

MAKING THE MOST OF BAYLOR

Preparation for the
College Process...

{ Grades
8-10



EIGHTH GRADE TRANSITION TO THE UPPER SCHOOL

Preparation for the college process lends itself to the big, meaningful questions that parents and students often forget to ask themselves when we are lost in the day-to-day. The transition into the Upper School is a perfect time to pause and consider the shift before students and parents; that requires parents to endeavor to assume a supportive and yet less directive role.

You will often hear the College Counseling office at Baylor emphasize the importance of time. When students enter the process, the essential question that they will need to answer for colleges: ***How did I spend my time in high school, and why?*** At Baylor we hope that students who are new to the Upper School will still take advantage of the opportunity to explore, but the onus on our community of parents and adults is to help students realize that their exploration should begin to have more purpose. “Busy” is not the primary goal of Upper School; steadily honing interests, deepening academic involvement, and extending involvement outside of class and school oftentimes leads to “busy”—but busyness without purpose will not lead to a robust college application.

Instead, focus on helping students make academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular connections in the Upper School that challenge their minds and bodies to go beyond what was comfortable in Middle School. The Upper School will be a place with a variety of curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular opportunities (links to *Making the Most of Baylor*). A little bit of reflection on the lessons and take-aways from Middle School will allow students and their families to explore choices and decisions in the Upper School with more purpose. The college counseling office, grade level deans, and middle and upper school offices are all available to help families with questions.

“*Transitions in life can offer*
OPPORTUNITIES
for discovery.”

~ Robbie Shell

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS PREPARING TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE UPPER SCHOOL AT BAYLOR:

- ♥ *What went well in Middle School?*
- ♥ *What would you do differently?*
- ♥ *What have I learned about my academic abilities and interests that will influence how I choose my classes in the Upper School?*
- ♥ *What have I learned about my interests that will influence how I spend my time outside of the class day?*

EIGHTH GRADE COLLEGE COUNSELING SIGNATURE PROGRAMMING

- ♥ Transitions meeting for parents and students
- ♥ Jump Start for new day students
- ♥ The Upper School Office is available for support and questions.

NINTH GRADE

BUILDING YOUR ACADEMIC FOUNDATION

Middle school was a wonderful time for students to begin realizing what interests them. The first year of high school is still an opportune time to explore and find subjects that bring academic fulfillment and joy. Simultaneously, ninth graders are laying a foundation upon which they will build future opportunities. For the first time, grades will be recorded as part of their official high school transcript. We want students to know that although, yes, colleges will see their first-year grades, they will **ONLY** see semester and year-long grades – nothing else in between. So, it is okay if students struggle to find their footing. There are many layers of support and resources to help students. Classroom teachers, advisors, and The Learning Center will offer guidance to students as they build their academic foundation with confidence should they face challenges. Utilizing Extra Help should become second nature for students across the academic spectrum.

By the end of the ninth grade, charting an academic path through the Upper School with a few curricular goals in mind is an important step for students and parents/guardians to take together. An effective way to think about the Baylor academic experience is through working backward. Students should begin with the classes they may want to take as a senior based on their current interests and aptitudes, and plan backward. The Upper School Office and the College Counseling office will be facilitating conversations with ninth graders about curricular choices and opportunities that are available in the Upper School.

HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES TO COMPLEMENT CURRICULAR CONVERSATIONS WITH STUDENTS:

- 🏰 Sample Transcript
- 🏰 Course Sequencing
- 🏰 Four-Year Course Map
- 🏰 Graduation Requirements
- 🏰 Course Guide and Coursebook
- 🏰 School Profile

Once students have built the academic habits of mind to support adding more, co-curricular opportunities will ignite even more powerful learning. Expanding academic learning outside of the classroom is an advantage that Baylor gives students, and it is important for our ninth graders to say “yes” to exploring those! Participation in robotics, debate, the arts, publications, etc. will enrich the classroom experience and may open important opportunities for leadership in the future. The more they get involved in Baylor, the more they will learn about themselves and what they value.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- 🏰 *Am I taking advantage of the layers of academic support at Baylor beginning with extra help?*
- 🏰 *Have I identified academic aptitudes and interests?*
- 🏰 *Have I matched those aptitudes and interests to at least one learning opportunity outside of the classroom?*

NINTH GRADE COLLEGE COUNSELING SIGNATURE PROGRAMMING

- 🏰 Welcome to the Upper School
- 🏰 PSAT
- 🏰 Parents of Ninth Grade Webinar
- 🏰 In person and virtual college visits
- 🏰 Course Selection Advising
- 🏰 Coast to Coast College Fair
- 🏰 Four Class Meetings to Build a Foundation
- 🏰 Athletic Recruitment Night
- 🏰 Financial Planning Webinar





TENTH GRADE EXTENDING ACADEMIC LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Students will often hear the college counseling office at Baylor emphasize the importance of **TIME**. When students enter the process, the essential question that they will need to answer for colleges is:

How did I spend my time in high school, and why?

Tenth grade is a perfect moment for students to begin envisioning the life they hope to live beyond Baylor's gates and to continue to prepare for that moment with time and some wisdom/experience on their side. All along the way students will have been invited to make the most of their Baylor experience by putting interests into action. During the tenth grade, students may begin connecting their interests in an even more intentional way as they get to make more choices and decisions about what they would like to study. In tenth grade their clubs and organizations that they join may introduce them to opportunities to go beyond membership and take a leading role. The college office will begin to play a more active and formal role in helping students identify aptitudes. The college counseling office will begin to facilitate participatory conversations and activities that focus students on how making intentional choices at Baylor connects to success in the college process. Some of those conversations will focus on the big picture, and some will begin to focus on the nuts and bolts of applying to college.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- ♥ *How do I put more of my interests into action at Baylor in order to deepen my understanding?*
- ♥ *Have I identified academic interests and aptitudes and made a plan to go beyond Baylor's graduation requirements in one or more areas?*
- ♥ *Have I put my classroom learning into action at Baylor through participation in signature programs, clubs, and/or activities?*
- ♥ *How might I use my summer to hone my academic interests or demonstrate commitment to an extracurricular activity?*

As we look ahead into the eleventh and twelfth grades and beyond to the college application process, we hope that an authentic theme will emerge for students. **What** students enjoy and pursue is less important to colleges than the demonstration of academic enjoyment and active pursuit of learning. A busy life at Baylor is a good indication that students are doing Baylor well but a robust college application begs students to ensure that they are busy with a purpose.

We encourage students to focus on the following areas in order to create a unifying thread for their college application. **1.** Mastering subjects and skills. **2.** Applying learning outside of the classroom. **3.** Time spent outside of class and school.

TENTH GRADE COLLEGE COUNSELING SIGNATURE PROGRAMMING

- ♥ PSAT
- ♥ Parents of Tenth Grade Webinar
- ♥ Interest Into Action
- ♥ In Person and Virtual College Visits
- ♥ College Counseling Meets to Discuss Course Selection
- ♥ Practice PSAT/ACT/SAT
- ♥ Course Selection Advising
- ♥ Financial Planning Webinar
- ♥ Red Raider Road Trips to Colleges
- ♥ Case Studies Program
- ♥ Coast-to-Coast College Fair
- ♥ Four Class Meetings



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