COLLEGE DECISION DAY
MAY 3, 2019
Site Coordinator Resource Guide
www.gentx.org
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We intend for these documents to be a useful guide for Site Coordinators when planning and implementing a GenTX Decision Day event.

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www.gentx.org
Dear Decision Day Site Coordinator:

On behalf of The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, thank you for hosting a GenTX Decision Day event on or around May 3, 2019 at your school! GenTX is a statewide, grassroots movement focused on creating a college-going culture in Texas.

GenTX Decision Day will be held at Texas High Schools to coincide with the National Decision Day, sponsored by the National College Advising Corps (NCAC). Decision Day is held annually on or around May 6 and is designed to coincide with the date that most seniors must inform a college of their plans to enroll. The goal of GenTX Decision Day is to recognize and celebrate seniors for their postsecondary plans and encourage younger students and families to prepare early for college. It is important we celebrate this big step for seniors and involving all of your students will help build a college-going culture.

GenTX College Decision Day is a culmination of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s (THECB) student outreach and college awareness activities over the course of a year. This celebration of seniors who are entering postsecondary education is the result of the hard work of students, teachers, parents, and community members during the GenTX Week College Application Campaign. At GenTX Day Seniors are reminded to complete the application process by making a decision about which college to attend and are recognized for their successful applications to postsecondary institutions and programs. Juniors and younger high school students rally in support as they start to think about their goals for postsecondary education. The entire student body is encouraged to participate.

GenTX Decision Day encourages community participation and engagement – festivities are often supported by local businesses and regional P-16 councils.

To help you prepare for GenTX Decision Day, we are pleased to provide the following resources through this Resource Guide:

- Planning Checklist
- Senior Enrollment Checklist
- Activity Recommendations
- Templates

Please contact GenTX staff at info@gentx.org if you have any questions or concerns about planning and implementing the event at your school. We will keep you updated regarding any changes or additional information you may find useful.

We will update our website www.gentx.org with program related information for this year’s GenTX Decision Day!

We thank you for helping drive this initiative and we look forward to continuing this tradition across Texas for years to come! Your participation will encourage Texas students and their families to make college a part of their future!
About GenTX Decision Day

What is GenTX Decision Day?
The goal of GenTX Decision Day is to recognize high school seniors for their postsecondary plans and encourage younger students and families to prepare early for postsecondary education. Decision Day is held annually on or around May 3 and is designed to coincide with the date that most seniors must inform a college of their plans to enroll.

College Decision Day is inspired by the NCAA’s National Signing Day to reinforce that excellence in the classroom should be given as much pomp and circumstance as excellence as an athlete. NCAA’s National Signing Day is when high school seniors sign a letter of intent to play sports at a specific college. Traditionally players participate in press conferences to announce their intentions. Our goal is to mimic this excitement for ALL students going to college.

GenTX College Decision Day is a statewide initiative for GenTX Day – all high schools in Texas are invited and encouraged to participate. College Decision Day addresses the gap between college application rates and enrollment rates among our students, and the complicated process for officially enrolling in college.

Why Host GenTX Decision Day?
- To recognize all students for their postsecondary plans
- To encourage and remind students it’s time to make a decision
- To support the best match and fit for each student
- To influence younger students as they prepare for college
- To support a college-going culture and wrap up the school year with a celebration

Expectations of Host Sites
While each school must decide for itself the benefit of hosting GenTX Decision Day and will organize an event that meets the needs of the school, at a minimum it is our goal to see host sites create an event that fulfills the following:
- Recognizes ALL students for their postsecondary plans (2-yr, 4-yr, military, postsecondary certificate)
- Recognition to happen in front of the entire student body
- Contact local media – encourage publicity beyond the high school building
- Have fun!
What’s in a name? Understanding the word “College”

College is important – there’s no doubt about it. In 2016, 42.3 percent of Texans population age 25-34 have some type of post secondary credential (Certificate or higher). At least 65 percent of all jobs in Texas will require a college education by 2020, and occupations projected to have the highest growth rate between now and 2020 require high levels of postsecondary education.¹ But what does that mean for our students?

Most workforce developers and education leaders use the word “college” to include any type of postsecondary education or training beyond high school. That means students have many options when it comes to attending college. But it also means a high school diploma or its equivalent is no longer enough.

On average, four-year college graduates earn about double the salary of individuals who stopped their education after high school.² And students who complete some form of postsecondary education are far less likely to be unemployed than those with just a high school diploma or GED.

Every Texas student should plan to complete some type of education beyond high school. The good news is Texas’s colleges and universities offer a wide variety of education options to fit the unique needs of all of our state’s students. Options include:

- **Educational Certificates**: Certificates are specialized programs of study that are usually intended for students planning to pursue a trade. Most of these programs can be completed in a matter of months, and Texas’s public community and technical colleges offer several certificate programs throughout the year.

- **Associate Degrees**: Associate degrees are awarded to students who complete a two-year period of study at a college. These degrees are often required for technical fields, but students can also pursue two-year degrees in business or other professional careers. Students can earn an associate degree through a public community or technical college — and associate degree students are often eligible for many financial aid programs.

- **Bachelor’s Degrees**: Bachelor’s degrees (or baccalaureate degrees) are awarded to students who complete a four-year period of study at a college or university. Students pursuing a bachelor’s degree take classes in their career field and in general education subject areas. Bachelor’s degree students also often qualify for state and federal financial aid programs.

¹ According to data from Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce.
² According to data from the College Board’s “Education Pays 2016” report.
Section II – Site Coordinator Planning

GenTX Decision Day Site Coordinator Checklist

This is a recommended planning process and timeline that implements the recommendations found throughout this Resource Guide. Dates listed below are a general guide and should be adapted to fit the needs of your campus. Your GenTX College Decision Day event will depend on the available budget and time. It is our hope this Resource Guide will save you some of that time and cost! Use the blank spaces for additional tasks necessary for planning your event. Remember, the earlier you are able to complete these tasks the better.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Completed</th>
<th>Recommended Completion Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Review Site Coordinator Resource Guide.</td>
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<td>3/1</td>
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<td>Connect with your P-16 council to discuss how the council can support your efforts.</td>
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| 3/8            |                             | Set up a GenTX Decision Day committee or team at your school to discuss the timeline and event. This may include school counselors/teachers/administrators, students, parents/guardians, higher education admissions/financial aid/outreach staff, P-16 Council representative, local businesses, etc. | • Evaluate current resources.  
• Evaluate budget. |
| 3/15           |                             | Determine type of event(s) and schedule based on resources and budget (see page 18): |       |
|                |                             | • Pep rally (low-cost)  
• Lunch celebration  
• Evening reception  
• Community picnic or fair (high-cost) |       |
<p>| 3/22           |                             | Discuss with teachers possible tie-in assignments for students related to the college decision process in the days leading up to GenTX Decision Day. |       |
|                |                             | • Ask art teacher to create a classroom challenge for GenTX Decision Day poster designs. |       |
|                |                             | • Ask art teacher to create a class project to design college mascots or pennants. |       |
|                |                             | • Ask finance teacher to create an assignment where students compare financial aid packages from colleges. |       |
|                |                             | • Ask math teacher(s) to give lessons on paying for college and calculating return on investment. |       |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tr>
<td>3/22</td>
<td>Brainstorm potential speakers (see page 18 for examples).</td>
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<td>3/29</td>
<td>Confirm GenTX Decision Day location and time</td>
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<td>- Share plans with school administration and staff.</td>
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<td>- Share final plans with GenTX by April 1 by completing the form provided on page 11.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>Invite/contact potential guest speakers.</td>
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<td>4/1</td>
<td>Contact colleges and local businesses asking for donations and sponsorship (see page 40).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Colleges may provide t-shirts, water bottles or lanyards to hand to students that have selected them as</td>
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<td>their college choice.</td>
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<td>- Local businesses may sponsor the purchasing of GenTX Day t-shirts, gift cards and/or gas cards.</td>
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<td>- Offer businesses GenTX Day posters to hang in their window.</td>
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<td>- Determine how sponsors will be recognized.</td>
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<td>4/1</td>
<td>Providing food? Contact a local restaurant or catering company.</td>
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<td>- Consider asking that the food be donated.</td>
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<td>- Provide estimate of the number of people invited.</td>
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<td>- Schedule food delivery/pick-up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>Provide seniors with the Enrollment Checklist found on page 14.</td>
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<td>4/5</td>
<td>Plan and prepare outreach and publicity efforts to get the word out about your event in your community.</td>
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<td>Discuss with your team possible volunteers and/or speakers to recruit. Ideas include:</td>
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<td>- Develop a press release to send local newspapers and TV stations (use template provided on pages 26 and</td>
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<td>27).</td>
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<td>- Brainstorm locations to hang fliers outside of the high school (public library, churches, coffee shop,</td>
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<td>etc.).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Encourage business community to wear college clothing to promote GenTX Day.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Make robocalls or send text message alerts to parents (if school already has system in place).</td>
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<td>- Develop social media posts (examples on pages 28-29)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Add event information to:</td>
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<td>- Morning/afternoon announcements</td>
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## Section II – Site Coordinator Planning

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Give the “Ask Me About It” flier to all staff and request they hang it on their doors.</td>
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| 4/5   | Begin volunteer outreach.  
  - Reach out to local stakeholders and P-16 council for volunteer assistance. |
| 4/12  | Finalize guest speaker arrangements for any pep rallies/assemblies (if applicable). |
| 4/12  | Send student and parent letter (see example on page 32). Notify both students and parents of the planned activity/activities.  
  - Encourage parents to attend  
  - Include information about comparing financial aid packages  
  - Remind them that it’s not too late to consider college |
| 4/12  | Buy all non-perishable items. |
| 4/12  | Confirm any additional personnel needed.  
  - Inform custodial staff of set up/clear up needs |
| 4/19  | Distribute press release to media (template on page 26).  
  - We recommend that you do this approximately 2 weeks prior to your event.  
  - Ask P-16 council to assist with media outreach if multiple high schools from one region are hosting events. |
| 4/19  | Finalize volunteer list.  
  - Confirm the time and place with all volunteers.  
  - Provide school visitor/volunteer policy (if applicable).  
  - Encourage them to wear college clothing. |
<p>| 4/19  | Confirm publicity and/or attendance of guest speakers for GenTX Decision Day related events. |
| 4/26  | Call catering/restaurant to confirm food delivery/pick-up. |</p>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>4/26</td>
<td>Follow up with media to determine if they’ve decided to attend. (Most media outlets will not decide until day of.)</td>
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| 4/26  | Wrap up senior meetings.  
- Review expectations of the event.  
- Confirm all seniors have informed you of their college choice if you’re planning to have a speaker announce vs students stating where they will attend. |
| 4/26  | Remind teachers, counselors, administrators of the day’s schedule and planned activities.  
- Ask them to wear college clothing on event day and decorate their classrooms with “college-going culture” materials. |
| 4/26  | Ensure your event supplies are ready.  
- Prizes or giveaways  
- Certificates printed  
- Decorations  
- Print student roster with college choice  
- Working PA system for music/ speaker(s)  
- Banner(s) |
| 4/30  | Set up decorations and music night before/day of. |
| 5/1   | Distribute media advisory day of event. (Template on page 27) |
| 5/3   | **GENTX DECISION DAY** |
| 5/3   | Remember to take pictures during GenTX Decision Day events and upload them to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. using the hashtag #GenTXDay. |
| 5/3   | Send thank you letters to volunteers, school administration, catering, businesses, colleges and universities, and guest speaker(s). |
| 5/3   | Send follow up letter to students who participated and their families. Congratulate them on being one step closer. Remind them of steps to take this summer. |
| 5/6   | Follow up with seniors to make sure all students have a postsecondary education plan. |
| 5/10  | Submit summary of activities to GenTX via survey to be provided by GenTX. Share any photos. |
## Section II – Site Coordinator Planning

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<th>Item/Service</th>
<th>Anticipated</th>
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Register Your Event - Form to Submit to GenTX

Generation TX wants to celebrate and promote the GenTX College Decision Day activities happening across the state. Help us by informing our staff about your scheduled activities.

Expectations of Host Sites
While each school must decide for itself the benefit of hosting GenTX Decision Day and will organize an event that meets the needs of the school, at a minimum it is our goal to see host sites create an event that fulfills the following:

- Recognizes ALL students for their postsecondary plans (2-yr, 4-yr, military, postsecondary certificate)
- Recognition to happen in front of the entire student body
- Contact local media – encourage publicity beyond the high school building
- Have fun!

********************************************

To register your event, complete the form at __________
by Monday, April 15, 2019
Examples of GenTX Decision Day Celebrations

Example #1:
“We hold a Signing Day that highlights academic scholars who have been accepted to college. We mimic the NCAA model with purpose to reinforce that excellence in the classroom should be given as much (if not more) pomp and circumstance as excellence on the field, court, etc. We host a school wide assembly, usually before lunch, where all students witness our seniors commit and physically sign a statement of intent to enroll, accompanied by admissions representatives from their respective schools. I’d even go so far to say it ROCKS. We also celebrate ALL seniors during a morning assembly once every kid has received an admission letter. We play a slide show of EVERY school that accepted our students and allow kids to wear sweatshirts/tees with the college of their choice over their school uniform. Since many of our students rely on Financial Aid to actually accept offers, we try to not push the kids to advertise where they are going since their dream school may not fund them and pushing them to recognize this fact hurts more the helps our mission.”

Example #2:
“We did this for the first time last year and loved it. We wanted to honor every senior's postsecondary plans whether they included 2-year, 4-year, military or certificate so we called it Postsecondary Celebration Day and held our event on 5/3. We kept it casual and had a quick morning event. We invited all seniors, their parents, underclassmen, and faculty to mingle in the cafeteria at 7:15 am to 7:45 am. We wanted parents to be able to stop in on their way to work. Students and faculty were instructed to wear college t-shirts. We had each senior picture hung up with their name and their plans. The PTO donated simple breakfast items such as coffee, juice, water, and muffins. We played college fight songs in the background. At about 7:30 our principal made a few quick remarks about how proud we are of our seniors and their wonderful plans, etc. It was a great day!”

Example #3:
“On May 3, or the closest to May 3 as possible, we do a senior signing where seniors wear the t-shirt/sweatshirt of the college they will be matriculating to. The faculty and staff also wear college gear of their choice. The seniors go to an area where they meet their counselor and sign a pennant with their name and the name of the college, career or post educational option. We take pictures and tweet them out and hang all of the pennants on the outside windows of our college center.”

Example #4:
“Our school invites seniors to wear colors indicating their plans for the following year on National Decision Day. With over 94% of our students going to two or four year colleges, many seniors are sporting college t-shirts or the colors from their school. Our JROTC students also tend to dress up. We also ask teachers to sport logo-wear from their colleges, to encourage conversations about their college experiences with students of all grades. Seniors are invited to the College Career Center over lunch periods for soda and cookies. We have them sign an official roster listing where they plan to attend. We have a table where students can write thank you notes to teachers, coaches, counselors or club sponsors for their help with applications. We also take solo or group photos of friends in their college garb or holding a pennant to indicate where they are going. Seniors know these pictures will go on a giant bulletin board outside the cafeteria listing “Where is the class of 2019 going?” This is a real "feel good" event that is great publicity for the college process and has low cost.”
Senior Checklist
Common Enrollment Steps

Colleges and universities require students to officially enroll in college, typically on or before May 3. Here are common enrollment steps, but be sure to check the college or university’s official website and correspondence for specific and up-to-date information.

☐ Talk to your family, teachers, counselors, college advisers, college outreach program staff, and people you trust to help you make your decision about where to enroll.

☐ If you’ve applied for financial aid by completing a FAFSA, read and understand your Student Aid Report (SAR) to find out how much financial aid you have received. If you have questions, be sure to share them with your college’s financial aid office.

☐ To enroll, follow the directions in the official acceptance letter/email you received from your college. Each college has its own steps and system for officially enrolling. Most likely, you will be directed to the college’s official website and instructed to log into the internal student information system. If you need help, don’t hesitate to ask questions to your college.

☐ Some colleges require a monetary deposit to officially enroll. This deposit can range from $100 to $500 or more. If you need help, don’t hesitate to contact the college’s financial aid office to discuss options.

☐ As part of the enrollment process, you may be prompted by the college to sign up for a campus email, campus housing, accept your financial aid award, and/or start the advising process to sign up for classes.

☐ After you have officially enrolled, you will also get information from your college about summer orientation and placement exams. Be sure to sign up for any required testing and attend orientation events.

☐ After you have officially enrolled, make sure to request a copy of your final high school transcript to be sent to your college.

☐ Check out your college’s summer reading list to get a jump-start on your college experience.

☐ Don’t melt this summer! “Melting” means you have followed all the steps to officially enroll in college but don’t show up when college starts in the fall. To keep you from melting, here are some tips:
  a. Stay active this summer through jobs, internships, clubs, sports, etc.
  b. Talk about your college/postsecondary dreams, plans, and fears to your friends, family, and people you trust.
  c. Figure out how you will physically get to college in the fall, and ask for help if you need it.
  d. Help your family prepare for your college experience – this isn’t just a life change for you, but also for them.
Next Steps for Students Who Haven’t Officially Enrolled in College

**Scenario 1:** Student has not yet applied to college or may have an incomplete application

a. Direct student to [College for All Texans](#) to explore postsecondary options and financial aid information.

b. Connect student with a technical college, community college, or a four-year university that has a late application deadline.

c. If application(s) are not complete, follow up with the official letter/email from the university to see what exactly is needed to complete the application. Reach out to the college directly to have a conversation.

**Scenario 2:** Student applied to college, but has not yet been admitted

a. Direct student to [College for All Texans](#) to explore other postsecondary options and financial aid information.

b. Connect student with a community or technical college.

**Scenario 3:** Student has been admitted to college, but has not yet decided or officially enrolled

a. Encourage student to talk to trusted adults and share feelings, questions and concerns.

b. Connect student with an admissions officer, financial aid representative, or other expert at the college.

c. Research the college/postsecondary institution’s steps to enroll and assist student in completing all that are required.

d. Assist student in connecting with financial aid assistance (particularly for help paying enrollment fees and deposits).

e. Help student complete a FAFSA and/or interpret any financial aid information that is received – ask the campus financial aid officer for help.
College-Going Culture and GenTX Decision Day

GenTX Decision Day is the perfect time to focus on building and enhancing a college-going culture within your school. Given that the goal GenTX Decision Day is to recognize high school seniors with postsecondary plans and to encourage younger students and families to decide on postsecondary education, here are some ideas for how this might look in your community.

Schools should acknowledge that College Decision Day could be an emotional day for all involved. Positive emotions for those celebrating their successes but also the possibility of some negative emotions for students who may not have been accepted to the college of the top of their list.

What is a college-going culture and how does it relate to GenTX Decision Day?

- **College Talk** – engaging everyone, at all times, in a variety of places, in talk about college/postsecondary education ensures that no matter where students turn or who they are talking to, college is being discussed and the question of “where are you going to college?” is asked by all to all.

- **Clear Expectations** – communicating and reinforcing the belief that all students can pursue postsecondary education and can take the steps to officially enroll in a college/postsecondary institution.

- **Information and Resources** – connecting students to relevant and necessary information about how to take the steps to officially enroll in college, and what to do if the student hasn’t yet applied to college or been admitted.

- **Comprehensive Counseling Model** – helping students and families with not only the steps involved in preparing for and enrolling in college, but also in dealing with the related stress of the college preparation, application, financial aid, and enrollment processes.

- **Testing and Curriculum** – supporting students through the college test preparation and exam process, what to expect with college placements exams, and how performance on these tests may impact a student’s postsecondary journey.

- **Faculty Involvement** – engaging educators to create a college-going culture among students both within and outside of the classroom. Ask the teachers on campus to be part of the GenTX Decision Day celebration.

- **Family Involvement** – engaging family members to increase the chances of student success in the college preparation, application, financial aid, and enrollment process.

- **College Partnerships** – developing relationships between K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions to support the official enrollment process and transition to college.

- **Articulation** – weaving in college access throughout a student’s life, starting at the earliest possible point and supporting the student all the way through high school graduation (and beyond)! Engage your middle school students and families in GenTX Decision Day activities to get them prepared early for what it takes to officially enroll in college/postsecondary education.
Ideas for Celebrating GenTX Decision Day

GenTX Decision Day will look different at each high school. It is important you plan an event that fits the needs of your students and community.

During the planning and implementation stages of your Decision Day event, keep your school staff apprised of the event schedule. Work with members of staff to identify the most effective schedule possible for your specific high school.

- Celebrate your seniors and their families and acknowledge their decision to enroll in college.
  - *Create a “College Wall.”* Seniors write the names of the postsecondary institution they plan to attend on banners or strips of construction paper to hang in a main hallway. Ask art teachers (if available) for additional promotional materials to create a “college-going culture” on the walls of your school.
  - *Announcements.* Make announcements over the school audio/video system to acknowledge students who decided to enroll and share where they will be going to college.
  - *Assembly.* Host an all-school assembly to celebrate the postsecondary plans of each of your seniors and their families. This could be an add-on to an already established school event or a stand-alone assembly. Be sure to invite all grade-levels to participate. Ask local businesses to donate prizes.
    - *Suggested prizes:* Microwave, mini-fridge, tablets, computer, college survival kit, thumb-drives, pencils, flags, t-shirts
  - *Community Picnic or Fair.* Host an afterschool community-wide picnic or celebration. This may require a larger budget, but will involve more community members and students of all ages.
    - *Food:* Pizza and BBQ chicken are always a hit.
    - *Entertainment:* Consider a DJ or local band, plan a flash mob, or provide games for all ages.
  - *Guest speakers.* Whether you host a school assembly or a community event, invite high school alumni, elected officials, college admissions and financial aid representatives, local business leaders, and parents to elaborate from personal experience on the importance of postsecondary education.
  - *Interviews.* Interview seniors about their postsecondary plans and send the articles to local newspapers, as public service announcements on local radio, as intercom/homeroom announcements, as ads in the school newspaper; or create a special section in the school newspaper that gives the names of seniors and their selected college.
  - *College gear.* Encourage students and school staff to wear college t-shirts on GenTX Decision Day.
  - *Social media.* As students bring in evidence of their postsecondary plans in the form of a college acceptance letter, or a similar offer letter, take pictures of the students with those letters/forms and post it to the school’s social media channels using the hashtag #GenTXDay.
Section IV: Creating a College-Going Culture

- **Involve teachers and staff.** In preparation for GenTX Decision Day, ask teachers to share their college experience, wear their alma mater gear and post signs on classroom doors advertising where they went to school. Promote the idea of postsecondary education, not a specific school.

- **Create early awareness of the steps needed to apply and enroll in college for younger students and families.**
  - **Workshops.** Possible topics: decision making, learning styles, study habits, the importance of GPA and high school course selection, college test prep, how to get help with grades and test prep, essay writing, applying to college, college admission criteria, [ApplyTexas](https://applytexas.org), paying for college, “I’m admitted – now what?”, etc.
  - **Web resources.** Use [GenTX](https://genTX.com) and [College for All Texans](https://collegeforalltexas.org) web resources to engage 9th-11th grade students.
  - **College spotlight.** In the months or weeks leading up to GenTX Decision Day, choose a different postsecondary institution to feature in each morning’s announcements. Play the school’s fight song. Ask trivia questions and award prizes for correct answers.
  - **Adopt-a-College.** Each classroom can “adopt” a college to represent for the rest of the year. This can be the teacher’s alma mater or the class may select a college/university. Students can decorate the classroom door with the college/university colors and logo.

- **Conduct one-on-one or classroom visits with seniors and ask students if they have:**
  - Applied to college?
  - Been admitted to college?
  - Officially notified the college or university that they will enroll?
  - Completed the FAFSA?

- **Gather students’ college choices in advance.** Some schools require seniors to bring evidence of their postsecondary plans in the form of a college acceptance letter, or similar offer letter.
  - **Day of:** The simplest and quickest way to ensure you have the college decision for each student is by handing the student a blank note card a few minutes before the event begins. Ask each student to write down their name and selected college. This method is sometimes used during graduation ceremonies.
  - **Week(s) prior:** Survey the seniors or schedule one-on-one visits. Ask the seniors to provide basic information of where they plan to go to college, where they are in the enrollment process, questions they have, and how you can assist them.
Promoting GenTX Decision Day in Your Community

The following are recommendations for promoting your GenTX Decision Day event.

- **Bring together a planning committee** to decide on the options and brainstorm additional activities, then make assignments and set deadlines. This committee may include different groups such as faculty, staff, families, student groups, college representatives, P-16 council representatives, and community members. The committee should begin as early as February or March identifying activities to be implemented throughout the spring semester to promote GenTX Decision Day.

- **Set goals** for the number of seniors enrolling, number of younger students engaged, number of volunteers, etc. Remind everyone of these goals and the importance of reaching as many people as possible in order to promote a college-going culture in your school community.

- **Hold special meetings or workshops** such as a College Alumni Parent Night and “Ask Me About It!” (see page 21) as opportunities to help students make a decision that is the best match and fit prior to GenTX Decision Day.

- **Hold one or more “Senior Meetings”** with school staff to facilitate communicating high expectations for GenTX Decision Day activities to students. Often principals hold these types of meetings to communicate information.

- **Send email or text reminders** to all parents, students, and school staff in addition to the official Student / Family letter. Also, include information in the school newsletter and post fliers around the school and community about your GenTX Decision Day event.

- **Media.** Write and send a press release inviting local media to your event(s).

- **Recruit volunteers from students’ families and community organizations.** Be creative! Send the volunteer letter to your local P-16 Council, volunteer groups, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, church groups, businesses in the community, banks, etc. Your P-16 council will be able to help you establish a point of contact.
Section IV: Creating a College-Going Culture

Sample Activities

“Ask Me About It!” Activity

**Purpose**
- To identify staff members by their institutions of higher education.
- To engage students in dialogue with faculty and staff members regarding college access, college preparation, application, enrollment, etc.

**Activities**
- Have the entire faculty and staff display an 8 ½” x 11” poster that lists alma maters (colleges and/or universities where they completed degrees).
- Post college signs and display them all year.
- Create a scavenger hunt during a specific time-frame (i.e., during homeroom) and allow students to complete the challenges for as many different schools as they can find, the school farthest away, the school with the most alumni, etc. Award small prizes.
- Explore Compare College TX in the classroom while teachers share their college experience.

**Preparation**
- E-mail a sample sign like the one included in this Handbook to all faculty and staff and designate a posting date.
- Scavenger hunt – provide copies to every home room.

College Alumni Family Night Activity

**Purpose**
- To familiarize families and students with 2- and 4-year public and private colleges and universities.
- To engage students in dialogue with faculty and staff members regarding college access, college preparation, application, enrollment, etc.

**Activities**
- Have staff and parents represent the colleges and universities. Ask parents and staff to wear college and university shirts and hats and display flags or other items of interest to represent their institutions of postsecondary education.
- Invite college admission offices and postsecondary institutions to send materials for display and/or to send staff to attend.

**Preparation**
- Schedule an evening, possibly in conjunction with a PTSA meeting. Reserve a space and make a promotion plan. Ask parents and the PTSA officers to provide refreshments and college paraphernalia door prizes.
- Invite parents and staff to represent colleges and universities for your student body.
- Invite admission counselors from nearby colleges to set-up information tables.
- Create sign-in sheets for each college/university represented to record attendance and collect comments.
- Create a “Good Questions to Ask” sheet for students to use as they visit alumni and collect information on their selected schools of interest.
Ask me about it!

____(TEACHER/STAFF MEMBER’S NAME)____

GENERATION TX

DEcision Day

MAY 3, 2019

I graduated from...

______ (COLLEGE)______

(Add mascot image or campus logo)
### College Bingo Activity

This is a good activity for 9th-11th graders. Complete your bingo card by locating teachers or other school staff members that experienced the following college scenarios or can answer “yes” to the following questions. Be sure to get the individual to sign in the space, and you can only use each person for one space!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended a 4-Year College</td>
<td>Lived at Home While Attending College</td>
<td>Worked Full-Time While Attending College</td>
<td>Is Still Close Friends with His/Her College Roommate</td>
<td>Studied Abroad While in College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a College in Texas</td>
<td>Went to College on a Scholarship</td>
<td>Changed Majors 2 or More Times</td>
<td>Attended a 2-Year College</td>
<td>Majored in Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majored in Science</td>
<td>Attended an Out-of-State College</td>
<td>FREE SPACE</td>
<td>Worked for the School Newspaper, TV Station, or Radio Station in College</td>
<td>Met His/Her Partner in College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived on Campus</td>
<td>Is Currently Enrolled in a College Program or Course</td>
<td>Had a Mentor or Other Close Advisor in College</td>
<td>Was President or Leader of a School Club</td>
<td>Has Completed Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended 2 or More Colleges</td>
<td>Wishes They Were Still in College</td>
<td>Ate Ramen Noodles Several Times a Week While in College</td>
<td>Played Sports in College</td>
<td>Took Out Student Loans to Pay for College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHO? Class of 2019, families and underclassmen

WHAT? Seniors across the state will announce their college decision.

WHERE? [NAME OF SCHOOL, ROOM NUMBER OR LOCATION]

WHEN? [DATE AND TIME OF EVENT]

WHY? To celebrate and recognize our seniors for their college decisions and hard work leading up to this decision.

For more information or questions please contact: [SITE COORDINATOR NAME]

[Add high school logo or mascot]
[Place on SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

**Media Contact:** [NAME]
**Phone:** [NUMBER]

**[TITLE EXAMPLE: May 3 is GenTX Decision Day: Where Will [High School Name] Students Go to College?]**

**[Date] [City] –** May 3 is a big day across Texas and the nation in the college admissions process. It’s the day by which seniors nationwide must inform colleges of their plans to enroll and, across the country, seniors will be participating in Decision Day festivities to announce and celebrate their postsecondary education plans.

[Name of your high school] will participate in Texas’ inaugural GenTX Decision Day on May 3, 2019. We will be hosting our Decision Day to celebrate the seniors of the Class of 2019 as they make this important decision to attend college, trade school, or pursue other postsecondary education.

[Name of site coordinator or school principal], GenTX Decision Day event site coordinator/Principal for [name of your high school], expects more than [insert number] seniors to participate. [Insert quote similar to: “This celebration will continue to create a college-going culture within our school as well as within the community. We are extremely proud of our senior class for taking this next big step for their future.”]

The [School Name] GenTX Decision Day 2019 will take place on May 3 from [time] in [location]. Students, parents, school administrators, teachers, staff and community members are invited to join in the celebration. [Include information about the event – will there be anyone speaking? Games? Prizes? Food?].

For more information about [name of your high school], please contact [name of site coordinator] at [contact information].

**Communication is Key to Successful Outreach!**
Include information specific to your event and send to local media outlets (newspapers, TV stations, community newsletters, etc.). Also disseminate via your school/ school district’s website.
Comunicado de Prensa Muestra

¡Comunicación es la clave para alcanzar éxito!
Incluir información específica de su evento y enviar a los medios de comunicación locales (periódicos, estaciones de TV, boletines, etc.). También dar a conocer a través de su escuela o distrito escolar.

[Lugar de la escuela MEMBRETE]

Contacto de prensa: [NOMBRE]
Teléfono: [NÚMERO]

[TÍTULO EJEMPLO: 3 de Mayo es Día de Decisión GenTX: ¿Dónde [Nombre de Escuela secundaria] estudiantes van a la universidad?]

[Fecha] [Ciudad] – 3 de Mayo es un día grande en todo el estado de Texas y de la nación en el proceso de admisión a la universidad. Es el día en que estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria nivel nacional deben de informar a los colegios de sus planes para inscribirse y, en todo el país, estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria, participarán en las festividades del Día de Decisión para anunciar y celebrar sus planes de educación postsecundaria.

[Nombre de Escuela secundaria] Participará en el Día de Decisión GenTX de Tejas inaugural el 3 de mayo de 2019. Celebraremos nuestro Día de Decisión para los estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria de la clase del 2019 por hacer esta importante decisión de asistir a la universidad, escuela, o dedicarse a otras educación terciaria.

[Nombre del organizador de sitio o director de la escuela], Día de Decisión GenTX lugar del evento organizador/director de [Nombre de escuela secundaria], esperara más de [insertar número] estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria para participar. [Insertar cita similar a: "Esta celebración continuará para crear un colegio de cultura dentro de nuestra escuela, así como en el seno de la comunidad. Estamos muy orgullosos de nuestra clase de estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria para tomar este próximo gran paso para su futuro. "]


Para obtener más información acerca de [nombre de la escuela secundaria], póngase en contacto con [nombre del organizador] en [información de contacto].
Sample Media Advisory

[Place on SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

Media Contact: [NAME]
Phone: [NUMBER]

TITLE EXAMPLE: May 3 is GenTX Decision Day at [High School Name]

[Date] [City] – May 3 is a big day across Texas and the nation in the college admissions process. It’s the day by which seniors nationwide must inform colleges of their plans to enroll and, across the country, seniors will be participating in Decision Day festivities to announce and celebrate their postsecondary education plans.

What: [Name of your high school] will participate in Texas’s inaugural GenTX Decision Day on May 3, 2019. We will be hosting our Decision Day to celebrate the seniors of the Class of 2019 as they make this important decision to attend college, trade school, or pursue other postsecondary education.

When: [insert date] from [time]

Where: [location]

RSVP: [name, title, contact information]

Press: This event is open to the media. We ask that you RSVP in advance. If you are unable to RSVP, please check in at [Name of your high school]’s main office.

Event Highlights:
• [Insert speaker names and info]
• [Insert plans for games, prizes]
• Announcing seniors’ postsecondary plans
[Lugar de la escuela MEMBRETE]

Contacto de prensa: [NOMBRE]
Teléfono: [NÚMERO]

TÍTULO EJEMPLO: 3 de Mayo es Día de Decisión GenTX [Nombre de Escuela secundaria]

[Fecha] [Ciudad] - 3 de Mayo es un día grande en todo el estado de Texas y de la nación en el proceso de admisión a la universidad. Es el día en que los estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria nivel nacional deben de informar a los colegios de sus planes para inscribirse y, en todo el país, las personas de la tercera edad, que participarán en las festividades del Día Decisión para anunciar y celebrar sus planes de educación postsecundaria.

Qué: [Nombre de tu escuela] participará en el Día de Decisión GenTX de Tejas inaugural del día 4 de mayo de 2019. Celebraremos este día para los estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria de la clase del 2019 como hacen esta importante decisión de asistir a la universidad, escuela, o dedicarse a otras educación terciaria.

Cuando: [insertar fecha] desde [tiempo]

Dónde: [lugar]

Reservación: [nombre, título, información de contacto]

Prensa: Este evento está abierto a los medios de comunicación. Lo único que te pedimos haga reservaciones adelantadas. Si usted es incapaz de Reservar, por favor, compruebe en [nombre de la escuela secundaria] oficina principal.

Detalles del Evento:
- [Inserte nombres de ponentes y información]
- [Inserte los planes de juegos, premios]
- Anunciar los métodos de los estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria educación terciaria
Section V: Outreach

Sample Social Media Posts

Use social media tools and networks to engage students about their postsecondary education plans, what they are doing to get there and questions or concerns they have. Ask for suggestions or input from the community.

**Facebook:** Post at least 3 times a week leading up to important dates and deadlines. It is important to post items that will engage the audience and encourage them to participate in the conversation. Open-ended questions and asking for opinions are good ways to initiate dialogue. We also recommend the use of pre-selected hashtags.

**Facebook examples:**
- Seniors! May 3 is #GenTXDay. What are your postsecondary plans?
- May 3 is GenTX Decision Day #GenTXDay! Join us in congratulating our seniors for this big decision.
- Congratulations seniors on your college decisions #GenTXDay. Where are you headed this fall?
- Tomorrow is #GenTXDay. Show your spirit as we celebrate your future! We are proud of our seniors.
- Today is the day our seniors tell us where they are going to college. Don’t forget to wear your college gear to celebrate! #GenTXDay
- You’ve taken the ACT and you’ve filled out the FAFSA, now your hard work is about to pay off! College Decision Day is May 3. Where will you be going this fall? #GenTXDay
- #GenTXDay is around the corner. What factors will weigh into what college you choose?
- While you’re thinking about who you’re taking to the prom, don’t forget to keep thinking about where you’re going to college this fall. Whether it’s a university, community college, or certificate program, you’ve made a big decision to keep learning. The [P-16 council/school/community] is here to support you every step of the way. #GenTXDay

**Twitter:** Twitter has a limit of 140 characters per post. To leave space for users to retweet your post and add a comment, try to keep posts to 120 characters or less. We recommend the use of pre-selected hashtags. Simply note on posters or fliers a chosen hashtag or note it in Facebook posts – e.g. for GenTX College Decision Day, use #GenTXDay.

**Twitter examples:**
- May 3 is #GenTXDay. Where are you going this fall?
- Congratulations seniors on your #college selections #GenTXDay
- It’s Texas #GenTXDay. Show us how you’re celebrating.
- College #GenTXDay is next week. Remember to wear your #college colors to school.
As graduation nears for high school seniors, big decisions are being made about their futures. While decisions like who to take to prom and what to do over summer break weigh heavily on the minds of many, the big question still remains: “Where are you going to college?”

While this decision is easy for some, many seniors are still unsure where they will go. Luckily, with online resources like ApplyTexas, GenTX.org and CollegeForAllTexans.org, along with community events like GenTX Decision Day, making a decision is easier.

GenTX College Decision Day, a statewide initiative, will be held at Texas high schools to coincide with the National Decision Day, sponsored by the National College Advising Corps. Decision Day is held annually on or around May 3 and is designed to coincide with the date that most seniors must inform colleges of their plans to enroll.

[Your school]’s GenTX Decision Day will be [date selected] and will celebrate the future goals of the senior class. All seniors are encouraged to select their postsecondary path by this date.

Students are asked to participate in the celebration by wearing a shirt representing the college or postsecondary education pathway they will pursue. Teachers and staff are also asked to join in by doing the same.

[School/s] should consider tracking which students are going to the same school and encourage dialogue among those students to share resources, concerns, advice and questions.

[Enter possible activities or additional thoughts specific to school or community]

We believe by promoting a college-going culture, students will have access to bright opportunities in the future.
Letter to the Editor example:

Dear Editor,

With acceptance letters in hand, it is now time for high school seniors to make final decisions about which college or postsecondary institution they will attend.

On [chosen date], [P-16 council/high school] will be participating in the statewide effort known as GenTX College Decision Day on [chosen date] to celebrate the postsecondary education plans of graduating seniors. We encourage all seniors to make a decision by this date. Area schools should use GenTX Decision Day to celebrate the futures of students by hosting a “wear college apparel” day, providing an area in the school for students to publicly announce where they are attending, and engaging younger students in the activities to promote a college-going culture.

Schools can also compile the names of students attending specific schools and provide a resource for those students to discuss plans for the fall.

[P-16 council] is proud of [community] seniors and wishes everyone the best of luck in their college adventures.

Sincerely,
[P-16 council contact]

--- Or ---

Dear Editor,

As graduation nears, high school students are facing big decisions about their futures. Who to take to prom and what to do over summer break weigh heavily on the minds of many, but the big question still remains: “Where are you going to college?”

College Decision Days, a designated celebration for seniors to announce their college plans, are being held across the nation on or around May 3, 2019. [P-16 Council/high school] is participating in the statewide effort in Texas known as GenTX Decision Day on [date] to will celebrate the future goals of the senior class. All seniors are encouraged to select their postsecondary path by this date.

It is important that all students know that college is possible for everyone. We thank the members of the community for the continued support of [P-16 council/school] students as they plan their educational futures.

Sincerely,
[P-16 council contact/site coordinator]
Dear Students and Families, [change this based on the audience for the letter. Could be the school board, etc.]

The administration and staff of [high school name] invites you to attend their GenTX College Decision Day on [date] from [time] to celebrate the Senior Class of 2019 as they decide their next steps after high school.

May 3 is a big day across the state and nation in the college admissions process. It’s the day by which seniors nationwide must decide what their postsecondary education will be. [School name] will be participating in the statewide initiative, GenTX Decision Day, to celebrate the Senior Class of 2019 as they make the important decision to either attend college, trade school, or other postsecondary institution.

This celebration will continue to create a college-going culture within [school name], as well as within [community/ region name]. In November, we helped our seniors apply to college during GenTX College Application Week, in February we helped our seniors access financial aid to help pay for college, and today we get to celebrate their efforts as they take this next big step.

[Insert information about all activities leading up to and during College Decision Day. Include speakers, games, prizes, food, etc. Parking information and/or visitor pass if necessary]

All graduating seniors are expected to attend and are encouraged to wear a t-shirt signifying their college selection.

Parents, school administrators, teachers, staff and community members are invited to join the celebration. To RSVP [insert information]

We are extremely proud of our Senior Class and hope you will join us in celebration. We look forward to seeing you on May 3.

Sincerely,

[SCHOOL COUNSELOR/PRINCIPAL/SITE COORDINATOR]
Queridos alumnos y familias, [cambiar esta basado en el auditorio de la carta. Podría ser la junta de la escuela, etc.].

La administración y el personal de la escuela secundaria [nombre] le invita a asistir el Día de Decisión del Colegio GenTX el [fecha] de [tiempo] para celebrar la clase del 2019 como deciden sus siguientes pasos después de la escuela secundaria.

3 de Mayo es un día grande en todo el estado y la nación en el proceso de admisión a la universidad. Es el día en que los estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria tienen que decidir a qué país van asistir sus estudios postsecundarios. [Nombre de la escuela] estará participando en la iniciativa de nivel estatal, Día de Decisión GenTX, para celebrar la clase de 2019, en lo que hacen la importante decisión de asistir a la universidad, escuela comercial, o de otra institución postsecundaria.

Esta celebración continuará para crear un colegio de cultura dentro de [nombre de la escuela], así como en [comunidad/ nombre de la región]. En el mes de noviembre, hemos ayudado a nuestros estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria aplicar a la universidad durante la Semana Aplicación GenTX, en febrero hemos ayudado a nuestros estudiantes del cuarto año de escuela secundaria acceder a ayuda financiera para ayudar a pagar la universidad, y hoy vamos a celebrar sus esfuerzos como el próximo gran paso.

[Insertar información sobre todas las actividades conducentes a decisión del Colegio y durante días. Incluye altavoces, juegos, premios, comida, etc. información de estacionamiento y/o pase de visitante si es necesario]

Los graduandos se prevé que asistan y se los alienta a que llevar una camiseta que significa su colegio selección. Los padres, los administradores de la escuela, los maestros, el personal y los miembros de la comunidad están invitados a unirse a la celebración. De RSVP [insertar información]

Estamos muy orgullosos de nuestra clase y espero que se unan a nosotros en la celebración. Los esperamos el 4 de mayo.

Sinceramente,

[CONSEJERO DE LA ESCUELA/DIRECTOR/COORDINADOR DEL SITIO]
Follow-up Letter to Students/Families

Dear Students [change this as needed],

Recently, you participated in GenTX College Decision Day hosted by [high school name]. Congratulations on taking this important step toward your education!

Now that you have enrolled in a college, it is important that students consider the following next steps.

☐ If you’ve applied for financial aid by completing a FAFSA, read and understand your Student Aid Report (SAR) to find out how much financial aid you have received. If you have questions, be sure to share them with your college’s financial aid office.

☐ To enroll, follow the directions in the official acceptance letter/email you received from your college. Each college has its own steps and system for officially enrolling. Most likely, you will be directed to the college’s official website and instructed to log into the internal student information system. If you need help, don’t hesitate to ask questions to your college.

☐ Some colleges require a monetary deposit to officially enroll. This deposit can range from $50 to $500 or more. If you need help, don’t hesitate to contact the college’s financial aid office to discuss options – they are there to help and fee waiver programs are often available for those who need them.

☐ As part of the enrollment process, you will likely be prompted by the college to sign up for campus housing, accept your financial aid award, and start the advising process to sign up for classes.

☐ After you have officially enrolled, you will also get information from your college about summer orientation and placement exams. Be sure to sign up for any required testing and attend orientation events.

☐ After you have officially enrolled, request a copy of your final high school transcript to be sent to your college.

☐ Check out your college’s summer reading list to get a jump-start on your college experience.

☐ Don’t melt this summer! “Melting” means you have followed all the steps to officially enroll in college but don’t show up when college starts in the fall. To keep you from melting, here are some tips:
   1. Stay active this summer through jobs, internships, clubs, sports, etc.
   2. Talk about your college dreams, plans, and fears to your friends, family, and people you trust.
   3. Figure out how you will physically get to college in the fall, and ask for help if you need it.
   4. Help your family prepare for your college experience – this isn’t just a life change for you, but also for them.
If you have any questions please call [name, title], at [phone number] or email me at [email]. I wish you all the best as you navigate the exciting path to college!

Sincerely,

[SCHOOL COUNSELOR/PRINCIPAL/SITE COORDINATOR]
Estudiante/Familia Informe de Sígueme

SÍMBOLO DE LA ESCUELA
DIRECCIÓN DE LA ESCUELA

[Fecha]

Queridos alumnos [cambiar esta situación como necesaria],

Recientemente, as partícipado en el Día de Decisión GenTX del Colegio organizado por la escuela [nombre]. ¡Félicitas por este importante paso hacia la educación!

Ahora que se ha inscrito en un colegio, es importante que los estudiantes consideren los siguientes pasos.

☐ Si ha aplicado para ayuda financiera cumpliendo una FAFSA, lea y comprende el Informe de Ayuda Estudiantil (SAR) para obtener la ayuda que ha recibido. Si usted tiene preguntas, asegúrese de compartir con su colegio la oficina de ayuda financiera.

☐ Para inscribirse, siga las instrucciones de la carta de aceptación/correo electrónico que recibió de su colegio. Cada universidad tiene su propio sistema y pasos para inscribirse oficialmente. Lo más probable es que usted será dirigido a la página de internet oficial del colegio y se le indique que inicie sesión en el sistema de información para estudiantes. Si necesita ayuda, no dude en preguntar a su colegio.

☐ Algunas universidades requieren un depósito monetario a inscribirse oficialmente. Este depósito puede variar desde $50 a $500 o más. Si necesita ayuda, no dude en ponerse en contacto con la escuela de su oficina de ayuda financiera para discutir las opciones, ellos están allí para ayudar a los programas y exención de pago están a menudo disponibles para quienes los necesitan.

☐ Como parte del proceso de inscripción, probablemente se le pida por parte del colegio de caja de campus, aceptar su ofrecimiento de ayuda financiera, e iniciar el proceso de consulta para las clases.

☐ Después de que haya alistado oficialmente, también obtendrá información de la escuela de verano y de orientación. Asegúrese de registrarse para realizar las pruebas y orientación asistir a eventos.

☐ Después de que haya alistado oficialmente, solicita una copia de su expediente académico de estudios medios para ser enviado al colegio.

☐ Mira la lista de su colegio de lectura del verano para obtener un salto de inicio en su experiencia en la universidad.

☐ ¡No te fundas este verano! "Derretir" significa que se han seguido todos los pasos para inscribirse oficialmente en la universidad pero no aparecen cuando se inicia en el colegio. Para que no te dé derrítas, aquí están algunos consejos:

1. Manténgase activo este verano a través de los trabajos, pasantías, clubes, deportes, etc.
2. Hable acerca de tus sueños de colegios, planes, y los temores a sus amigos, familiares y personas de su confianza.
3. Asegúrate de cómo vas a llegar realmente a la universidad en el otoño, y pedir ayuda si la necesitas.
4. Ayuda a que su familia se preparen para su experiencia en la universidad, ya no se trata simplemente de un cambio de vida para usted, sino también para ellos.

Si tiene alguna pregunta, favor de llamar [nombre, título], al [número de teléfono] o enviarme un mensaje de correo electrónico a [email]. ¡Le deseo todo lo mejor y navegar el emocionante camino a la universidad!

Atentamente, [CONSEJERO DE LA ESCUELA/DIRECTOR/COORDINADOR DEL SITIO]
Section V: Outreach

An Overview for Teachers, Staff, and Community Members

Our school is participating in GenTX Decision Day! To ensure that our event is a success for our students, we need your help in promoting and coordinating this event — and making sure our initiative is exciting and fun for our students, families, and community!

What is GenTX Decision Day?
GenTX Decision Day is a statewide initiative to recognize high school seniors for their postsecondary plans and encourage younger students and families to prepare early for postsecondary education. GenTX Decision Day is held annually on or around May 3 and is designed to coincide with the date that most seniors must inform a college of their plans to enroll.

What is the goal of GenTX Decision Day?
The goal of GenTX Decision Day is to recognize high school seniors for their postsecondary plans and encourage younger students and families to prepare early for postsecondary education. Let’s mimic the excitement of NCAA’s National Signing Day to celebrate ALL students going to college.

GenTX Decision Day is a new statewide initiative. Over the years high schools have hosted College Decision Day activities in isolation but in 2019 all high schools in Texas are encouraged to participate in a statewide celebration, supported by the resources available through GenTX. GenTX Decision Day addresses the gap between college application rates and enrollment rates among our students, and the complicated process for officially enrolling in college.

What happens during GenTX Decision Day?
All students are recognized for their postsecondary plans. Think of GenTX Decision Day as a school spirit day, during which we all work together to build excitement and awareness surrounding the college selection and enrollment process. We will provide [insert local information like special office hours to help students through the enrollment process], but the event becomes truly memorable when we integrate fun activities into our school and community environments. For example, we can decorate our doors and classrooms in college themes, post signs and pennants in our community, decorate storefronts, or have college trivia contests — let’s get creative!

How can I help?
You can help by talking to students about their college choices, contributing to the “spirit” of the day, or —perhaps most importantly — reaching out to students to encourage them to complete the enrollment process. Seek out those students who might traditionally be overlooked when it comes to college planning, and talk to them about their options for college. Be sure to ask students about their postsecondary education plans after high school as they board the bus, go through the lunch line, or walk into church, a store, or your classroom!

For more information, visit www.gentx.org
Volunteer Recruitment Letter/Email

[Date]

Dear [name of organization],

[Name of your high school] is pleased to announce its participation in GenTX Decision Day – a statewide initiative to recognize and celebrate high school seniors for their postsecondary plans. Encouraging younger students and families are to participate supports their early preparation for postsecondary education and creates a college-going culture. GenTX Decision Day is held annually on or around May 3 and is designed to coincide with the date that most seniors must inform a college of their plans to enroll.

College Decision Day is inspired by the NCAA’s National Signing Day to reinforce that excellence in the classroom should be given as much pomp and circumstance as excellence as an athlete. NCAA’s National Signing Day is when high school seniors sign a letter of intent to play sports at a specific college. Traditionally players participate in press conferences to announce their intentions. Our goal is to mimic this level of excitement for ALL students going to college.

High schools have hosted College Decision Day activities in isolation over the years but in 2019 all high schools in Texas are encouraged to participate in a statewide celebration. GenTX Decision Day addresses the gap between college application rates and enrollment rates among our students, and the complicated process for officially enrolling in college.

We will be hosting our event on [date and time] and would welcome representatives from [name of organization] to visit our school during this exciting and important time. Volunteers can greet and sign-in students, hand out prizes, set up, clean up, or manage the food and beverage table [tweak this sentence to fit your volunteer needs]. Our students would really appreciate your help and support as they announce their postsecondary plans.

If you or any of your colleagues at [name of organization] are interested in working with [name of your high school] in any capacity please contact me at [site coordinator information].

Thank you!
[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Contact Information]
Volunteer Training – Sample Agenda

Training volunteers for GenTX Decision Day is not a complex task. You want to provide volunteers with enough information to be useful to you and the students but not so much as to overwhelm them. In addition to the very real assistance they can provide to ensure that GenTX Decision Day is successful, they also are likely to become college access advocates in the community.

Host sites are not required to provide a volunteer training. It is up to you based on who you have selected as volunteers and if they feel comfortable with the tasks you are expecting them to complete. You can provide it as a short face-to-face gathering either a week before the event or the day of the event. If your school requires a background check for non-school personnel to work with students on your campus, then be sure to handle this requirement prior to the training.

I. Welcome and Thank You!
   • Have all volunteers sign in and provide you with name, phone number(s), and address (you will need the address later when you send a follow-up thank you note)

II. Purpose of GenTX College Decision Day
   • Use information provide on pages 3 and 35

III. GenTX Decision Day Logistics
   • Provide a short tour of the school highlighting where the event will be held, principal’s office, facilities they may use or go into and those that they should not
   • Dates and times GenTX Decision Day will be held in our school
   • Times that volunteers are expected to be available (it is strongly recommended that they are asked to arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the start of the event)
   • Assign tasks to be done by volunteers

IV. Questions?

V. Again – thank you!
Volunteer Thank You Letter

[Date]

Dear [volunteer’s name],

On behalf of [name of your high school] I would like to personally thank you for volunteering your time at our GenTX Decision Day event. This event could not have been a success without your help and the help of many others who volunteered their time.

During GenTX Decision Day, we recognized [number of seniors] of our seniors for their postsecondary plans. Our seniors are one step closer to actualizing their dreams of attending college!

[Summarize events or include any press coverage]

Once again, [name of your high school] thanks you for your efforts and contribution of time at GenTX Decision Day! We hope to see you at our event next year.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Contact Information]
Consider reaching out to local businesses to donate prizes to be given out during GenTX Decision Day or to donate special treats to students in attendance. Often times, local businesses are very willing to donate goods or services, gift certificates, food, etc.

The following is a sample donation request letter and thank you letter to use when asking and receiving donations.

[School name/logo/address]

[Date]

Dear [Business],

On May 3, 2019, [name of high school] will participate in GenTX College Decision Day, part of a statewide and national initiative that has the goal of recognizing and celebrating seniors for their postsecondary plans and encourages younger students and families to prepare early for college. It is important we celebrate this big step for seniors in our community.

GenTX Decision Day on or around May 3 is designed to coincide with the date that most seniors must inform a college of their plans to enroll. Over the years high schools have hosted College Decision Day activities in isolation but in 2019 all high schools in Texas are encouraged to participate in a statewide celebration. Decision Day addresses the gap between college application rates and enrollment rates among our students, and the complicated process for officially enrolling in college.

College Decision Day is inspired by the NCAA’s National Signing Day to reinforce that excellence in the classroom should be given as much pomp and circumstance as excellence as an athlete. NCAA’s National Signing Day is when high school seniors sign a letter of intent to play sports at a specific college. Traditionally players participate in press conferences to announce their intentions. Our goal is to mimic this level of excitement for ALL students entering into postsecondary education.

We respectfully request a donation of [suggested donation] to be given as prizes as an incentive for students participating in GenTX Decision Day. Your donation will help students celebrate the college-going process and remind them of the support they have in their community.

We also invite you to join us during the celebration. [Insert Event Schedule].

If you are able to assist us in this effort, please contact me at [phone number] or at the address listed above no later than [deadline].

We appreciate your continued support.

Thank you!

[Site Coordinator’s name and title]
Sponsor Thank You Letter

[Date]

Dear [sponsor’s name],

On behalf of [name of your high school] I would like to thank you for your [donation/gift of X] to support our GenTX Decision Day event. This event could not have been a success without your contribution and the help of many others who volunteered their time or resources.

During College Decision Day, we recognized [number of seniors] of our seniors for their postsecondary education plans. Our seniors are one step closer to actualizing their dreams of attending college!

Once again, [name of your high school] thank you for your efforts and contribution during GenTX Decision Day! We hope to see you at our event next year.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Title]
[Contact Information]