MAKING THE MOST OF BAYLOR
A Guide to the College Application Process
If you are a junior or a senior in high school, the six words you likely dread hearing are: ‘Where are you going to college?’... So instead of prerecording a response on your phone or faking a coughing fit to leave the room when asked ‘where,’ I suggest you start by first asking yourself, ‘WHY AM I GOING TO COLLEGE?’

Unfortunately, too few students ask and answer this question. And if you go to a college preparatory school or are in a college prep curriculum, it’s rarely asked, because going to college is a foregone conclusion. But I believe answering ‘why’ first is critical because it forces you to answer other questions: Why should I bother spending the time and money? What do I want the experience to look like? What do I hope to happen after I graduate?

WHY WILL THEN LEAD YOU TO WHERE.”

~ Rick Clark Georgia Tech
A Guide to the **College Process**

As much as we wish it would, highly selective college admission does not trade on future potential so much as it looks at demonstrated high school achievement and behavior as a predictor of whether a student will make the most of their opportunities and resources available to them.

As a Baylor student, you have an advantage in the college process because you have tremendous resources and opportunities at your fingertips. However, it is incumbent upon you to take continuous advantage of these offerings. Beginning in the ninth grade, upper school students are encouraged to focus on the following areas.

**ONE**

**MASTERING SUBJECTS AND SKILLS**

**TWO**

**APPLYING LEARNING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM**

**THREE**

**TIME OUTSIDE OF CLASS AND SCHOOL**

**FOUR**

**DEVELOPING A UNIFIED THREAD**

**FOR THE COLLEGE APPLICATION**

**OTHER TOPICS**

- **THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SELECTING COURSES**
- **PREPARING FOR STANDARDIZED TESTING**
- **FINE ARTS AND THE COLLEGE PROCESS**
- **ATHLETICS AND THE COLLEGE PROCESS**
- **THE ROLES OF THE COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE**
- **COLLEGE COUNSELING SCHEDULE FOR GRADES 9-12**
Meeting and exceeding, when appropriate, Baylor’s graduation requirements.

Choosing the most rigorous course of study for which you are recommended and prepared.

Prioritizing class participation, seeking support when needed and engaging with classroom teachers. Academic perfection is not a prerequisite to college admission but when you remain passive recipients of knowledge at Baylor, it often manifests itself in a less robust college application.
2. APPLYING LEARNING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

Some of the opportunities for experiential education at Baylor include:

- Harris-Stanford Honors Program
- Global Scholars Program
- Civic Scholars Program
- Student Exchange Programs
- Advanced Scientific Research
- Participating in clubs that complement class experiences: Periaktoi, The Baylor Notes, Robotics, Model UN and Debate
- Attending Conferences with Faculty Members
- Liz Aplin Art Trip
- Walkabout (both after school and travel opportunities – local and abroad)
- Abshire Leadership Trip
- Community Service
- Organic Gardening
- Performing Arts
- More than 70 Athletic Teams

The College Counseling Office and the Upper School Deans’ office can provide even more suggestions and guidance!
3. TIME OUTSIDE OF CLASS AND SCHOOL

Purpose: Selective colleges typically do not judge one special endeavor as “worthier” than another, but they do expect students to have purpose and reason behind the time they spend outside of the classroom.

Balance: In addition to balancing school activities and adequate rest, consider paid work – even during the school year.

Community Involvement: Involvement in the local community – including coaching a youth team, political and civic engagement, outdoor stewardship, and arts organizations can complement the Baylor experience.
$1 + 2 + 3 = \text{A UNIFYING THREAD FOR THE COLLEGE APPLICATION}$
Find your unifying thread...

Upper school students can still explore at Baylor, and in fact, it should be encouraged. However, a college application is designed to help admission offices understand what inspires a student. A “dabbler” is harder to understand and appreciate than a student who has built upon sincere interests. Developing a unifying thread that weaves interests and talents into a tapestry makes it easier for a college admission officer to appreciate how you have made the most of what Baylor offers. Here are just a few of the many scenarios that are possible!

**A Serious Musician** in the middle school who then teaches piano in the summer to neighborhood kids, develops a leadership role in the upper school orchestra, and does significant volunteer work with the Chattanooga Symphony.

**A Walkabout Student** who gains Wilderness First Aid Certification, works at REI, does Advanced Scientific Research in environmental biology, becomes a Walkabout Instructor and volunteers for three years to lead the Freshman Trip.
A GLOBAL SCHOLAR who hosts an exchange student, demonstrates significant academic achievement in honors social studies courses, is proficient in a foreign language, teaches citizenship courses at their place of worship with a refugee services group, volunteers with a political campaign and has a leadership role with Model UN.

A TWO-SPORT VARSITY ATHLETE interested in sports medicine who, in addition to playing sports, volunteers with an athletic training office in the summer, coaches or referees in a youth sports league, writes for and eventually becomes the sports editor for the Baylor Notes, and completes a summer hospital internship.

AN ACCOMPLISHED VISUAL ARTIST who takes digital design, is an editor for the art and literary magazine Periaktoi, volunteers with the Baylor communications office in the summer, travels on the Liz Aplin Art Trip, paints scenery for the Chattanooga Theatre Centre, and develops an outstanding AP Art Portfolio.
Course selection combined with academic achievement is one of the most important factors in college admission. Colleges will look closely at your transcript to assess your success in courses and subjects. Some consideration will be given to the rigor of course load in assessing success, but the most selective colleges expect students to succeed in the most challenging curriculum. A positive trend in grades is also considered. Therefore, improvement in the senior year mitigates, but does not erase, a poor record in the first three years.

**The Process:** Students gather with the Upper School head each spring to learn about the course selection process. In that meeting, you will be encouraged to have clarifying conversations with current teachers and your advisor about sequencing recommendations. PSAT scores, teacher recommendations, and conversations with students determine placement in honors and AP level courses.
College admission officers generally look first to the candidate’s course selection during the high school career. Individual schedules will (and should) vary, which can be a source of confusion for students and their families. As a guiding principle, colleges seek students who have taken advantage of the curricular opportunities at Baylor. Recently, some of the most competitive colleges have focused increasingly on the student’s background in what is often described as “core courses.” These colleges encourage students to exceed the Baylor diploma requirements in science, history, math, and foreign language.

Am I better off earning a “B” in an AP course or an “A” in a regular or honors level course?

High school is about learning how to learn; all students will experience proverbial triumphs and defeats. You should understand that exceptional work is rewarded and that excellent work is recognized. A single grade will never determine an admission decision. While the Advanced Placement and Honors monikers suggest rigor, a full slate of Advanced Placement or Honors courses is not always appropriate for a student. Students and parents should approach course selection as an opportunity to craft an experience that is rooted in success as opposed to strategic positioning post-Baylor.

The art of course selection.

The science of course selection.

Graduation Requirements

Baylor expects students to enroll in a minimum of 20 units, including 16 academic courses.

• English: 4 units
• Mathematics: 4 units
• Laboratory Sciences: 3 units
• Social Sciences: 3 units
• Foreign Language: 2 units
• Fine Arts: 1 unit
• Additional requirements: three years of Physical Education and Wellness.

(Senior year schedule should be discussed with student’s college advisor.)

Grade Point Averages

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses receive an additional boost to the course grade (+4 points) as do Honors courses (+2 points). Baylor does not rank. Weighted grades are shown on the transcript and are used for determining GPA. The grading scale is: A: 90-100  B: 80-89  C: 70-79  D: 65-69  F: 64 or below.
**Mapping course selection.**

The Baylor School profile is sent to colleges along with every Baylor transcript and is updated each year. A good rule to go by when mapping out a course of study is to choose the most rigorous course of study for which you are prepared.

**PLANNING AHEAD**

Planning ahead for course selection is essential. If you would like to take a selection of upper level courses at Baylor, you should keep an eye on pre-requisites and plan accordingly. However, you may change your mind, and asking questions about how to make the most of the opportunities and resources available to you is appropriate when it comes to the course selection process. It is important for you to know as a ninth grader that Baylor allows students to pursue advanced studies (honors, AP and post-AP offerings) in all of its disciplines. Since you cannot do it all, planning is important!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES</th>
<th>SCIENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eng I or Eng I Honors</td>
<td>World History I</td>
<td>Biology or Biology Honors</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>Eng II or AP Language</td>
<td>World History II or AP World History</td>
<td>Chemistry or Chemistry Honors</td>
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<td>MATH</td>
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<td>APPLIED HUMANITIES</td>
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<td>Algebra I</td>
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<td>*Audio Journalism</td>
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<td>Geometry or Geometry Honors</td>
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<td>*Digital Narratives</td>
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<td>Algebra II</td>
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<td>*Film Production</td>
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<td>Algebra II w/Trig or Alg II w/Trig Honors</td>
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<td>Precalculus or Precalculus Honors</td>
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<td>Trigonometry and Analysis</td>
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<td>AP Calculus AB</td>
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<td>AP Calculus BC</td>
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<td>AP Statistics</td>
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<td>Honors Abstract Math: Advanced Algebra†</td>
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<td>Honors Abstract Math: Advanced Calculus†</td>
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<td>AP 3D Art &amp; Design</td>
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<td>AP Studio Art</td>
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<td>Band</td>
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<td>Choir</td>
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<td>Orchestra</td>
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<td>*2D/3D Art &amp; Design 100 and 200</td>
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<td>*Choreography 100 and 200</td>
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<td>*Digital Design</td>
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<td>*Drawing 100 and 200</td>
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<td>*Form and Function 100 and 200</td>
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<td>*Painting 100 and 200</td>
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<td>*Pottery 100 and 200</td>
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<td>*Theater 100, 200, and 300</td>
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<td>*one-semester course</td>
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<td>French: 100, 200, 300, 400, AP</td>
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<td>German: 200, 300, 400, AP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latin: 100, 200, 300, 400, AP, Spanish: 100, 200, 300, 350, 400, AP, AP Lang, AP Lit</td>
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<tr>
<th>COMPUTER SCIENCE</th>
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<td>*Computer Sci I: Intro to Computer Sci</td>
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<tr>
<td>*AP Computer Science Principles</td>
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<td>† indicates course offered beyond AP level</td>
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Distinguishing Curricular Opportunities

**GLOBAL SCHOLARS** Baylor’s Global Scholars program distinguishes students who apply an international lens to their education by studying world languages, taking globally-focused courses such as AP Human Geography and Eastern religions, participating in activities such as Model UN, and producing Senior Global Capstone portfolios. All sophomores can sign up as Global Scholars in January of their sophomore year.

**CIVIC SCHOLARS PROGRAM** Fostering and promoting a respectful, courteous, and productive environment for civic discourse is an expectation for all Baylor students, but Civic Scholars are also expected to welcome a leadership role in this area both inside and outside the school community. Prospective Civic Scholars will meet with the Civic Engagement Coordinator in their sophomore year.

**HARRIS-STANFORD** Modeled after college honors programs, Harris-Stanford Honors Program partners with local, regional and national organizations to provide extraordinary civic engagement and leadership opportunities for motivated students. Partners include the prestigious Institute for The Public Trust, a non-partisan, non-profit organization based in Raleigh, N.C. Baylor is the first high school in the U.S. to be brought into the Trust’s leadership program. Open to current freshmen and sophomores who have been at Baylor for at least one year. Applications are due in September.

**BAYLOR RESEARCH** The most advanced students entering ninth grade will take honors chemistry, making them eligible for the introductory courses (molecular methods and engineering design) the summer after their freshman year or during their sophomore year. Students who take honors chemistry as sophomores may take the introductory courses concurrent with honors chemistry. Other students are eligible for the intro courses once they’ve completed chemistry. Once enrolled in the independent research courses, students have the opportunity to conduct research, publish their work, and present at national symposiums.
Additional Co-Curricular Opportunities

At Baylor, athletics has long been valued as a complement to students’ work inside the classroom; but over the years the school has simultaneously grown a world-class menu of co-curricular opportunities available to all students in areas ranging from the arts to engineering to engaged citizenry. These are areas ripe for exploration as students deepen their interests.

**FALL ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES**
* (sample list)
Cheerleading
Community Service
Concert Dance
Crew
Cross Country
Girls Soccer
Girls Volleyball
Golf
Fall Play
Fencing
Football
Organic Gardening
Pre-Basketball
Pre-Diving
Pre-Swimming
Pre-Tennis
Pre-Wrestling
Robotics
Tech Crew
Walkabout

**WINTER ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES**
* (sample list)
Community Service
Concert Dance
Golf
Instrumental Music
Organic Gardening
Pre-Baseball
Pre-Lacrosse
Pre-Soccer
Pre-Softball
Pre-Tennis
Pre-Varsity and Pre-Novice Crew
Robotics
Track
Varsity and JV Basketball
Varsity and JV Wrestling
Varsity Basketball
Cheerleading
Varsity Bowling
Varsity Diving
Varsity Swimming
Walkabout
Winter Players

**SPRING ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES**
* (sample list)
Baseball
Community Service
Concert Dance
Crew
Diving
Fencing
Filmmaking
Football Skills
Lacrosse
Lifeguard Certification
Organic Gardening
Pre-Cheerleading
Pre-Golf
Soccer
Softball
Spring Play
Swimming
Tech Crew
Track
Tennis
Walkabout
Winter Players
PREPARING FOR STANDARDIZED TESTING

Although the best preparation for the tests you will be required to take along the way is the knowledge you gain in the classroom, test taking is a skill. One of the ways students demonstrate their mastery is through either the ACT or SAT, SAT II Subject Tests and Advanced Placement Exams.

Beginning in the summer before junior year, students are encouraged to seek out and take advantage of test preparation courses and free online test preparation through Kahn Academy (www.khanacademy.org) and ACT Academy (www/academy.act.org/).

For ninth and tenth grade students, the most important thing to remember is that the Baylor curriculum includes strong preparation for both the SAT and ACT. However, much like competitive athletics, preparation and process are important to ensuring that you feel ready to perform on high stakes admission tests.
**RECOMMENDED STANDARDIZED PSAT/SAT/ACT TESTING SCHEDULE**

- **Ninth Grade:** Take the PSAT 8/9 (required)
- **Tenth Grade:** Take the PSAT (required); consider the SAT Subject Tests (when appropriate)
- **Eleventh Grade:** Take the PSAT (National Merit Qualifying Test; required), ACT and/or SAT, and SAT Subject Tests (when appropriate)
- **Twelfth Grade:** Take the final ACT or SAT test(s) in the fall.

**SAT SUBJECT TESTS**

Some colleges with holistic and/or highly selective college admission profiles will require or recommend that students sit for SAT Subject Tests. The College Counseling Office will work with you to help chart out a comprehensive testing plan. However, students who are in a terminal AP course or other upper-level courses as a ninth or tenth grader, are advised to sit for the SAT Subject Tests in those subjects in May or June of the year of completion.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TESTING**

Baylor students for whom English is not their first language will likely need to retake the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). We recommend that rising seniors take the TOEFL during the summer if possible. The TOEFL is also offered in Chattanooga on various days throughout the year.

**TESTING WHEN APPLYING TO BRITISH UNIVERSITIES**

If you are interested in applying to colleges in the UK, there may be additional testing required for certain courses of study. In the Southeast United States, there are very few test centers that offer exams, so advanced planning is important. An example of some testing requirements can be found at http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/admissions-tests.
The fine arts requirement at Baylor ensures that students graduate with artistic literacy, but many of them continue with deep involvement in the arts in the classroom and beyond. For potential bachelor of fine arts or bachelor of music candidates, there are a certain set of admission realities: Programs are highly selective and admission is highly subjective. As a result, if you have a strong interest in the arts you should begin to familiarize yourself with the requirements of fine arts programs before your junior year. Requirements can include (but are not limited to):

- **Auditions**
- **A visual art portfolio** (typically 10-20 of the best pieces of work)
- **Artist statements, and time-based media submission** for programs such as animation, film, and game design.

The fine arts faculty at Baylor are highly qualified and willing to help you prepare for the admission process; however, students are advised to communicate their intentions and partner with faculty in a timely manner. The subjective nature of arts admission will also lead the college office to advise applicants to pursue a multi-pronged approach to building a college list. We may suggest that students also pursue college options with strong arts programs, but that are not audition based or portfolio driven.
ATHLETICS AND THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS
At Baylor, the majority of students in the ninth and tenth grades will not take any special steps in their early years. Instead, they enjoy the benefits of participating in a student-centered athletic program with an emphasis on developing decision-making skills, citizenship, sportsmanship and the promotion of individual maturity. However, for those who entered the upper school having attained a high level of athletic success, and who aspire to pursue a path that includes competitive collegiate athletics, collegiate athletic recruiting requires advanced planning.

These students and families are encouraged to:

- Attend to student academic performance and rigor which must be in balance in order to ensure that students are viable candidates for admission.
- Supplement athletic development appropriately with summer camps that provide exposure and club involvement if it’s appropriate to the sport.
- Discuss aspirations with Baylor (and club) coach(es) who can offer guidance regarding the complexities of the collegiate recruiting process, identify strengths and weaknesses, suggest appropriate athletic programs and advocate appropriately in the recruitment process.
- Keep a good record of involvement, performance, and accomplishments.
- Visit colleges and ask coaches to be as candid as they can about their recruiting policies, procedures, thresholds, and advice.
- If you will be a serious contender for a Division I athletic scholarship you are advised to attend to your standardized testing schedule. Some sports have an accelerated recruiting schedule so please take your ACT and/or SAT Reasoning test in November, December or January of junior year.
The NCAA has specific course credit requirements in order for a student to participate in collegiate athletics. If you aspire to play Division I athletics, you should be mindful of the NCAA course requirements below. These course requirements must be satisfied in the first four years of high school. The College Counseling Office and Head of the Upper School will look through your transcripts, but please review your credits and courses before contacting us so that our discussions can be more focused and efficient. Most questions about eligibility are answered in the Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete (http://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2017EC_Initial_Eligibility_Presentation_20170912.pdf).

**GPA AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible to compete in Division I College Athletics, you must have over a 2.0 GPA in sixteen core courses and have the minimum SAT or ACT scores for that GPA. Student-athletes entering a Division I college or university must have over a 2.3 GPA. The sixteen core courses are as follows:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
- 2 years of natural/physical science (one must be a lab science)
- 1 year of additional English, math or science
- 2 years of social studies
- 4 years of additional core courses (from any area listed above, or from a foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy)
- Students must satisfy 10 of the 16 core courses by the end of their 3rd year in high school.
- Students arriving at Baylor after ninth grade should consult with their coaches and the Academic and College Office.
- These requirements do not apply to Division III athletics.

**NCAA CORE REQUIREMENTS**

Students should go to the List of NCAA Courses (https://web3.ncaa.org/hsportal/exec/hsAction), then type in Baylor’s high school code (430275), or simply search for “Baylor.” They will then find a list of Baylor courses approved by the NCAA. This list is updated annually. If an approved course that was offered when your child was a freshman is no longer offered when your child is a senior, for example, then the NCAA may archive it, which means that it may not appear on the list of approved courses, even though it will still count. Please contact the Director of College Counseling for further clarification.
ROLES OF THE COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE

The College Counseling Office is working for Baylor students externally every single day. Our college counselors travel nationally and internationally each year to cultivate an understanding of various options for our students. We develop sustained relationships with colleges and universities by representing Baylor at professional meetings and inviting our colleagues to campus to visit with students and families.

PROGRAMMING FOR BAYLOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

Internally, the College Counseling Office has developed extensive programming to ensure that students and their families have an understanding of various parts of the college admission process. While very few of these programs are “required,” it is our expectation that students and families will avail themselves of the opportunity which is consistent with the Baylor’s college preparatory mission.
College Counseling Schedule for Grades 9-12

**NINTH GRADE**
It’s too soon to think about what colleges are a fit. Instead, we focus energy on developing the skills and the habits of mind students need to ensure their academic transcript is an accurate reflection of their potential. In our meeting with ninth graders, we encourage students to focus on becoming a strong high school student with habits that will help them succeed in the classroom and in other endeavors.

- **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

The College Counseling Office will have group meetings with tenth graders which will introduce them to college research tools.

Students should:
• Reflect on a plan to build rigor into the academic schedule, using academic strengths and specific interests to map out a proposed course of study with advisors.
• Deepen involvement outside of the classroom with Baylor and community organizations. Think deeply about how to structure summer with purpose and intention.
• Consider the role that paid work might play in the summer and school year. Almost without fail, paid work opportunities are valued by colleges for the life skills and responsibility they build in young people.
• The emphasis should now become quality rather than quantity. Talent and genuine contributions to a team or activity are important. Excellence, leadership, and consistent dedication to a passion are highly valued.

- 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

College representatives visit Baylor throughout the fall. We encourage sophomores to take advantage of these opportunities.
ELEVENTH GRADE

In December, individual college counselor assignments will be made and the formal college counseling program will begin.

Students should:
• Sharpen academic skills, and take advantage of advanced courses where appropriate.
• Sign up for the ACT or SAT in December or January.
• Be mindful of leadership and school service opportunities where appropriate.

FALL COLLEGE FAIRS
PSAT
JUNIOR SEMINARS (Students)
COLLEGE FORUM (Parents & Students)
INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS
SCHOOL DAY ACT
CAMPUS & VIRTUAL VISITS
SPRING COLLEGE FAIR
APPLICATION WORKSHOP
ESSAY WORKSHOP
PRACTICE PSAT/ACT/SAT
ATHLETIC RECRUITMENT NIGHT
CASE STUDIES PROGRAM
RED RAIDER ROAD TRIPS TO COLLEGES
FINANCIAL PLANNING WEBINARS

College representatives visit Baylor throughout the fall. We encourage juniors to take advantage of these opportunities.
TWELFTH GRADE

The college office will work closely with seniors on all aspects of the college process including robust programming and one-on-one meetings.

- APPLICATION WORKSHOP
- FALL COLLEGE FAIRS
- CAMPUS & VIRTUAL VISITS
- INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS
- SENIOR WORKSHOP DAY
- FINANCIAL PLANNING WEBINARS
- ATHLETIC RECRUITMENT NIGHT
- RED RAIDER ROAD TRIPS TO COLLEGES

College representatives visit Baylor throughout the fall. We encourage seniors to take advantage of these opportunities.
College Counseling Office Contacts

- **Ann Katherine Taylor**, Director  
  (423) 757-2847  
  ataylor@baylorschool.org

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- **Jake Kennedy ’11**, College Counselor  
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- **Kelly O’Mara**, College Counselor  
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  komara@baylorschool.org