

Breck College Counseling News | April 2019

Information for All Grades:

A look at the school calendar shows mostly five-day weeks, which should afford some regularity and structure. However, in practice, this can be a rather busy time with many moving parts. The spring sports season, music department performances, end-of-year programs, Advanced Placement testing, May Program, and more create a swirl of activity.

The many moving pieces reflect Breck's distinctiveness. It is a wonderful place where students will develop the habits and perspectives to be successful in college and life beyond. It is a place that prepares our students for college success and happiness by providing an environment that fosters relationships amongst peers, encourages students to engage with faculty, and challenges and supports our students academically and co-curricularly.

And though the college process is creeping earlier, it is important that Breck's college counseling efforts remain thoughtful and purposeful. You will hear the counselors encourage students to continue to challenge themselves AND maintain good balance in their lives. This looks different for each student. We may encourage more challenging courses or outside activities. We often challenge students to reach a bit more outside their comfort zone. Sometimes we may counsel to let up a bit on the intensity, especially if quality is waning. Likewise, we will encourage a student to delve more into an outside commitment in order to build relationships, experiences and memories beyond these walls. These are the habits and experiences that not only comprise the Breck experience but also provide the firm foundation for success in life beyond Breck.

Seniors

College Decisions – Much Great News!

Congratulations on all the great news! Our students have been accepted to many wonderful institutions. Each year at this time, I find myself amazed at the scope of where our students apply (and are admitted) as well as the genuine desire to find the college that best "fits."

By now, seniors should have received college decisions from every college. While we reach out to the colleges to which our students apply, we only hear decisions from the students. Many students have kept their college counselor in the loop throughout. Now is a good time to share the results with your counselor and to begin devising a strategy on college selection!

An Article for Parents

Here is a great piece by Valerie Strauss in *The Washington Post* directed towards parents of seniors. Although it was written a few years ago, much of it supports the senior parent conversation the College Counseling office hosted in late February. [We invite you to read it.](#)

Waitlisted?

Each year, students will receive waitlist offers. In recent years, colleges have increasingly turned to the waitlist as a way to mitigate risk. Colleges are going out conservatively with admits and rely on the waitlist to fill in the class, most likely after the May 1 deadline. While some colleges may move to their waitlist prior to May 1, most will wait to see how the class settles before doing so.

If a student wishes to pursue a waitlist opportunity, please speak with your college counselor ASAP. It is important to be on the same page and to devise a strategy. We will likely advise constructing a letter or email to the college, reiterating interest and providing an update; it is imperative that the senior and counselor work together in this endeavor.

Looking Forward: Depositing, Financial Aid, Admitted Student Days, etc.

Along with acceptance letters, comes the invitation to visit campus for admitted student days. Please note that while these programs are celebratory in nature and are often highly popular, admitted students can visit most any time during the month of April. Such programs often bring opportunities to meet with professors, attend a club fair, meet other admitted students, and more. Some colleges even offer special programs for parents, too! These days provide an opportunity to learn much about the college. The downside of admitted student days is that the program is not a "usual" day at the college. Visiting on a regular day, students can see the college in action – get a sense of what the dining room is like during the noon rush, see how students interact with each other, their professors and the staff, and more.

We suggest you speak with your college counselor to devise a college visit plan, if one is necessary. Classes go on as do the vast array of athletics, organizations, and involvements that make our students attractive applicants in the first place. Try to minimize absences. Spring is often very busy and extended absences can create unnecessary obstacles.

You should only submit one enrollment deposit. Often this is a small percentage of the cost or a flat payment, often around \$500. Please know this is how colleges track commitments. By taking up more than one spot, you are limiting the opportunity for other students! Some colleges will allow you to submit a fully refundable housing deposit. You can feel free to do so. Breck will only send one final transcript.

Before depositing, families should know the entire cost of attendance as well as all financial aid. If you have questions or would like to discuss options and financial aid awards, please contact [Carrie Papillon](#) to schedule a time to speak with your college counselor. With the rise of tuition, we are finding these conversations increasingly important.

Juniors

Parent Survey – complete ASAP!

One of the most critical elements of the college process is the information and perspective parents provide, to the student as well as to the college counselor. You can access the two parts of the parent survey via your Naviance account. If you need assistance, contact [Carrie Papillon](#).

Schedule a College Counselor Meeting!

It is our expectation that parents will meet with their child's college counselor at least once before summer. To schedule an appointment, please call (763-381-8258) or email [Carrie Papillon](#). Spring is a very busy time for all; we encourage you to schedule a time soon!

Upcoming April and May Items

- We have rescheduled the JUNIOR APPLICATION WORKSHOP for April 3 at 6:30PM. This event is always one of our most popular events in the college process! You will read applications and serve on the admission committee led by a senior admission officer from College of St. Benedict/St. John's University, Gustavus Adolphus College, Macalester College, University of Minnesota, St. Catherine University and St. Olaf College. The applications have been posted online for parents and juniors will participate in a workshop earlier in the day. We strongly advise parents to read through the applications prior to the evening in order to get the most from the conversations with the deans. We will send another reminder as the date approaches.
- Our next Coffee Talk will be held at 8:00-9:00 AM in the Heritage Room at Anderson Ice Arena on April 25. The topic will be "Common App Nuts and Bolts." The informal format provides opportunities for questions and comments.
- Advanced Placement (AP) Testing will be held on the main campus again this year. Students should know the dates and times of their exams. All students are required to attend one of the pre-registration sessions later this month. Students should watch the Mustang Minute for the dates and times. AP tests are scheduled by the College Board and take place during the school day. Students are expected to discuss with their teachers possible class absences caused by the AP test.
- All juniors should have submitted their plans for May Program. Remember, this is an opportunity to learn more about a possible career opportunity, to further one's involvement or pursuits in a particular area, or another unique outlet. Be sure to keep your college counselor updated!

What's coming up in June?

Register for the August ACT Prep sessions. Information was sent to parents and students prior to Spring Break. This course will provide thorough reviews of all sections of the exam: English, math, reading, science, and writing. Instruction will also include overviews of critical test-taking strategies and time management tips for each section of the ACT. Students should expect to complete approximately 2-3 hours of homework for each class. In addition to the Wednesday classes, Breakaway recommends that students schedule a practice pre-test in May or June as well as a post-test in September to measure their progress. Breakaway offers practice tests every weekend at its office in St. Louis Park. The deadline to register is Friday, May 3. To register for the practice test and class, please click [here](#). If cost is an impediment to register, please contact your college counselor.

Watch for sign-up details for two separate workshops for juniors. College Counseling will host:

- Common Application Workshop for juniors on June 8th.
- College Interviewing Workshop during the week following graduation.

We realize this is the week after graduation and may conflict with travels. However, this opportunity was too good to pass up. Please mark your calendars now!

Sophomores

Standardized Testing Plan & Prep

This summer is a time for all students in the Class of 2021 to do some form of standardized test preparation. Most students will sit for a standardized test in the fall and many will take the test of their choice – ACT or SAT – twice by the end of their junior year. Whether your first formalized testing experience will be in August or April, it is vital to use the summer time to prep for the test.

We have once again partnered with Breakaway College Test Prep to offer an **August ACT prep class**. This course will provide thorough reviews of all sections of the exam: English, math, reading, science, and writing. Instruction will also include overviews of critical test-taking strategies and time management tips for each section of the ACT. Students should expect to complete approximately 2-3 hours of homework for each class. In addition to the Wednesday classes, Breakaway recommends that students schedule a practice pre-test in May or June as well as a post-test in September to measure their progress. Breakaway offers practice tests every weekend at its office in St. Louis Park. The deadline to register is Friday, May 3. To register for the practice test and class, please click [here](#). If cost is an impediment to register, please contact your college counselor.

Meetings with Counselors & Course Scheduling

By now, all sophomores should have met with their college counselor to discuss a range of topics. The chief objective of the meeting was to begin to get to know each other, learning your child's interests and passions, discuss junior scheduling and lay out possibilities for senior year in advance of scheduling conferences with advisors. If things have changed or there are follow up conversations that should be had, please contact Carrie Papillon (763-381-8258) to schedule a meeting with your college counselor. Some sophomores will schedule another brief meeting with their college counselor to outline summer plans.

Finish the Year Strong

"It's not how you start, it is how you finish." Now that spring break is in the rearview mirror, there is a sprint to exams in mid-May. Typically the sophomore year can present increased challenges and grades do tend to drop a bit from freshman year. However, there is still time to improve or maintain positive momentum.

Freshmen

Continue Developing Good Habits.

It's important to develop good habits. If you've found some strategies successful, great! If not, now is the time to refine. See Ms. Wanless, talk to your advisor, other teachers or older students. There's no one pathway to success, so continue to experiment!

Summer Plans

Now is the time to think about summer plans. Yes, it's time for some rest and relaxation, but find ways to make your summer productive. Read. Volunteer. Be active. As you plan ahead to sophomore year, think about ways you can further your involvement or pursue other opportunities.

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