**2017 Dallas County College Texting Tool**

**Information for Lancaster High School**

*Even after gaining acceptance into college, many seniors face hurdles enrolling in college, including financial aid, housing applications and registering for classes. With these challenges, many Dallas County seniors fall off track, or “melt” at some point during their senior year or the summer, and do not enroll.*

***To support seniors through the process, Lancaster ISD is participating in a regional texting tool that will allow students to receive reminders about college process deadlines and give students the ability to text Mr. Vasquez our college advisor with questions.***

**How It Works**

* Students can **text Lancaster ISD** to **(972) 992-1681** to opt-in.
* Students will receive information about financial aid, application deadlines, registering for classes, and other important things they’ll need to know before enrolling in college.
* Students can text questions about the college process and connect directly with Mr. Vasquez from now through their first weeks of college.
* If a student decides to enroll in one of the higher education partners, they will receive deadline reminders specific to that college and be able to text with the admissions/financial aid staff. **Partners include Dallas County Community College District, Paul Quinn College, Prairie View A&M, Texas Woman’s University, UNT-Dallas, UNT-Denton, UT Arlington, UT Dallas and Texas Southern University.**

**Why Should Students Sign Up?**

* **Connect with our Counselor/College Advisor**: Students will be able to have *real time* conversations about questions regarding financial aid or college applications with Mr. Vasquez.
* **Connect with College Staff**: Once students are accepted into college, they will be able to text with admissions and financial aid staff at their new college.
* **College Information**: This is our communication tool to have college conversations with our seniors from now through their first weeks of college. It breaks the college process into smaller steps so the process feels less overwhelming.
* **Parent/Mentor Texts**: At participating campuses, parents and mentors can also opt in to receive text messages in English or Spanish.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

* **Are students charged for participating?** There is no charge from us to participate, but standard messaging rates from students’ cell phone provider apply.
* **How often will the students receive texts?** No more than three times a week.
* **What are the texts about?** Financial aid, scholarships, college applications, orientation, registering for classes, resources specific to the individual universities, what to expect as a college student, settling into college life, etc.

**Our goal is to have as many students sign up as possible.**

**Together, we can help more of our students attend college and be on the path to successful careers!**

Questions? Contact svasquez@austin.utexas.edu

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**Tips to Encourage Students to Sign Up**

**Classroom Announcement**

*Share promotional flyer and sample post with senior sponsors, English teachers can read or print on materials/ post on board.*

* Sample post:
  + Lancaster High School seniors, sign up to text with Mr. Vasquez to receive deadline and scholarship reminders! Text Lancaster ISD to (972) 992-1681.
* Sample for audio or video broadcasted announcements (ex: morning announcements, sporting events):
  + Lancaster High School seniors, sign up to text Lancaster ISD to (972) 992-1681 with Mr. Vasquez your college advisor and local college admissions and financial aid staff for guidance through the college process from start to finish. Get answers to your questions about college applications, scholarships, and financial aid. Support continues through the summer into your first few weeks of college. Again, text Lancaster ISD to (972) 992-1681.

**Social Media**

*Add the announcement texts to your campus’ website, social media, marquee, etc.*

* Sample posts:
  + Seniors and parents text Lancaster ISD to (972) 992-1681 to text with Mr. Vasquez our college advisor for reminders and support on college deadlines and scholarships.
  + Seniors, did you know that you have an 85% chance of receiving money to go to college by filing the FAFSA or TASFA? Need help? Text to Lancaster ISD (972) 992-1681
  + Worried about the college process? We want to help! Text Lancaster ISD to (972) 992-1681 for more info!
* Follow @Commit2Dallas on Facebook and Twitter and @youcanaffordcollege on Instagram to receive more info or to see example college access posts.
* Visit <http://youcanaffordcollege.org> for a vast amount of advisor resources pertaining to college access.

**Involve Student Ambassadors**

*Call on high school seniors that are seen as leaders by their peers that can be ambassadors.*

* Schedule a meeting with student ambassadors to brainstorm how to promote the text reminders. Use this toolkit as a resource so they have a comprehensive understanding about what the texting tool entails.
* Have the student ambassadors visit classrooms to spread the word about how useful the texting tool is for applying to college.
* Ask students leaders to create their own posts or repost your posts on social media.