youth of Rockdale County with opportunities to acquire and to apply basic skills necessary for life. Such skills are defined as those that enable one to address effectively and efficiently the decisions and opportunities presented in a free, technological society.

Secondary school instructional delivery and support services shall reflect the high school graduation requirements and assist all students to develop their unique potential to function in a global society.

To be eligible for graduation from a Rockdale County high school, a student must meet requirements in the following areas:

1. Attendance
2. Carnegie units of credit
3. Core curriculum courses
4. Passing scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Tests referenced in Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-3-1-.07 (Testing Programs - Student Assessment).
5. Students who are enrolled in courses that are involved in the EOCT, as identified by the Georgia Board of Education, shall participate in the EOCT in order to earn credit for any of those courses.

Students who complete Carnegie units, core curriculum, and attendance requirements, but choose to end their formal schooling prior to passing the Georgia High School Graduation Test, will be awarded the Certificate of Performance.

Students who are in a special education program have the opportunity to receive a high school diploma by meeting the appropriate requirements. In addition, a student in a special education program who does not pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test and/or does not obtain the necessary core curriculum course credits may receive an Employment Preparatory or Life Skills Preparatory Diploma, provided that the requirements specified on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) are met. New regulations allow for rising 9th grade students with significant cognitive disabilities to obtain a regular education diploma provided that they were assessed with the Georgia Alternate Assessment in 8th grade and have successfully completed the Georgia Alternate Assessment and core Access classes in high school.

Report Cards - Reporting to Parents

Individual student progress shall be reported to parents or guardians by means of report cards generated at the end of each instructional period. Midway through the instructional period, parents or guardians shall be provided a progress report showing the progress of their child in each class in which the student is enrolled. The instructional period for all grades and all courses is 18 weeks. Grades are calculated as follows:

Courses without an EOCT

1st and 2nd semester grades

- 80% - grades earned during the semester
- 20% - Final Exam

Courses with an EOCT

1st Semester Grades*

- 80% - grades earned during the semester
- 20% - Final Exam

2nd Semester Grades

- 75% - grades earned during the semester
- 15% - EOCT
- 10% - Final Exam

* If economics is taken the first semester, the final grade is calculated with the same percentages as a second semester course with an EOCT.

Schedule Changes

Student schedule changes are limited to the first ten days of the semester. Should an extreme circumstance arise involving an individual student past the ten-day limit, the principal may authorize a schedule change in writing.

Tests Required for Graduation

- Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT)
- Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test (GHS GWT)

The Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) and the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test (GHS GWT) assess student mastery of Georgia's Curriculum. Both are statewide assessments administered to all 11th grade students (3rd year students with nine or more credits). The Georgia High School Graduation Test is administered in content areas of English, math, social studies, and science. A passing score on all tests is required to graduate with a regular diploma. If a student completes all the requirements for graduation except passing all of the GHS GTs and the GHS GWT, he/she will receive a Certificate of Performance. A student has five opportunities during the 11th and 12th grades to achieve a passing score on each test. A student will be allowed to return during future assessment periods to take the GHS GTs and the GHS GWT in order to obtain a high school diploma. Free remediation is provided during the school year and during the summer to students not passing one or more portions of the GHS GT or GHS GWT.

Other Learning Opportunities

In addition to the variety of courses in the curriculum, Rockdale County offers several programs to meet the special needs of students.

Alpha Academy

An alternative and complement to the traditional elementary/middle/high school program is the Alpha Academy. At Alpha Academy, students benefit from small class sizes that provide flexibility and the opportunity for individual growth. The primary goal of Alpha Academy is to help students become successful in school so they can return to their home school.

Student assignment to Alpha Academy may be made by a placement committee or as the result of a disciplinary tribunal.

Career Centers/Career Searching

Each high school has a career center that provides information on career opportunities and resources for personal and professional development. The career center specialists and high school counselors work together to help students make appropriate career and college choices.

Students are encouraged to begin career searching early. There are many great sources of information for students who are interested in exploring careers. Students can take career interest inventories, do volunteer work in an area that interests them, read and research particular careers, and write, e-mail, or speak to others in the field they are interested in pursuing. The Georgia Career Information Center is available to all students at www.gcic.peachnet.edu/. This website provides a wealth of information including a career interest inventory and helpful links to find schools of choice. The website www.gacollege411.org, also offers a career interest inventory and links to every public, private, and technical college in the state of Georgia. Another great resource is the Occupational Outlook Handbook found at www.bls.gov/oco/.

Community-Based Learning Experience

Community-based learning experience can be used in a planned program of study to complete requirements for graduation. Some of these programs involve students working for pay on or off campus in a job compatible with their career choice. Some positions such as internships will not be paid. Local school coordinators will help students apply what they have learned at school with what is learned in the workplace. See local school staff for details. These programs are designed for all students.

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

The goal of the ESOL program is to provide an opportunity for students whose dominant language is not English to acquire English proficiency and at the same time continue learning content. The school system identifies those students whose dominant language is not English.

These students may be those who do not speak English, learned a language other than English first, or speak a language other than English at home. The opportunity for English language proficiency testing is required by law for language minority students to determine their English proficiency for academic purposes.

Extracurricular Activities

Sports — Rockdale County high schools are members of the Georgia High School Association and adhere to its policies with regard to interscholastic sports and activities. All high schools have active teams participating in baseball, basketball, cheerleading, cross-country football, golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track, volleyball, and wrestling. Students are encouraged to participate in the sports program as their abilities dictate. For more information about competitive interscholastic eligibility and activities, contact the school's athletic director.

Clubs and Organizations — Many clubs and organizations are available at each high school. Some are open to all students while membership in others is restricted by academics and other requirements. Efforts are made at the beginning of each school year to attract all students to participate in those organizations and clubs that will appeal to them.

Governor's Scholarship Program

This scholarship must be funded annually by the state legislature. It is a merit based scholarship and its purpose is to recognize Georgia's high school valedictorians and STAR students, and to encourage them to attend a public or private college or university in Georgia by providing scholarship funds. Additional information on the Governor's Scholarship Program and requirements for eligibility can be found at: http://gacollege411.org/FinAid/ScholarshipsAndGrant/merit-based_scholarships.asp.

Hospital/Homebound

This program is offered to students who cannot attend class in a regular school setting due to illness or accident. Students must be projected to be absent a minimum of ten consecutive school days. Consult your local school for the form necessary for entry into the program. Arrangements to meet curricular needs beyond those provided by Hospital/Homebound teachers must be made through the Student Support Team at the student's home school.

I-Parent

I-Parent is a web-based program which provides secure, parental access to the following student information: current daily schedule, attendance history, assignment grades, the current average of each class recorded in the electronic grade book. Only one user name/password is required to view information for all of your children who attend Rockdale County Public Schools. You can access I-Parent from any location where Internet access is available. To create your I-Parent account, go to your school to receive an access key. Your school personnel will assist you in creating your account.

JROTC

The Leadership Education Program, known as JROTC, is a consolidated program available to qualified students in all of our high schools. It is designed to help the cadets develop into responsible and productive citizens. The curriculum is designed to enhance and complement the cadet's academic efforts in all classes. The development of character, self-discipline, and academic performance is the primary focus of the program.

Open Campus

The Open Campus alternative secondary program will provide a flexible educational opportunity to students who may be unlikely, for a variety of reasons, to reach their full potential in the traditional high school structure. The program is designed for students who wish to accelerate the manner in which they complete the remaining required units for graduation. This program provides an educational opportunity to students who are at least 16 years of age. Students must not currently be serving long-term suspension or expulsion. The general student population to be served will include but not be limited to:

- Students needing to makeup one or more courses for graduation;
- Potential dropout students who have the desire to join the work force before graduation;

- Actual dropout students seeking education while gainfully employed;
- Students with social, emotional, environmental, and/or self imposed issues;
- Traditional students with individual wants/needs;
- Students desiring accelerated completion of non-EOCT courses.

All students will be held to highest expectations for conduct and decision making while enrolled in the program. The school will operate on a mini-semester plan. The school year is divided into four - 36 day terms and a student is permitted to come and go as classes begin and end. Students attend classes 4 days a week, Monday – Thursday. Students are required to follow a strict Attendance Policy and may be withdrawn after five absences. A standard RCPS high school curriculum will be offered and delivered by a qualified faculty as well as computer supported instruction. All students will participate in an intensive advisor/advisee mentor program during their tenure at Open Campus. A student must complete the required number of units and pass the relevant GHSGT in order to graduate. Students participating in the graduation ceremony will be included in the procession at their home schools.

Applications for Open Campus are available through school counselors and graduation coaches.

Opportunities for Students With Disabilities

There are several agencies/services who work with students who have mental, physical, and emotional disabilities after they leave high school. Rehabilitation Services (Vocational Rehabilitation) is a publicly funded department. The employees of this department work with mentally and physically disabled students 16 years old and older. Contact can be made through the Special Education Department in the student's high school or by calling Learning Support, 1121 West Avenue, Conyers, Georgia 30013. 770-761-1451.

Other services are available through the following agencies:

1. Rockdale Industrial Opportunities – a publicly funded rehabilitation workshop for individuals with disabilities.
2. Group Homes – two publicly funded residential centers for disabled individuals whose families may be unable to care for them. Transportation is provided to other training centers during the day. Contact Rockdale CARES or Gwinnett/Rockdale/Newton Mental Health Services.
3. Warm Springs (GA) Vocational Rehabilitation Center – a residential center in which individuals with disabilities learn independent living skills and work skills.
4. Gwinnett/Rockdale/Newton Mental Health Services – Contact the developmental disabilities counselor.
5. Atlanta Services for the Blind.
6. Annandale Village of Suwanee – a privately funded residential center for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Post-Secondary Options

Tuition is paid to Georgia public post-secondary schools for high school juniors and seniors who meet certain criteria. These classes may be on a joint enrollment or early admission basis. Some of these classes are held in our high schools. Students must be age 16, or an 11th or 12th grader, have a 3.0 average in academic subjects, and meet ACT or SAT qualifying testing standards. These requirements are subject to change. See your counselor for more information.

Advanced Placement (AP) Classes

Advanced Placement (AP) classes are year-long courses based upon college level curriculum. They are taught at the high school during the regular school day. A national exam is given at the end of the course and graded by readers employed by the College Board. Many post-secondary institutions either award post-secondary credit for a successfully completed exam or allow a student to exempt certain courses. Some post-secondary institutions do not honor AP credit. The exam is optional, and the student is responsible for fees if the Georgia General Assembly does not continue to fund payment. Individual colleges determine guidelines for the awarding of credit.

Articulated Credit

Articulation is a partnership agreement between DeKalb Technical College or Gwinnett Technical College and the school system that provides an opportunity for students to earn college credit for courses that they take in high school that are the same as technical college courses. As an example through an articulation agreement a student enrolled in "Introduction to Drafting" in high school could earn college credit for "Introduction to Drafting" at DeKalb Technical College. To be eligible to receive articulated credit the course must be considered an articulated course and students must meet all college admission requirements for the college with which the course has been aligned, earn a numeric grade of 85 or better in the articulated high school course, enroll at the technical college within 18 months of high school graduation, and pass the technical college exemption exam with a score of 70 percent or above.

Early Admissions to Post-Secondary Institutions

A student who attends a post-secondary institution full time is responsible for getting grades sent to his/her high school for graduation. Both joint enrollment and early admissions can take place in a public or private post-secondary setting. If a student attends a Georgia public institution, post-secondary options rules apply. A student must meet certain requirements to maintain extracurricular eligibility and eligibility for honor graduate, valedictorian, salutatorian, etc. Consult local school administrators for details.

Joint Enrollment (Dual Enrollment)

Joint Enrollment allows qualified high school juniors and seniors the option to begin working toward a college degree, while still pursuing a high school diploma. This program enables participants to fulfill high school graduation requirements by taking college courses that provide dual credit, simultaneously completing high school course requirements, too. Students who meet specific criteria may enroll in courses at participating colleges and take eligible courses at the college for high school Carnegie credit and college credit. There may be course fees associated with these classes.

For more information about Post-Secondary Options, please talk with your counselor. The list of eligible courses may be found at the Georgia Student Finance Commission website at <http://gacollege411.org/FinAid/ScholarshipsAndGrand/accel.asp>.

Rockdale Career Academy

Rockdale Career Academy (RCA) is the district's charter school providing qualified high school students the opportunity to pursue programs of study in a wide array of Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) courses. Students attend RCA on a part-time basis and remain students of their regular high school. Study at RCA provides students the chance to earn college level credits while in high school through articulation agreements, dual enrollment, and joint enrollment coursework. Additionally, students may earn specialty certification in selected technical areas and participate in work-based learning opportunities. Following study at RCA, students are prepared to succeed in either the workplace or in pursuit of post-secondary studies. See your counselor for more information.

Rockdale Virtual Campus

Rockdale Virtual Campus (RVC) offers a student the opportunity to complete a variety of courses in an on-line format via a home computer. The online experience will also prepare students for the demands they will encounter in higher education, the workplace, and personal life-long learning. An online experience requires students to complete assignments, meet deadlines, learn appropriate online behavior, and effectively collaborate with others in an instructional setting while working independently. Students interested in learning more about RVC or taking a course through RVC should speak with their counselor.

Special Education

Special education programs are available to high school students who meet specific eligibility criteria in the following program areas: specific learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, speech/language impairments, visually impaired and/or hearing impaired, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, autism, and traumatic brain injury. All due process procedures as mandated by state and federal laws are strictly followed. Special classes are available for students who require more structured learning in a small group setting. Upon completion of these classes, students who meet the requirements will be given a regular course number indicating that the course may be used toward a diploma. Students meeting Individual Education Plan (IEP) objectives only will be given elective credit toward a diploma or credit toward an Employment Preparatory or Life Skills Preparatory Diploma. An Individual Transition Plan is written for each student to support his/her movement from school to adult life. For further information, Learning Support, 1121 West Avenue, Conyers, Georgia 30013. 770-761-1451.

Summer School, Intercession, Credit Recovery

High school students who do not successfully complete coursework needed to move on to the next grade or fulfill graduation requirements will be given opportunities through summer school, intercession, or credit recovery to remediate this coursework for the needed credit. Students are encouraged to talk to their counselor about these opportunities and to discuss their eligibility to participate.

Test Preparation Information

Ample test prep information is available to students on the Internet for free. Also there are test preparation materials available at each high school counseling office. The best preparation for any college admission test is by participating in rigorous coursework and by participating in the PLAN test in the 10th grade and the PSAT in the 10th and 11th grades. Using these tests as guides, students can get a wealth of test preparation help. Visit these websites for test preparation information: www.act.org (ACT), www.collegeboard.com (SAT), www.gacollege411.org.

Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) is a program of study combining school-based learning with structured work-based learning, which leads to a high school diploma, post-secondary credential, and a certificate of occupational skills. Students 16 years old and older who are interested in preparing for a career while enrolled in high school select a course of study such as: Automotive (service or collision), Banking and Finance, Business, Drafting and Design, Electrical, Law Enforcement, Health Occupations, Horticulture, Culinary Arts, and Teaching.

The sequence of courses guides each student's academic preparation. On-the-job training, guided by a skilled work-based mentor, prepares the student for entrance into a post-secondary institution. Students are paid for their work experience as businesses help produce successful workforce candidates.

After High School Planning Assistance

College/Post-Secondary Education

Numerous resources are available in the counselors' office and the career center regarding information about colleges and universities in Georgia and beyond. In addition, periodicals and software programs are also available to offer assistance with college applications, financial aid, and scholarships.

Employment

Assistance in seeking employment is available at each high school through the technical/career department.

Military

Recruiters are readily accessible to discuss with students and their parents the many opportunities available in the Armed Forces. ASVAB testing is available to assist students in planning for this option. Information on military careers, including officer training, is available from your counselor as well as in the career center.

Technical/Vocational Schools

Opportunities for technical training are available at some 27 public area technical schools and two statewide technical schools. In addition, many private training institutions are available. Counselors have this information for their students.

Planning Beyond High School

Post-Secondary Planning Calendar

9th Grade

1. Meet with your counselor to complete a Six-Year Plan.
2. Continue to focus on career possibilities.
3. Visit the career center to become familiar with resources.

10th Grade

1. Begin a formal measure of career interest and aptitude (i.e. Self-Directed Search, GCIS). Discuss your results with parents, other adults, teachers, and peers. Plan to take elective courses that are related to your career interests, and visit some job sites.
2. All 10th grade students take the PSAT in the fall of the sophomore year. The PSAT is given once in October. Preparation in algebra and geometry is related to better scores on the math section.
3. All students in the 10th grade take the PLAN in the fall. Scores correlate highly with ACT scores and academic preparation. The career interest inventory is also helpful.
4. Volunteer in a career field of interest.

11th Grade

1. Take the PSAT again in the fall of the junior year. Students must register to take the PSAT. Check with counselors prior to October regarding the PSAT date. To qualify for National Merit Scholarship and other scholarship competitions, the PSAT must be taken during the junior year.
2. Students planning to enter college take the SAT and/or ACT in the spring. Check post-secondary catalogs or the College Handbook to determine which test is required for admission.
3. Visit the high school counselor regularly. The counselor will guide students in the exploration of possibilities and in the application process. Take advantage of books, videos, and catalogs in the counseling office, media center, and career center.
4. Begin to visit post-secondary campuses.
5. Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse if interested in athletic participation in a Division I or II school (after second semester grades have been posted).
6. Begin the process for military appointments.
7. Visit campuses.
8. Consider taking an internship as part of your school schedule.
9. Volunteer in a career field of interest.

12th Grade

1. Maintain an academically rigorous course of study.
2. Talk with representatives of post-secondary schools when they visit the high school campus, attend the PROBE Fair, obtain scholarship information, and note test registration dates.
3. Retake the SAT or ACT in early fall to improve scores.
4. Select post-secondary and technical schools to which you would like to apply.
5. Visit the career center. Request information about scholarships, applications, catalogs, and financial aid. Sign up for scholarship notifications on www.fastweb.com
6. Submit application, application fee, and a copy of the high school transcript to at least two colleges. Prospective Division I or II athletes must send final transcript to the NCAA Clearinghouse.
7. Obtain Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA) from counselors or post-secondary institution after January 1. Forms are also online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Private institutions may require additional forms.
8. Visit post-secondary institutions of choice.
9. Finalize post-secondary choices.
10. Consider taking an internship as part of your school schedule.
11. Volunteer in a career field of interest.

Post-Secondary Admissions Standards

The high school curriculum is the cornerstone of the University System of Georgia admissions policy. Students should pursue a challenging and rigorous high school curriculum to be best prepared for a successful college experience. Students should consult with their high school counselor and parents to select courses suitable to their ability level in each subject area.

While the rigor of the high school curriculum is very important, it is not the only factor considered when determining an applicant's potential to succeed in college and eligibility for admission. The grade point average (GPA) in academic courses and standardized test results (SAT and ACT) are also considered. Information regarding these requirements can be found online at www.gacollege411.org/StudentPlanner/CollegeEntranceRequirements/usg. Some colleges also have additional requirements and admission requirements vary depending on the type of college and space available. Prospective students should check with the admission office for additional information.

Taking a Foreign Language

While the Georgia Department of Education will no longer require students to complete two years of a foreign language in order to graduate from high school (after 2012), the colleges and universities comprising the University System of Georgia WILL require the completion of two years of the same foreign language or two years of sign language in order to be considered for admission.

For online assistance planning for post-secondary options, visit www.gacollege411.org.

Post-Secondary Admissions Testing

Since different colleges, universities, and technical institutes have varying admission policies, students must carefully check into the admissions requirements for institutions to which they plan to apply. The school counselors can help with details of registering to take the various tests. Answers to the most frequently asked questions about college admission tests are provided in the next few pages.

PSAT/NMSQT

What is it?

The PSAT/NMSQT is a preparation for the SAT. It consists of verbal, mathematics, and writing skills assessments. This is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program and the National Achievement Scholarship Program. Only eleventh grade PSAT scores can be used for these scholarship programs.

Who should take it?

It is strongly recommended that all tenth and eleventh grade students seeking admission to a four-year college or university take the test. PSAT is a requirement for being accepted in the Governor's Honors Program and other scholarship opportunities.

When is it given?

The PSAT/NMSQT is given in October. Students should ask their counselor for specific dates.

Where is it given?

The PSAT is given at each high school on the Tuesday test date.

How do students apply to take it?

You will receive information at your school concerning the PSAT. There is no charge to 10th grade students. Students are given a booklet containing a practice PSAT and helpful test-taking tips, which should be studied carefully before the test date.

How are scores reported?

The scores are returned to the local high school along with an individual REPORT OF STUDENT ANSWERS. This report indicates the correct answers for each item on the test and the answers each student actually gave. The scores are reported for verbal, mathematics, and writing skills in a range from 20 to 80. Counselors will return the test booklets so students can carefully review any missed items.

How is it used for the National Merit and National Achievement Scholarship Programs?

A selection index score is derived from the PSAT scores. The selection index scores are used each year to identify the top one-half of one percent of students who expect to graduate the following year in every state. These students are called "National Merit Semi-Finalists" and may become "Finalists" in the National Merit competition. The PSAT score is also used to identify semi-finalists for the National Achievement Scholarship Program.

Students must take PSAT/NMSQT in October of their junior year to qualify for this program – even if they take the PSAT as a sophomore. The names, but not the scores, of the students who become semi-finalists are published by the National Merit Corporation and are distributed nationwide.

SAT (SAT I)

What is it?

The SAT is a nationally normed post-secondary admission test. The Georgia University System accepts the SAT or the ACT. The SAT consists of three parts – verbal and mathematical reasoning and the writing section.

The verbal section assesses reading comprehension and vocabulary. Items contain sentence completion and critical reading. The mathematics section presents problems generally associated with arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. Questions are in the context of application of mathematical knowledge in new situations. The writing section includes multiple choice questions on grammatical concepts and requires students to compose an essay.

Who should take it?

Students should consult either the specific post-secondary catalog or the College Handbook to determine if the institution of their choice requires the SAT. The College Handbook is located in the career center at each high school. Georgia colleges will accept the SAT or ACT.

It is recommended that most students take the SAT and/or ACT during the spring of their junior year and again the fall of their senior year. It is important to remember that the courses taken in high school contribute to achieving a successful score on the SAT and the ACT.

When is it given?

To find out testing dates and locations, visit www.collegeboard.com for annual SAT testing calendars or consult with Career Center staff or your counselor.

How do students apply to take it?

The registration should be mailed by the deadline, which is approximately five weeks before the test date, or as late as three weeks before the test date with payment of the late fee. The exact test dates, registration deadlines, and fees are available from your counselor or online at www.collegeboard.com. A fee must always accompany the registration. Students may obtain "Taking the SAT" from the counseling office. It is a sample full-length SAT given at an earlier date. It includes timing and scoring instructions and strategies along with correct answers for the practice test. There is also an official SAT practice test online. Visit www.collegeboard.com for more details about SAT test preparation. Students who require special needs accommodations should see a counselor before registration due dates.

Where is it given?

The SAT is administered only at official College Entrance Examination Board Test Centers. Students can select one of several test centers in Rockdale County or the metro Atlanta area. Students should consult with their counselor for exact dates and test centers.

How are scores reported?

SAT scores are reported directly by mail to the students. Each high school has a school code number. The student fills in this number on the registration form. This enables the student's high school to receive a copy of the scores. SAT scores also are sent directly to four institutions of the student's choice, indicated by assigned numbers in the Student Bulletin. Students can request that scores be sent to additional colleges or organizations by the payment of an additional fee.

Can the SAT be taken more than once?

Yes, the SAT can be taken as frequently as students desire. Some students taking the test more than once have improved their scores. Since score reporting is cumulative, score reports will include scores from up to five previous test dates.

What is the best preparation for the SAT?

The soundest preparation for the SAT is to take a wide variety of courses with emphasis on a college-prep curriculum and extensive outside reading. Most experts agree that the study of courses such as algebra, geometry, biology, chemistry, physics, foreign language, English, and social studies contributes to such preparation. Each high school has study materials, software, and preparation courses available.

SAT-II Subject Tests

What are they?

SAT II Subject Tests are achievement tests. They are one-hour tests that measure the student's knowledge of a particular subject and the ability to apply that knowledge. Tests are available in 18 specific subjects.

Who should take them?

Subject Tests should be taken by any student who intends to apply to a post-secondary institution that requires them. Students should check the college or university catalog. Many colleges exempt coursework based upon high scores on these tests.

When are they given?

They are given five times a year for most tests; twice a year for others (see the Student Bulletin). The Subject Tests are given on the same day as the SAT.

Where are they given?

They are given at the same centers as the SAT.

How do students apply to take them?

Students use the same applications and procedures as stated for the SAT.

How are scores reported?

Scores are reported in the same manner as the SAT, using the same range of scores.

PLAN

What is it?

The PLAN is a practice college admissions test similar to the ACT in format. It also includes a career inventory component.

Who should take it?

All tenth graders take the PLAN at no cost to the students.

When is it given? Where is it given? How do students apply to take it?

The PLAN is administered in October to all tenth graders at their respective high schools. There is no registration required.

How are scores reported?

Scores for English, math, science reasoning, reading, and a composite score are reported, each one ranging from 1 to 32. Test results are sent directly to the high school for each student. Students should use these scores as a personal academic assessment to determine subject areas in which improvement is needed.

ACT

What is it?

The ACT is a nationally normed college admissions test. All Georgia public post-secondary institutions accept this test. Many states outside of Georgia require it for admission. It consists of four tests: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

Who should take it?

Students should consult either the post-secondary catalog or handbook to determine if the institution of their choice requires the ACT. Georgia institutions will accept the SAT or ACT (see this section under SAT).

When is it given?

The ACT is given six times a year in September, October, December, February, April, and June.

How do students apply to take it?

Registration and planning information is available online at www.actstudent.org and well as in every guidance office. The application must be submitted directly to ACT. The registration should be mailed by the deadline, which is approximately five weeks before the test date, or as late as three weeks before the test date with payment of the late fee. The exact test dates, registration deadlines, and fees are listed in the Student Bulletin. A fee must always accompany the registration. Students may obtain Preparing for the ACT Assessment from the counseling office. Students who require special needs accommodations should see their counselor prior to registration due dates.

Where is it given?

It is given only at designated test centers. This information is in the application packet and online at www.actstudent.org. There are centers in Rockdale County and the metro Atlanta area.

How are scores reported?

Test results are sent directly to the high schools and are mailed to the students. Scores are reported for each subject area. In addition a composite score is reported, which is an average of the four scores. The range is from 1 to 36.

AP Tests

What are they?

Advanced Placement (AP) Tests measure achievement in freshman post-secondary level courses taught in the high school, and depending upon examination results, may enable students to receive advanced placement or post-secondary credit or both when they enter. They are recognized and accepted by a majority of the colleges and universities in the United States. Each subject area test is approximately three hours long. For each AP Test taken, 1.2 grade points will be added to each student's total grade point average for the respective class.

Who should take them?

AP Tests are designed to assess AP curriculum; therefore, students should be proficient in each area to be tested.

When are they given?

AP Tests are given in May each year.

Where are they given?

AP Tests are given at a designated location within Rockdale County. See your counselor or AP teacher for information about locations.

How do students apply to take them?

The AP teachers and counselors can give students information concerning the procedures for registering and taking the tests. Registration is always in advance of the test date. Students who require special needs accommodations should see their counselor prior to registration due dates.

How are scores reported?

Scores are reported directly to the student, the high school, and the post-secondary institution which the student designates. Scores range from 1 – 5. Most colleges accept a score of 3 or higher for college credit or college course exemption.

Schedule for College Admissions Testing

TEST	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
PSAT/ NMSQT	College-bound students	College-bound students	Not applicable
PLAN	All Students	Not applicable	Not applicable
SAT (SAT I)	College-bound students	College-bound students	College-bound students
ACT	Not applicable	College-bound students	College-bound students
SAT II – Subject Tests	Students who have excelled in a course of study	Students who have excelled in a course of study	Students who have excelled in a course of study and/or whose chosen college requires it
Advanced Placement	Students completing AP courses	Students completing AP courses	Students completing AP courses

Financial Assistance

Financial aid is available for attending post-secondary institutions such as colleges, technical schools, and career training schools. Upon application to the post-secondary institution, contact the school's financial aid officer to request the appropriate financial aid forms and to obtain additional scholarship information. Financial aid forms are used to determine the distribution of loans, grants, scholarships, and work-study opportunities for incoming students.

Students need to contact post-secondary institutions for information about campus-based awards. Students need to contact individual departments, if they have strong interests or talents in an area, to request information and special scholarship offerings.

All students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in January of their graduation year. Go to fafsa.edu.gov for online completion and instructions.

HOPE Grant

Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) is a scholarship program funded by the Georgia Lottery. Georgia residents enrolling in a technical certificate or diploma program at an eligible Georgia public college, university, or public technical college, may be eligible for the HOPE Grant regardless of high school graduation dates or grade point averages. The HOPE Grant covers tuition, HOPE-approved mandatory fees, and a book allowance. Additional information on the HOPE Grant and requirements for eligibility can be found at: www.gacollege411.org or by calling 1-800-505-GSFC (4732).

HOPE Scholarship

Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) is a scholarship program funded by the Georgia Lottery. Georgia residents enrolling in a degree program at an eligible Georgia public or private college, university, or public technical college, may be eligible for the HOPE Scholarship. Recipients must demonstrate academic achievement. The award at public institutions covers tuition, HOPE-approved mandatory fees, and a book allowance. If you wish to enroll in a Georgia private college, you may be eligible for a \$3,500 per academic year scholarship for full-time study or \$1,750 for half-time study (6-11 hours). Additional information on the HOPE Scholarship and requirements for eligibility can be found at: www.gacollege411.org or by calling 1-800-505-GSFC (4732).

Other Types of Financial Aid

1. **Loans:** A loan is money that you borrow and must repay with interest to the lender.
2. **Grants:** Money that is awarded as financial aid that does not have to be repaid. To apply for grant money, you must complete the appropriate financial aid form.
3. **Scholarships:** There are numerous scholarships available to Rockdale County students. Students should listen to school announcements regularly regarding the availability of scholarships and the criteria for selecting scholarship recipients. Many scholarships are based on some combination of leadership, financial need, and/or academic achievement. For entering freshmen, high school averages and SAT/ACT scores are often considered. To apply, complete the sponsoring agency's application for financial aid. Contact the financial aid office of each school you are considering to inquire about available scholarships.
4. **Work-Study:** Post-secondary work-study opportunities provide jobs for students who show financial need and who must earn a part of their educational expenses. This is a federal program administered by the college's financial aid office. To apply, complete the college's application for financial aid.
5. **Eligibility For Collegiate Athletics:** The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has established a central clearinghouse to certify athletic eligibility for Divisions I and II. This information is only relevant to students who want to participate in post-secondary athletics. If you intend to participate in Division I or II athletics as a freshman in college, you must be registered with and be certified eligible by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse (CH).

Please note that initial eligibility certification pertains only to whether or not you meet the NCAA requirements for participation in Division I or II athletics and has no bearing on your admission to a particular Division I or II institution. Please see the Athletic Director for further information.

Additional Sources for Financial Aid Information

The technical, two-year college, or four-year college or university your child plans to attend is one of the best sources of financial aid. A counselor at the school can assist you with the financial aid process and let you know of scholarship opportunities available from the school. Local scholarship information is usually filtered through each high school's career center. Students are encouraged to check regularly with their career center coordinator regarding local scholarship opportunities. Also check with the Georgia Career Information Center at www.gcic.peachnet.edu/, Georgia College 411 at www.gacollege411.org, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The Georgia Student Finance Commission also provides assistance to those who have questions regarding financial aid. This office can be reached by calling 1-800-505-4732 or visiting www.gacollege411.org. Students may also receive e-mail alerts for scholarships that they may qualify for by visiting www.fastweb.com.

Accel Program

Award and Course Eligibility

- Students who meet certain requirements may simultaneously be enrolled at an eligible **public** Georgia high school and an eligible Georgia **public or private** post-secondary institution taking college degree-level courses can receive an **Accel** Program award.
- Georgia residency and U.S. citizenship requirements for HOPE Program eligibility apply to **Accel** award eligibility as well. Residency and citizenship eligibility will be determined by the participating post-secondary institution.

Award Amounts

- For students attending **public** post-secondary institutions, the award amount for **Accel** is the same as for the HOPE Scholarship Program (tuition, HOPE-approved mandatory fees, and a book allowance).
- For students attending **private** post-secondary institutions, the award amount for **Accel** is the same as for the HOPE Scholarship Program (\$3,000 per academic year), prorated based on the number of hours enrolled.

Program Limits

- High school students enrolled in technical certificate/diploma programs will continue to be eligible for the HOPE Grant, rather than the **Accel** Program. Beginning Fall term 2004, hours for which HOPE Grant payment was received must be counted in the **HOPE Grant Paid-Hours** (63 semesters/95 quarters) and the **Combined Paid-Hours** (127 semesters/190 quarters) limits.
- All hours paid for by **Accel** will be included in the **Combined Paid-Hours** (127 semesters/190 quarters) limit, which includes payments from the HOPE Scholarship, HOPE Grant, and **Accel** programs

Rockdale County Public Schools
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Rockdale County Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the Rockdale County school system, the boundless learning community where students aspire to their dreams and success is expected of all, is to ensure that each student performs at his/her highest academic level and is a successful, participatory member of our democratic society, through a system distinguished by:

- fearless advocates for students;
- community alliance for students' success;
- empowering students to shape their own future;
- infinite learning opportunities for all; and
- customized measures of individual student success.

It is the policy of Rockdale County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, age, religion, national origin, or disability in educational programs, activities, or employment policies and practices.