

# Breck College Counseling News August - September 2019

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Welcome back!

The College Counseling Office believes clear and regular communication makes for a successful college search process. The monthly newsletter serves to provide general information by grade to the Breck community. We ask that you read the information relevant to your child and encourage you to review the entire newsletter to appreciate the scope of the college counseling curriculum. These newsletters are sent via the monthly broadcast. You will find the archived newsletters [here](#) as they are added over the course of the year.

## Seniors

FIRST JOINT PARENT/STUDENT COLLEGE MEETING: August 26 6:30PM Cargill Theater  
Following tradition, the first senior and parent joint meeting will occur on the first day of school. Counselors will map out the first semester calendar, offer key nuts and bolts information, and provide details to Breck's college process. Please plan on arriving at least a few minutes early so you may pick up materials. We will begin promptly at 6:30 pm so that we can conclude no later than 8:00 pm.

PARENTS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES. The insights and responses provide immeasurable value to our work, from the conversations we have with your child to the recommendation letters we craft for your child. Thanks to the many of you have already completed the surveys. To access the surveys, navigate to your [Naviance account](#). If you would prefer, you may use the surveys as a guide in composing a letter to your counselor (please send to your counselor and Ms. Papillon). Parents can contact [Carrie Papillon](#) for login information.

Naviance Student should be the first resource you use when you want to know the latest information in the College Counseling Office. Parents and seniors have individual accounts.

On the Home page you will find:

- Upcoming College Visits. This up-to-date schedule will include all the colleges that have made appointments to visit Breck. Students use this page to register for college meetings.
- The College Counseling Calendar may be found under the "Links" section at the bottom of the page. The calendar lists college counseling events, standardized test dates, registration deadlines and college rep visits.
- The Class of 2020 Forms link that serves as a repository of important information and forms has moved from the side of the screen to the bottom of the page.

On the My Favorites tab:

- Colleges I'm Thinking About. This is the student's working college list, so it is important to ensure this list is current and you have indicated your interest level. This is a valuable tool for you and your counselor to ensure a balanced and complete college list.
- Colleges I'm Applying To. This will reflect the colleges listed on the Blue Sheet the student submits. This is the reference we will use to send your official school documents to colleges. Only the college counseling staff has access to make changes to this list.

On the About Me tab:

- Surveys are listed on the About Me home page.
- Select "My Account" to verify your GPA is accurate.
- Select "About Me Home", then select "My Stuff", then select "Test Scores" to verify your list of test scores is complete and accurate.
- Select "About Me Home", then select "My Stuff", and then select "Portfolio" to verify your teacher recommenders. They will be listed after your test scores towards the bottom of the page.

## COMMON APPLICATION WORKSHOPS

Once again a large majority of the senior class attended at least one of these workshops on August 6, 8 and 13. Aside from offering a place, time and computer to work, these workshops allowed seniors to speak with counselors and learn about specific aspects of the application. The Reference Guide and notes from the specific programs (Writing the Essay, Applying to Public Institutions, and College-Specific Questions) may be found in Naviance under the Class of 2020 Forms link. **No application or essay should go out without a counselor's review.** There will be multiple drafts of the essay and "supplement" portions.

On August 6 and 8, there will be a Supplemental Essay presentation at 10:30 am. Students should plan to attend one of the offered sessions.

## EARLY APPLICATIONS

Students will utilize application deadlines in various ways. Some will apply via a binding Early Decision program or through an Early Action, Rolling or Priority program. Many of last year's seniors were holding a letter of admission in January. Students who anticipate applying **Early Decision, Early Action or to a state university** (the U or Madison, for example) should schedule an appointment to speak to their counselor.

All Request to Send Transcript forms ("Blue Sheets") are due in our office **AT LEAST ONE MONTH** before the first college application due date. Therefore, if you are considering one of the early options listed above, your deadline may be as early as September 15 or October 1. Here are steps you take to meet this deadline:

- Meet with your counselor to finalize your early list, verify all of the application requirements including standardized test requirements, supplements required, and that you have asked the appropriate teachers to write a recommendation for you.
- Make sure you have submitted two Teacher Recommendation Forms, one for each of the teachers you have asked to write recommendation letters for you. Many of you completed this task before you left for summer break.
- Submit the completed forms to Ms. Papillon or place in the basket on her desk.

All seniors are responsible for **SENDING** official score reports directly from the testing agencies to the colleges you are applying. Colleges are increasingly allowing for *self-reported* scores, so be sure to consult with your counselor. Use the ACT ([www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)) and College Board ([www.collegboard.org](http://www.collegboard.org)) websites to request your scores. Please allow four to six weeks.

## COFFEE TALK WITH COUNSELORS

Dates listed below

8:00 am

Heritage Room at Anderson Ice

Arena

We host a series of casual, one-hour meetings for senior parents to address a specific topic. Please note these are not intended to replace individual conversations, but are intended to address specific issues relevant to many, if not all, families.

- September 17: Applying Early Q&A
- October 8: A Balanced List, Financing College, and Applying to Publics
- November 12: The Process Moving Forward

If you are unable to attend, you will receive a summary of the discussion shortly following the conversation.

## MISP FAIR

September 22

12:30 – 3:00 pm

Mounds Park Academy

Mounds Park Academy is the site of this year's MISP (Minnesota Independent School Partnership) College Fair. All seniors are expected to attend as it is a unique opportunity to connect with college representatives, demonstrate your interest in colleges, and expand your awareness.

## STUDENTS' TO-DO LIST

- Complete the junior surveys if you have not done so.
- Submit the Senior Update Form as soon as possible.
- Sign off on your transcript and senior schedule.
- Schedule an appointment via Ms. Papillon to meet with your college counselor. It will prove immensely helpful as you finalize your college list, set an application strategy and construct your applications.

- Make sure you have fulfilled all the test requirements for the colleges to which you are applying. October 3 is the registration deadline for the November SAT. September 20 is the registration deadline for the October ACT. These may be the last test dates for ED/EA applications.
- Sign up in Naviance Student to attend the college rep meetings that interest you. College Representative visits are very important. Remember, if a college visit is scheduled during one of your classes, you must receive your teacher's written permission to miss the class in advance of the meeting. Respectfully ask for permission at least a day ahead of time.
- Attend the MISP Fair on Sunday, September 22 from 12:30-3:00 PM at Mounds Park Academy. It is essential that **all** seniors attend.
- Plan for the possibility of college travel over MEA weekend, Oct 16-20. Please note: seniors are not required to be on campus Wednesday, October 16. This weekend can be spent visiting colleges or working on applications. Counselors will be available to help.
- Be on the lookout for additional opportunities such as interviewing skills, essay sessions, and drop-in times.

### IMPORTANT DATES

August 26	Student/Parent College Meeting
September 6	Registration deadline for Oct SAT
September 20	ACT Test Date at Breck
September 15/October 1	ED/EA forms completed and submitted
September 17	Coffee Talk with Counselors   Launching into Senior Year
September 22	MISP Fair at Mounds Park Academy
October 1	Blue Sheets due for ED/EA
October 3	Registration deadline for Nov SAT
October 5	SAT and SAT Subject Test Date at Breck
October 16-20	MEA Weekend trips and drop-in assistance
October 8	Coffee Talk with Counselors   Balanced Lists, Financing College and Applying to Publics
October 10	FAFSA Workshop
October 26	ACT Test Date (offsite)

### RECOMMENDED READING

1. *The Launching Years: Strategies for Parenting from Senior Year to College Life* by Laura Kastner
2. *Almost Grown: Launching Your Child from High School to College* by Patricia Pasik

## Juniors

### WELCOME BACK!

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We recognize the build up to the much hyped junior year – increased work and expectations, “college” becomes all-consuming or at least unavoidable, and the lack of “fun.” It is important to find a balance this year in all facets of your life. Perhaps the greatest lessons you are learning now are *how* to learn, how to manage your time, and how to communicate with your peers and faculty.

We believe the college process has an appropriate place in the lives of our juniors. It is best approached with the long-term in mind: you will have a college list by the fall of your senior year (though it need not be a *finalized* list until the winter), you will be admitted to college, and you will find yourself attending a college that fits you. The College Counseling Office is here to help you clear through the clutter and hype to achieve these ends. The counselors are

experienced, work as a team, maintain relationships with admissions professionals, and have your best interests at heart. Remember, no one can promise results. However, we will promise you an unsurpassed process.

To that end, please read the information below as you begin to plan your year. We have a number of programs planned for you this coming year, and we are looking forward to working with you this school year.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

JUNIOR PARENT/STUDENT COLLEGE MEETING: August 28 6:30 pm Cargill Theater  
All juniors and their parents are expected to attend as we will cover the counseling process, focusing on this fall and discuss standardized testing, scores, and test preparation. Please plan on arriving at least a few minutes early so we may begin promptly at 6:30 pm so that we can conclude no later than 8:00 pm.

### COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE VISITS THROUGHOUT THE FALL.

College representatives visit Breck School throughout the fall. Juniors should feel free to attend the meetings if the visit time falls during a free hour. In particular circumstances, juniors will be able to leave class with permission from the college office and their teacher. The college visit schedule can be found on Naviance. Around the time of the MISP Fair, we will host many colleges in a unique schedule.

### OCTOBER COLLEGE TESTING WORKSHOPS.

On Thursday, October 3, we will offer a free ACT booster class in the morning followed by a guided (P)SAT prep class offered by Breakaway College Test Prep. These events should not conflict with other obligations as juniors should be able to schedule their Parent/Teacher Conferences around these obligations.

MISP FAIR September 28 12:30 – 3:00 pm Mounds Park Academy  
Mounds Park Academy is the site of this year's MISP (Minnesota Independent School Partnership) College Fair. All juniors are expected to attend as it is a unique opportunity to "shop" for colleges, expand your awareness, and connect with college representatives.

### A NOTE ON TESTING IN THE JUNIOR YEAR.

As in all facets of the college process, for as much as this process is universal, it is individual. Some students find it appropriate to first take a standardized test in the fall of their junior year whereas others elect to first test in February or March. *There is not one path to standardized testing success.* We strongly encourage students to take the test of their choice at least twice and no more than three times by the fall of their senior year. And, yes, the fall of senior year can be a good time to test! Don't rush into testing, but enter into testing with a plan and with adequate preparation. Your counselor will be instrumental in this aspect of the process.

This year we request all juniors to take the PSAT and a Practice ACT.

- On Saturday, October 12, a practice ACT test will be given at Breck School. The college office will register your child.
- On Wednesday, October 16, the PSAT will be administered at Breck. This is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Competition; more importantly, however, it offers a simulated SAT experience.

### MEA WEEKEND – OCTOBER 17 & 18.

Families may travel near and far over this weekend, and we encourage you to work in a college visit or two. Not traveling? There are many local opportunities to visit as most colleges and universities in Minnesota and surrounding states have special visit schedules to accommodate students. College counselors can assist in planning. An electronic copy of the Campus Visit Guide can be found in [Naviance](#) and hard copies in the College Counseling Office.

### OTHER DATES TO MARK:

January 8	Parent/Student College Meeting
Spring Break	Possible College Visits!
April 1	Junior Application Case Studies Workshop
June 7	Common Application and Essay Workshop for Juniors
June 9-10	Interview Workshop for Juniors

## Recommended Reading

1. *The College Admissions Mystique* by Bill Mayher
2. *The All-in-One College Guide* by Barron's

## Sophomores

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Though college is still a long way off, we will meet with your class several times throughout the year, and we are looking forward to getting to know each of you. Breck is unique in our local area in that we assign college counselors to 10<sup>th</sup> graders. The intention is that the counselors get to know the students and families as best we can so that we can provide appropriate and individualized counsel as we seek to fulfill Breck's mission to "prepare each student for a college whose culture is compatible with the individual's needs, interests and abilities."

### TESTING IN THE SOPHOMORE YEAR.

This year all sophomores will take the Practice SAT and the Practice ACT. A test has already been ordered for each student.

- We will offer an introductory meeting on testing for sophomores during the school day on October 9.
- On Saturday, October 12, a practice ACT test will be given at Breck School. The college office will register your child.
- Wednesday, October 17, the Practice SAT test will be given at Breck School. The college office will register your child.
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GRADE 10 PARENT COLLEGE COUNSELING MEETING September 11 5:30 pm Upper School Library  
Prior to the Upper School Back to School Night, the College Office will hold a brief, 20-minute program for parents in the US Library.

## Recommended Reading

*I'm Going to College, Not You* by Jennifer Delahunty

## Freshmen

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The secret to success is getting off to a great start! While the college process is a long way off, you are developing the foundation upon which you will build your high school career. Now is a time to get involved, try something new, develop good habits and time management skills, and get to know your peers and faculty.

On Wednesday, October 16, we will offer a Practice PSAT9 test via Cambridge Educational Services. While this provides an experience similar to the PSAT, it is not a test offered through the College Board. This provides a unique opportunity to simulate a standardized testing experience while also providing feedback that should be useful for students and parents.

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Jonathan Nicholson  
Director of College Counseling  
763-381-8248  
[jonathan.nicholson@breckschool.org](mailto:jonathan.nicholson@breckschool.org)

Andrea O'Connell  
Associate Director of College  
Counseling  
763-381-8138  
[andrea.oconnell@breckschool.org](mailto:andrea.oconnell@breckschool.org)

Elizabeth Pabst  
Associate Director of College  
Counseling  
763-381-8127  
[elizabeth.pabst@breckschool.org](mailto:elizabeth.pabst@breckschool.org)

Carrie Papillon  
College Counseling Office  
Assistant  
763-381-8258  
[carrie.papillon@breckschool.org](mailto:carrie.papillon@breckschool.org)