

Fall is certainly here! It is difficult to believe the start of school was the better part of a month ago and yet the energy and excitement reveal just how deep into the school year we now find ourselves. Parent-Teacher-Student conferences will soon take place as will MEA Weekend, the post-season for fall sports, and the list goes on.

This newsletter is full of information and details. Please feel free to read its entirety or delve into the area that pertains to your family. Please note that while we serve all students, we have set aside the last week of October for open office hours for seniors in the lead up to early November college application deadlines. If there is a need for a 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade student, please email your counselor or contact [Carrie Papillon](#).

## Seniors

Amidst all the newness of the year and establishing their leadership within the school, seniors may just now begin turning their attention to the college process. In the process, anxiety and pressure may begin to mount. The appropriate response is to talk, and we are here to help! Below is a checklist of sorts. While not all will apply directly to you, please carefully review the items.

### COMMON APPLICATION ESSAY

All seniors, especially those with a deadline between now and November 1<sup>st</sup>, should plan on sharing their essay this weekend! Following the June workshop that launched the writing process and our August workshop that provided additional insights and time for writing as well supplement essay help, this weekend is set aside for seniors to share their most recent drafts with their counselor.

With no classes and few conflicts, it is our intention to set aside time to alleviate the crunch that can occur the last week of October.

### MEA WEEKEND, OCTOBER 16- 20

Many students will use these dates to travel. Students often visit the campus of the college they are considering for a binding program once more. Others may take the opportunity to visit an area they have yet to see.

Seniors not traveling can drop in to speak with a counselor about their essays and other aspects of their application.

### REMINDERS AS YOU START YOUR APPLICATIONS:

- Parents & Seniors should submit your respective questionnaires immediately. These questionnaires are invaluable to your college counselor. If you have questions about accessing your account, contact [Carrie Papillon](#).
- Confirm and sign your transcript. All seniors have received a copy of their completed transcript through junior year. By signing and dating the transcript, they confirm their academic record.
- Complete and submit your Request to Send Transcript form (blue sheet) to the College Counseling Office *30 days prior* to your first deadline. If Ms. Papillon is not at her desk, just place it in the tray on the counter. We do not officially know you are applying to a college unless it is on your blue sheet. *Remember, you can change your blue sheet at anytime.*
- Finalizing your College List. The list on your blue sheet should be the same as the list in your Naviance Account as well as your Common Application (when applicable). This list should be balanced, which generally entails 3 likely schools, 3 possible/target schools, and 3 reach schools. Your college counselor can help you in these decisions.
- A note about teacher recommendations and supplemental recommendations. Typically, a college requires one or two teacher recommendations in addition to the counselor recommendation. Our counsel is to follow these guidelines and not exceed the number of recommendation letters. If you are applying to a specific program that requires a supplement (i.e. arts,) your counselor will gladly guide you through the process.
  - All green sheets should be submitted by MEA weekend. If you have an early deadline, then you must submit them ASAP.

- Send your test scores. Please consult each college's website as an increasing number of colleges are accepting self-reported scores directly from the application. Should the college require official test scores, you will need to send them directly from the ACT or College Board as Breck does not send test scores to colleges.
- Show your counselor your application and supplements before submitting.

IF YOU ARE APPLYING TO A LARGE STATE UNIVERSITY – BE AWARE OF PRIORITY AND ROLLING DEADLINES: Though published deadlines may be much later, we advise submitting your applications earlier. In particular, we strongly suggest submitting your University of Minnesota application by the November 1<sup>st</sup> Early Action Deadline. *Remember that the college counseling office requests one month advanced notice of a due date to submit your transcript and counselor recommendation.*

ALSO, BE SURE TO NOTE POSSIBLE EARLY DEADLINES FOR SCHOLARSHIP CONSIDERATION. There is a trend for colleges to have earlier deadlines for merit consideration than their posted Regular Decision deadline. These earlier dates should be listed on the Blue Sheet.

IF YOU ARE APPLYING EARLY DECISION OR EARLY ACTION: These deadlines are usually around November 1 or November 15. Early Decision is suitable for students who are ready to make a binding commitment to a college or university. Early Action is a non-binding application. If you are applying early:

- Confirm with your counselor.
- Notify your teacher recommenders.
- Be sure to turn in your Request to Send Transcript form (blue sheet) one month before the application deadline.

IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID: The FAFSA went live on October 1! Colleges will use Prior Prior Year (PPY) information to calculate aid. Families may use 2017 taxes to complete the information.

- The published cost of attendance for college can be quite substantial. However, financial aid, through merit and need-based awards, can make college more affordable. It is imperative you know the required forms and deadlines for each school to which you are applying. A missed deadline can result in missed money! Check the Net Price Calculator at the college(s) to which you are applying to get a sense of what aid you may be eligible for. Your counselor can help you navigate this process.
- We will host Brian Lindeman, Macalester College's Assistant Vice President for Admissions and Financial Aid and Director of Financial Aid, Brian Lindeman, on October 10. He will discuss FAFSA and PROFILE and answer your questions. Please mark your calendar for this highly attended event. You may [register here](#) for the event.

IF YOU ARE A POTENTIAL DI OR DII ATHLETE: Make sure you have registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center and confirm with Ms. Papillon. For recruited students, you should be in regular contact with the coaches at schools you are most interested. If not, see your college counselor immediately!

IF YOU PLAN TO SUBMIT ART SUPPLEMENTS: Please check with your counselor and art teacher. Note this process has changed greatly in recent years.

#### STANDARDIZED TESTS

- October 26 is the next ACT test date. Registration deadline has already past. Late registration deadline is October 4. To register, go to [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).
- November 2 is the next SAT and Subject Test date. Registration deadline is October 3. Late registration deadline is October 22. To register, go to [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

#### UPCOMING CALENDAR ITEMS

- Wednesday, October 16, seniors are not required to be on campus. Rather, seniors should use this day to work on applications or use it as an additional travel day for MEA weekend. Be productive with this time! Early deadlines are around the corner!
- Thursday and Friday, October 17-18 ED/EA application help. Drop in to the College Counseling Office for help on your application and essays. There will be no appointments; a counselor will be available throughout the day.

- **Monday, October 21 – Friday, November 1, Open Office Hours for Seniors.** When not teaching or in meetings, the counselors will make special efforts to be available in the office and around the senior commons and other locations where seniors may be. Seniors should feel comfortable speaking with any member of the college office about any aspect of their application process. We feel this will make counselors more available to more students throughout the school day.
- Tuesday, October 8, Coffee Talk: Developing a Balanced List, Talking Money, and Answering Your Questions. We will host our 2<sup>nd</sup> Coffee Talk at 8:00 am in the Heritage Room at the Anderson Ice Arena. These sessions are not intended to replace individual conversations you will have with your counselor and session overviews will be sent following the meeting.
- October 10, FAFSA Workshop. This is an event not to miss. Macalester College Director of Financial Aid, Brian Lindeman, will be on campus to answer questions about the FAFSA and PROFILE. Register [here](#).
- Colleges may be hosting an area informational session. This is a great opportunity to expand your knowledge of colleges! Many schools will visit Breck and some will use these regional session in lieu of school visits. We will post the ones of which we are aware in Naviance.

### COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE VISITS TO BRECK SCHOOL

Each fall, over 150 representatives visit Breck. It is important that seniors attend the meetings of the colleges that interest them. Seek information, get your questions answered, and make direct contact with reps from schools that most interest you. Often, these representatives read the applications from our students first and then take those applications to their admissions committees. Refer to the college visit list on Naviance and Mustang Minute. Sign up for visits on Naviance on the “College” tab. Students must receive permission to miss class for these meetings.

### A NOTE ON FALL TERM GRADES:

Please note that we do not have quarter grades. Colleges and universities, particularly those who utilize the binding ED program, may want a grade check-in this fall. This is incentive to continue the momentum you’ve built thus far: continue to engage in class, submit your work on time and thoroughly completed, and get in to ask questions! We will not take a snapshot of grades this year. Rather, we will send grades if they are strong and you wish they be sent and/or the college requests them.

## Juniors

As you may have heard, expectations and responsibilities can increase dramatically this year. The fall can be a difficult time to acclimate, juniors should make sure to ask questions of their teachers, participate in class, take advantage of opportunities – academic or co-curricular – to grow. Remember, at least one of their teachers from this year will most likely write one of their college recommendations. A good start is imperative for a good year!

This month also provides unique opportunities for our juniors to expand their awareness of colleges and the vast array of educational experiences available at post-secondary institutions around the country and beyond. The MISP Fair and the college visit programming surrounding the visit will afford juniors tremendous opportunities to connect with professional admissions officers from around the country. These are times not to be missed!

### COLLEGE PROGRAMMING

- Thursday, October 3, ACT and SAT Test Prep. Ron Michalak, founder of Breakaway College Test Prep, will offer an ACT booster class for Breck juniors from 8:30 to 11:30 am and a PSAT prep class from 12:00 to 3:00 pm.
- Saturday, October 12, practice ACT administered at Breck: All juniors have been registered to take the practice ACT at Breck on Saturday, October 12. The test will begin promptly at 8:30 am; please arrive no later than 8:00 am.
- Wednesday, October 16. Juniors will take the PSAT during the school day. A great source for preparation for this test is the website: [www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html).
  - Words of advice:
    - Eat breakfast and arrive early.
    - Think about which email address to enter on the registration form. Students should expect to receive communication from colleges after taking the PSAT. Therefore, students should select an email address they plan to use throughout the college process. Many students use their Breck School email address, whereas others prefer a personal email account. For those

- who have already taken a College Board test (such as an SAT, SAT Subject Test or AP Test) should use the email address that matches their account.
- Bring sharpened #2 pencils and calculators. Remember, this is a College Board test and we need to follow their testing policies.
- Treat it seriously. It's more important than you may care for a test to be. These score results can be helpful as you progress through the standardized testing process.
- But, it's less important than you fear. Remember, it's a *practice* test! This provides students with a standardized testing experience and feedback.
- MEA Weekend, October 17-18 College Visits Strongly Encouraged. We strongly encourage juniors to visit colleges over MEA weekend. There are many opportunities in the local area and surrounding states.
- College representatives visit Breck School: We will host over 150 colleges this fall. Multiple college representatives are visiting our campus daily. Juniors should feel free to go the meetings (mostly in the senior area) during a free hour. The beginning of October is an especially heavy visit schedule. The college visit list for all days is posted on Naviance, the Mustang Minute and the bulletin boards in the college office and in the senior hallway. Check it out for specific dates and times.
- Colleges may be hosting an area informational session. This is a great opportunity to expand your knowledge of colleges! Many schools will visit Breck and some will use the regional session in lieu of school visits. We will post the ones of which we are aware in Naviance.

## **Sophomores**

Our goal this year is to get to know you better and to help ease you into the college process. We urge you to take it at your own pace. We will post newsletters a few times this year to keep you updated on the happenings in our office. If you are curious, check out some college counseling information on Breck's website, <http://www.breckschool.org/college-counseling>. You will find information about ACT/SAT testing, course planning, college visits, and more.

- Saturday, October 12, practice ACT administered at Breck: All sophomores have been registered to take the practice ACT at Breck on Saturday, October 12. The test will begin promptly at 8:30 am; please arrive no later than 8:00 am.
- Wednesday, October 16. Juniors will take a practice SAT during the school day. A great source for preparation for this test is the [website](#):
  - Words of advice:
    - Eat breakfast and arrive early.
    - Bring sharpened #2 pencils and calculators.
    - Treat it seriously. It's more important than you may care for a test to be. These score results can be helpful as you progress through the standardized testing process.
    - But, it's less important than you fear. Remember, it's a *practice* test! This provides students with a standardized testing experience and feedback.
- What do Practice SAT and Practice ACT mean in the sophomore year?  
Breck gives the Practice SAT and a Practice ACT to sophomores to familiarize students with the test, its scoring system, and the testing conditions. When you receive your scores in January, you will also receive your testing booklet. This book serves a purpose, don't throw it away. Take a look at your test sheet and see which answers were right and wrong. Then go to the test booklet and study the questions. This analysis will help you prepare for future tests and will provide information in developing a standardized testing plan.
- Should I take a prep class for the Practice SAT/Practice ACT?  
Although all test prep classes are a personal and family choice, sophomore year is early to prep for a practice ACT/SAT. Simply familiarize yourself with the test components so you can utilize the testing time effectively. We will have Ron Michalak visit during tutorial on October 2 to provide an introduction to the tests to sophomores.

Remember, the best predictor of college GPA is high school GPA. Beyond earning the marks, now is the time to develop and hone your habits, further your analytical skills, and continue to know who you are. This takes place not only in the classroom but in your varied commitments beyond the class day. Find ways to get involved, to serve, and to challenge yourself.

# Freshmen

As you embark on your Upper School career at Breck, you are beginning a time of great personal and intellectual growth. In the College Counseling Office we are interested in these developments and your sense of how you want to shape your future. Welcome to this exciting time!

Settling into the routines and rhythms of Upper School life takes energy, focus, and sustained commitment. While you are getting involved in the daily happenings at school, we encourage you to take time to step back, reflect, and think about how to best build a solid foundation for your future. You are creating a pattern of work habits and attitudes that will be interesting to college admission people in their admission processes and decision making. You should work hard, do your best, get involved and learn from your experiences as a student and member of our community.

On Wednesday, October 16, during the school day, all freshmen will take a practice PSAT9 test.

There is no preparation needed and all students have been registered. The test will be offered through an outside agency, so students should feel comfortable knowing the only ones who will see your results will be family and college counseling. The PSAT9 is a newly designed test that will help you figure out what you need to work on most so that you're ready for college when you graduate from high school. It tests the same skills and knowledge as the SAT and PSAT/NMSQT, in a way that makes sense for your grade level. In other words, the focus is on skills, not scores.

- Words of advice:
  - Eat breakfast and arrive early.
  - Bring sharpened #2 pencils and calculators.
  - Treat it seriously. It's more important than you may care for a test to be. These score results can be helpful as you progress through the standardized testing process.
  - But, it's less important than you fear. Remember, it's a *practice* test! This provides students with a standardized testing experience and feedback.

Here are several bits of advice for the freshman year:

- Read often and carefully. Find things that interest you and read them thoughtfully and strategically. Students who read purposefully and actively tend to retain information longer, have better developed vocabularies, a broader knowledge base, and make more connections with other concepts and information they already possess.
- Develop relationships with your teachers. Teachers are an essential component to your years in Upper School not only because they help you learn, but also because some will eventually write you college recommendations. It is important to have adults in the school who know you well, and that is your responsibility as much as theirs.
- Figure out what interests you and pursue them. Opportunity abounds at Breck and outside of school. Take advantage of the possibilities. This is a good time in life to try out new and intriguing academic, social, and athletic activities.
- Strengthen and refine your work habits and time management. Given the increased Upper School workload and daily preparation for classes, you will be more engaged and successful if you prepare for classes by studying every day, organizing and prioritizing assignments, and carefully budgeting your time.
- Use laptops and other technology wisely. Computers are an amazing and versatile learning tool as well as a social networking system. Strive to balance both types of activity. Avoid staying up too late and getting insufficient sleep because of excessive "social" screen time.

Please know that our office is here for you questions and inquiries. Some times are much busier than others, but we appreciate the chance to get to know you. Please contact [Ms. Papillon](#) with questions or to make an appointment. We are excited about working with you over the coming years.

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