



PROVIDENCE GUIDE

Providence School

December 2009

Gearing Up for the Holidays

You can just feel the excitement in the air: it's almost Christmas! For students, the anticipation for this time of year is second only to summer break. A long break is just around the corner! Presents! Parties! Time with family and friends! And most importantly, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

Before you start making all of your holiday plans, you still have to get through this semester. And that means finishing out the quarter and taking the dreaded semester exams.

Semester Exams are worth 20% of the semester grade. This means that this one test can have an impact on your semester grade. Here are some tips to make the most of the Semester Exam:

1. **STUDY EARLY.** If you haven't already started preparing, do so

now. Don't cram—it is a waste of time and can actually lower your test grade in some circumstances.

2. **GET HELP IF YOU NEED IT.** Whether it's a tutor,

teacher, it is smart to get some outside help if you are struggling.

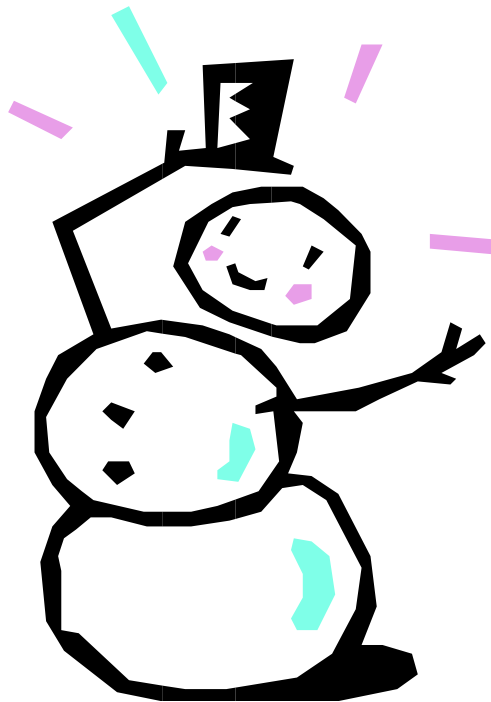
3. **GET REST.**

4. **EAT A GOOD BREAKFAST.**

5. **TRY NEW METHODS OF STUDYING.** Instead of just doing the same old routine of reading notes and making flashcards, try some new ways to study. Make yourself a test and time yourself. Get together with friends and do a game show with the information. Write about the subject, read it out loud, ect. The more senses you get involved with studying, the better.

6. **DON'T CRAM!** Break up your studying in chunks and notice the length of your attention span!

7. **ASK QUESTIONS IN CLASS.** Most teachers site that students who struggle don't ask questions. Asking questions is the simplest way of being prepared.



friend, parent, or

PSAT and EXPLORE Update

Counselors for grades 8-11 will be going over the PSAT and EXPLORE test results at the beginning of second semester. These tests are opportunities that Providence provides to ready students for college entrance exams and to get ready for the academic rigors of college curriculum.

Students will learn how to interpret their test results, study tips, and resources to make the most of high school to get ready for college.

One important and useful resource for students that took the PSAT (grades 10-11) is the College Board's My-Road website. This website

features an SAT study plan, career exploration, and college searches customized for that student. Go to www.collegeboard.com/quickstart to check it out!

SAVE THE DATE!

Senior students and parents are invited to come to our Financial Aid Night on Tuesday, January 12th from 6:30 -7:30 p.m. in the chapel of the New Life Christian Fellowship building. This meeting is geared toward Seniors who will be beginning college in the summer or fall of 2010. You will learn useful general information about the process of paying for college, including:

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- Scholarship Resources
- Bright Futures
- ...and more!

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Florida Bright Futures

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program has helped more than 405,000 Florida students attend a postsecondary institution. The program offers two levels of scholarship awards in which Providence students can be eligible for – the Florida Academic Scholars award (FAS) and the Florida Medallion Scholars award (FMS).

Your Responsibilities

It is your job to **know** and **meet** the requirements of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program before high school graduation and throughout your college career.

The Application

To apply for a Bright Futures Scholarship, you **must** submit a completed (error free) **Initial Student Florida Financial Aid Application** during your last year in high school (after December 1 and prior to graduation). **You must apply during your last year in high school, before**

graduation, or you will forfeit all future eligibility for a Bright Futures Scholarship. To apply online, visit

www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org, select “State Grants, Scholarships & Applications” and click on “Apply Here.” The application gives the Florida Department of Education permission to evaluate your high school transcript and test scores for eligibility for state scholarships and grants, including a Bright Futures Scholarship. You may apply prior to meeting all requirements. The School Counseling Department enters all your student’s transcript and test score information, so you do not have to worry about doing that.

Not Sure About College in Florida?

You **should** apply for a Bright Futures Scholarship even if you are considering not going to college, are planning to go out of state, are taking a few years off, or are enlisting in the military. Eligible students have up to three

years from high school graduation to begin using the scholarship.

Note: Initially eligible students who enlist in the United States Armed Forces immediately after high school graduation (within three years after separation from active duty), or students who receive a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and discontinue their education to enlist in the United States Armed Forces, commence the remainder of their seven-year renewal period upon the date of separation from active duty. *Make the Grade*

It is your responsibility to earn the necessary Grade Point Average (GPA) in the **required** high school classes. Not all high school courses will qualify you for a Bright Futures Scholarship. Ask your guidance counselor or refer to the Bright Futures Web site for course information.

Earn the Score

To qualify for a Bright Futures Scholarship, you **must** earn the minimum required test score (SAT or ACT) for the award for which you wish to qualify.

For Freshman Only

Freshman students remember the following:

- Each semester counts towards college admissions from now until graduation!
- Your #1 job is to get the best grades possible.
- If you have questions about your four-year plan, please make an appointment to see

Ms. Dillon.

- Get involved with community service and leadership activities to strengthen your standing for college admissions.
- It’s never too early to explore careers and colleges! Come by the School Counseling Office if you need help getting started.

Freshman! Every semester counts! Make the most of it!

Sophomores, Take Note!

- Keep up your grades
- Revitalize yourself over the break.
- Explore career interests by using College Board’s My-Road site.
- Keep up with your community service hours.

- Take advantage of help sessions.
- Participate in as many leadership and extracurricular roles as possible.



SOME HELPFUL WEBSITES:

- www.collegeboard.com
- www.act.org
- www.fastweb.com



Junior Corner

COLLEGE PLANNING TERMS

Common/universal application.

Form that allows a student to submit one application to many different schools. Both are available online: <http://www.commonapp.org> and <http://www.universalcollegeapp.com>. Some schools also require supplemental forms.

Early decision.

A binding agreement between you and the school. You apply early, and if admitted, are bound to attend the school. The application deadline occurs early and the admission decision is delivered early.

Rolling admissions.

A process in which a school reviews applications and makes decisions on them throughout the year.

Early action.

You can apply to an early action school and receive your admission response early. The decision is usually non-binding, but you may agree to forgo applying to other early action/early decision institutions. When conditions apply it is sometimes called Restrictive Early Action.

Open admissions.

An admission decision, usually made by public junior and community colleges, without regard to your academic performance.

Transcript.

The official record of your educational achievements, provided by your high school.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The key to unlocking student financial aid, it should be completed and submitted as soon after January 2 as possible. The form and supporting information can be found at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

You can find glossaries of college and financial aid terms on several websites, including:

Finaid.org:

<http://www.finaid.org/questions/glossary.phtml>

College Confidential:

<http://tinyurl.com/4vfskn>

FastWeb: <http://tinyurl.com/545n5f>

ALSO! Do not forget to be keeping up with your community service hours!

College Admissions Update

Even though it is early in the college admissions season to be getting decisions from colleges and universities, our students are already getting good news about their admissions applications. We are still eagerly waiting on decisions from many more schools, so be on the lookout for additional updates next semester. If a student has been accepted to a school, we want to know! Please come by the School Counseling Office and share with us your good news. If a student has been deferred or denied, we would also like to know that. We can give some valuable advice and assistance in those situations as well.

Congratulations to all of the students who have gotten admitted to college and universities. So far, students have been admitted to the following schools:

- University of North Florida
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Lee University
- University of Alabama
- Florida Southern
- Stetson University
- Flagler College
- Gardner Webb
- University of South Florida
- Auburn
- Liberty University
- University of West Florida
- Norwich University
- Eckerd College
- University of Tampa
- Florida Atlantic University
- University of Central Florida
- Georgia Southern
- Middle Tennessee State University
- Jacksonville University
- Savannah College of Art and Design
- Samford University

The Providence Guidance Staff

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Wilkins's Wisdom

The Scholarship Search

Searching for scholarships takes commitment and perseverance. It can truly be like a part-time job but the payoff can be immense. Beginning the process early will help you feel more prepared as your senior year draws to a close. The following tips are meant to help you in your search.

If it sounds too good to be true, it is. If it guarantees you money for a college education watch out...you could end up in North Dakota. "There is a small processing fee." Don't pay for it!

So many parents are willing to go to great lengths to find a scholarship. So many scholarship-finding services will tell you that millions of dollars go unused every year. The fact is that **nearly all the money for financial aid comes from the colleges themselves** or from the federal government.

Private scholarships available through universities are usually earmarked for students with particular talents or qualifications. They are not a secret...you only need to **check out the scholarship portion of the college's website to see what's available.** Parents also should check to see if their employers have any sort of scholarship program.

Here are some tips for spotting scams:

The worst of the worst is:

www.FAFSA.com instead of www.FAFSA.ed.gov. The dot-com site asks for \$25. The government site is free!

"The scholarship is guaranteed or your money back!" If this sounds too good to be true, get refund policies in writing before you pay.

- "You can't get this information anywhere else!" There are so many lists available on the internet and through legitimate websites. Do the search yourself.
- "We just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship." Never give out this information.

"You've been selected by a national foundation to receive a scholarship" or "You're a finalist" in a contest you never entered. Make sure the foundation or program is legitimate. Again, don't send money.

Legitimate scholarship search organizations such as www.schoolsoup.com and www.FinAid.org can not only help you identify scams, but can also **offer you a window to legitimate scholarships available** from independent

grantors.

There are no tricks to the financial aid system. **Your very best contact about aid is the college financial-aid officer,** who can help you determine that you can pay for college. They conscientiously try to use all the money they have according to their institution's award criteria and available funds. The financial-aid officer is your best ally. Providence's Guidance web site and school office are both good sources of information! Go to the [Providence School Web Page](#); click on *high school*; click on *guidance*; click on *scholarships and financial aid* to get up-to-date scholarship information.