

Blind Brook High School

The College Admissions Process

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Relationship with the Counselor

Student-Parent/Guardian-Counselor

Our college counseling program is designed to assist students and parents – through good counsel and individualized support – in the selection of a college that will best match individual preferences. Counselors are available for consultation, conferences, and troubleshooting throughout the school year. Because selection of a college requires a student to confidently analyze a variety of factors and personal preferences as he/she considers a myriad of choices in the pursuit of the best college fit, our expectation is that juniors will meet with their counselor several times. Additionally, his/her college search is unique and so close contact helps us know the student better as we keep the students' goals and preferences in mind.

Important information will be shared with parents throughout the school year, but parents are always welcome to set up appointments or to ask questions via email or phone. We greatly value and depend on your partnership in this exciting process.

In the spring we will schedule an individualized college meeting which includes the counselor, student, and family to review junior year progress and the student's transcript to date, standardized test results, senior year course schedules, choosing teachers for letters of recommendations, and the college search process as it relates to Reach, Competitive/Target and Likely/Safer college matches. This information can be used as a guideline in understanding the student's competitiveness for admission as well as serving as a guide for planning and preparing for college visits.

Our first priority in the fall of senior year is to meet with the students to discuss summer happenings, preparation for senior year classes and to review colleges that are on the student's list.

The Transcript

Transcripts are an accurate reflection of a student's academic history; thus we ask students to review them for completeness. When you submit your college application, colleges expect BBHS to submit your entire high school academic record, which includes any courses that count towards high school graduation. Naturally, the focus for each junior should be on a strong academic performance – for many students, the strongest in their high school career. Colleges take note of all of your grades, especially in your core classes, the difficulty of your course selection, trends in grades, and, in some cases, your grade point averages. We encourage students to take the most challenging curriculum that is appropriate to their capabilities with the goal of achieving success. Blind Brook High School provides an opportunity for each student to be challenged through its course offerings, but it is up to the student to perform well in those courses. The transcript is assessed with the aid of the school profile, a document that describes our school, explains our grading policies and curriculum, and contains a cross section of summary testing and matriculation information.

Naviance

<https://connection.naviance.com/blindbrook>

Naviance is a web-based college planning service designed especially for educators, students, and parents. Naviance is a comprehensive resource that allows you to investigate and research colleges, sign up for college visits and monitor and track the college application process. It also serves as a means of electronic submission of transcripts and letters of recommendation to colleges and provides a database of admission outcomes.

Students have the opportunity to use a number of different features and research tools to create a list of potential colleges that they are considering, easily adjusting that list as their interests change. Using a college comparison checklist can sometimes be helpful to weigh advantages and disadvantages among schools.

Parents are given access to their child's Naviance account with their own password protected login.

Through this electronic partnership, Naviance transmits transcripts and letters of recommendation from our high school to colleges. Aside from saving paper, time, and postage, this system allows students and counselors to track the submission and receipt of school materials required to complete a student's applications.

The College List

In selecting colleges students are encouraged to first consider their own preferences, aptitudes, talents, and interests and then to research colleges for good matches. Remember to seek help from your counselor, but don't forget to ask for aid from your parents, teachers, friends, and college alumni. Being admitted to the college that is the right fit starts with the development of a sound list of colleges. The list may be lengthy during the junior year for investigation purposes, as students gather information through the school year and summer.

Each student should leave for summer vacation with 10 to 15 schools of interest and narrow the list in the senior year to approximately eight to ten schools, all of which should be good matches and have a range of selectivity. The list should include:

- One or two schools, classified as highly selective, where most of the applicants have an academic performance and test scores better than yours. Your chance of acceptance is 25% or less. These are called "Reach" schools.
- Four to six schools where your background and achievement record compare favorably with other applicants. Your chance of acceptance is at least 50%. These are called "Competitive/Likely" schools.
- Two schools, possibly including one for cost, where your abilities and record are stronger than those for the majority of the applicants. Your chance of acceptance is at least 90%. These are called "Safer" schools.

Preparation and Submission of Applications

Counselors - What We Do on Our End

Based upon your submitted Transcript Request Forms and the deadlines of your applications, we send your colleges an official transcript (Grade levels 9-12 with 8th grade high school level courses included) as well as transcripts from previous schools if applicable, the recommendation letter written by your counselor, the secondary school report, and the school profile. The school profile describes the Blind Brook community, our educational philosophy, the course curriculum, and our grading system. A grade distribution scale is also provided.

Please note the following:

- The counseling office meets all deadlines as long as students provide us with a completed Transcript Request Form at least 2 weeks prior to each college deadline and have previously supplied us with the required completed forms: Student Questionnaire, Parent/Guardian Questionnaire, Academic Comment Forms (1-2), Non-Academic Comment Forms (1-2), all of which are in your folder. Seniors applying to colleges with a “rolling” admission will also have their information submitted by counselors within that 2-week time frame. We can tell in our Naviance system that a college has received our electronic submission of a student’s transcript and recommendations. Students should check their college portals for receipt of all documents.
- The counselors request that every student make an appointment with their counselor in the fall of their senior year to review the college process and review the list of colleges the student is applying to.
- The counseling office is not able to submit transcripts electronically until the student has submitted the Transcript Request Form to the counselor.
- The Mid-Year Report is sent to colleges a student has applied to with 1st and 2nd quarter senior grades for all courses if the college requires it or the student requests it be sent. They are sent to colleges in the beginning of February.
- The Final Report (final official transcript) is automatically sent to a senior’s college after graduation.

Teacher Recommendations

- The procedure for deciding upon, asking, and following up with teachers concerning letters of recommendation will be discussed in your individual junior college meeting in the spring of junior year.
- Students should decide upon two teachers who have taught them academic subjects in their sophomore or junior year. It is a good strategy to think of one teacher representing reading/writing and the other analytical thinking and problem solving. Some colleges will accept a third recommendation if it adds something different to the application. Other colleges limit the submission of recommendations to one or two.
- Students can ask teachers to write on their behalf in the spring of their junior year. Some teachers will ask for the student to submit a Teacher Recommendation Request form (in your folder). Teachers understand that they are writing from their experience with you, not a general perspective, which is more what the counselors do.
- In the fall of senior year, once you have confirmed with the teachers that they are writing your letter of recommendation, you must enter the teacher's name in your Naviance account. The teacher will then receive an automatic email indicating that he/she may upload their letter of recommendation. The student can tell when the letter of recommendation has been uploaded but cannot read the letter. The letter will then be electronically sent to the colleges that a student is applying to.
- Students are responsible for following up with teachers to thank them for their letters of recommendation and to keep them updated as you hear back from their colleges.

The Common Application

www.commonapp.org

A member organization of over 1,100 private and public colleges and universities, the Common Application, or "Common App" as it is known, is a wonderful time saving tool for students as it allows students to apply to many schools using one application process. Students create a password protected account, fill out the application form, attach an essay, build a college list, pay the application fees, and submit their applications and supplements electronically. Many colleges require an institution specific supplement in addition to the Common App.

A Common App is not considered complete by a college until all the other components of the application are received: transcript, standardized testing (if submitting), recommendations, supplement, etc. Many of the colleges require the completion of supplementary questions or required writing supplements. It is the student's responsibility to confirm with each college that every component of the application has been received by the college's stated application deadline. (The same procedure applies for applications submitted through the Coalition Application or an individual school's application.) The counselor and teacher documents do not get downloaded until the student has submitted their completed application.

It is important to remember that the student's college list in Common App is separate from his/her list in Naviance.

Coalition Application

www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org

A member organization of over 150 schools, The Coalition for Access, Affordability and Success was developed to “improve the college application process by providing a single, centralized toolkit for students to organize, build, and refine their college applications”. The Coalition Application has virtual lockers for students where they can enter their work, which can include extracurricular activities, interests, writing samples, college essays, videos and accomplishments over a four year period of time. Colleges would not have access to this information until the student released their locker when submitting their application. **When completing the Coalition Application, it is extremely important to check the box in the Official Document section that indicates that school materials will be sent using an outside system.**

Individual Applications

When completing an individual college’s application, you **must** invite your counselor and teacher(s) through the college’s document upload system. This will ensure your school materials (transcripts and letters of recommendation) process correctly.

Supplementary Information

Other college admission review factors may include a personal essay, involvement in extracurricular activities, various recommendations, and an interview. Students should begin work on their college essays and resumes their junior year and are encouraged to devote time in the summer and early in the senior year to polish these documents. Counselors work with students regarding teacher recommendations, and students are asked to complete these requests in the spring of junior year, thus it is important to make positive impressions on your junior year teachers; set goals in your classes and reach them.

Some colleges require or encourage students to go beyond the basic requested application information and send supplemental information to support special talents or accomplishments. This can often be accomplished through a portfolio, a digital presentation, or a focused resume if applicable to showcase leadership qualities, performing arts ability, athletic aptitude, or service learning. It is important for applicants to find out specifically from each college the format preferred, and the amount of information expected. Fine and performing arts supplements are usually submitted to colleges through *Slide Room*.

Athletes can find additional information about how to connect with college coaches on a college’s website. Usually there is a sport specific online *Prospective Athletes’ Form* (found on the athletics website) for completion by high school students. This is usually the first step in getting noticed by a college coach. Formulate a strategy for getting yourself known to college coaches by meeting with the coach of your high school team and the school athletic advisor, as well as gathering information from the coaches of your travel, club, and summer teams. Additionally, keep your counselor updated on your

progress. It takes persistence, but if you find the school with the right academic and athletic fit for you then it will be worth it.

Standardized Testing

Results of standardized testing can be used by many colleges and universities to validate your transcript and to project future success in your freshman year of college.

Blind Brook High School registers students taking Advanced Placement courses for the appropriate AP exams. Students/parents are responsible for the students SAT and ACT registrations. Use www.collegeboard.org for the SAT registration and www.actstudent.org for the ACT registration. It is important to register well before the registration deadline as test locations fill-up quickly.

Remember, an increasing number of colleges may not (Test Optional) or do not require standardized testing as part of the college application process. You can see a list of these schools on the Fair Test website at www.fairtest.org.

It is the student's responsibility to send standardized test scores to colleges (if required) based upon each college's requirements and deadlines. Blind Brook High School does not send standardized test scores with a student's transcript. Colleges want to receive scores directly from the testing agency (ACT or College Board), not the student or the high school, unless a college indicates they will accept a self-reported score. Each student controls this process through their online account with each testing agency.

International students, who are not native English speakers, are required by colleges to submit the results of the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). The TOEFL is given year-round at commercial test sites. The student is responsible for registering for the test on a date that is convenient for them. A guideline regarding acceptable results is an overall score of 100 with sub-scores of 25 on each subtest.

Additional Suggestions and Ideas:

Parents:

- Encourage your child to research schools; act as a sounding board during the research and visit process.
- Ask your child to create a personal timeline of junior year college activities he/she needs to accomplish. Do the same for the summer and for senior year.
- Use the college's Net Price Calculator (on a college website) to estimate the net price of attending a particular college.
- Consult with your child's counselor if you have any questions or concerns.

Students:

- Be aware of the deadlines for the various application components. Create a calendar for yourself.
- Spend quality time on your essay; writing well and writing often contributes to a greater ease with this part of the college application process. Begin thinking about two junior year teachers who could be your teacher recommenders.
- Begin your search for scholarships: www.fastweb.com, <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college>, Naviance, and colleges' financial aid website links are great resources.
- If you plan to participate in Division 1 or 2 college sports, complete your NCAA eligibility registration at www.eligibilitycenter.org. Check with your coaches and the Athletic Director for more information regarding collegiate athletics as well as for information about the NCAA eligibility process.
- Take advantage of the college admissions counselors who come to visit Blind Brook during the fall of your senior year.

The summer before senior year:

College admissions officers look for students to be active during summer vacation. Students could be employed, take summer college classes, travel, participate in athletic ventures, and/or volunteer in the community. Summer is also a great time to try something new. Be sure to schedule "down" time to relax and recharge before your senior year begins.

We also suggest that each student:

- Begin his/her college applications in earnest – access electronic applications and revise college essays, which will make the senior workload more manageable.
- Visit colleges.
- Register as needed for the fall (August-October) SAT or ACT.