

College Office Handbook



Baruch College Campus High School

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Welcome!

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to College Counseling at Baruch College Campus High School. We invite you to keep updated by reading the college newsletter and linking to Naviance and the College Office website, as well as the college notices on the bulletin boards, and to take full advantage of the many resources that have been accumulated for your use.

This venture is a partnership in which each of us has a vital role. We have compiled information that we believe will help you understand your roles and the way the college application process works at BCCHS. Your initial role is to start the process with some serious self-assessment. Be positive about your future. Think about what you might enjoy studying, but take time to consider all aspects of your life. Give thought to how you most enjoy spending your free time. Think about activities, sports or groups in which you hope to continue participating, or maybe take up for the first time. For most students, college will be a residential experience. Your happiness and success in college will be influenced greatly by not just the classes you take, but the overall atmosphere of the campus. Your job is to choose intelligently. The more time and effort you dedicate to the process, the more satisfactory the results will be.

BCCHS is committed to helping you in your college planning process. We recognize that it is not a small job. It requires substantial thought, organization and commitment. It is not, however, too complicated for any of you to handle. Remember that each of you have many “good” choices. This can and should be a fun and exciting period of your life. Go into the process with optimism and enthusiasm, and you will find it to be a positive experience. Throughout the process, this College Handbook should be a valuable reference, answering many of your questions.

We look forward to assisting you in getting the right balance and fit for your college choices over the next year.

Sincerely,

The BCCHS College Office

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Developing a College List

Create a college list of about 20 schools that are of interest to you, taking into account factors such as: size, location, quality of a particular academic or extracurricular program, type of students, faculty/student ratio, housing availability, guidance and support for students, overall cost, etc. Be aware of applying to too many schools. You should apply to approximately 8 to 10 private and out of state, state schools, and also include a balance list of CUNY and SUNY schools. The final goal is to come up with a balanced group of schools (CUNY's, SUNY's, and private schools) that fall into three categories: *Likely, Possible and Reach*.

- **Likely/Safety** school is one where your credentials are very competitive, and where we are confident that you will be admitted.
- **Possible/Comfort** school is one where your credentials for admission are truly competitive and you are qualified for admission.
- **Reach** school is one where your chances of admission are less likely, but where you have some chance of admission.

Compare your testing to the school's average testing and selectivity. Don't be afraid to aim high, but also make sure to apply to schools where you and your college counselor feel your chances are strong. It is important to be realistic, and your counselor has the expertise to give you good guidance.

The Application Process

Once a decision to apply to a school has been reached, you should begin listing your schools on Naviance under the “Colleges I’m applying to” link. You **MUST** read each college's requirements and follow the instructions carefully. Pay close attention to the timetable for each application and comply with the deadlines given by the College Office.

Four of the most prevalent schedules are:

- Early Decision
- Early Action
- Regular Decision
- Rolling Admissions

(You must mark which of these you are applying for).

Naviance

[Naviance](#) is a powerful database that will assist students to navigate the college process. With Naviance, you will be able to search for colleges that match your interests, identify those schools you are considering applying to, keep track of important deadlines and more. Naviance will indicate through an icon of a computer screen, which schools allow the College Office to submit letters of recommendation and school documents electronically. Students are required to list ALL schools they are applying to on Naviance.

Fee Waivers

Students who are eligible may receive fee waivers for SATs, ACTs and college applications. You must complete the lunch form in order to receive these waivers. SAT fee waivers are received through the College Office. College application fee waivers may be sent out electronically through Naviance, or received from the College Office to be mailed out. CUNY Fee waivers will be sent via email to those who are qualified in early November.

Filling out the Application

Read and follow the directions carefully. Do not assume that all schools have the same steps or requirements.

1. Organize and distribute all parts of the application. This includes your forms, and forms for teacher and counselor recommendations. Naviance will list icons that will indicate which schools allow you to send your application electronically, or require an envelope to mail your application and documents.
2. Give yourself plenty of time. Filling out an application takes longer than expected. Doing this in advance will reduce a lot of stress by the due dates!
3. Be neat and clear in your presentation. Information must be presented clearly and legibly and questions should be answered directly and honestly.
4. Provide as much information as possible within the structure of the application.
5. Do not worry if you must leave some spaces blank.
6. If you do submit extra pieces of information, you **MUST** write your name and college identification number, if available, on all materials.
7. Send official copies of your standardized tests to colleges.
8. Save and make copies of all materials submitted.
9. Be sure to include any necessary payments and check to confirm receipt of your application. Check on the status of your application three weeks after it has been sent.

[Click here for more tips](#)

The Common Application

Over 400 colleges and universities support the use of the Common Application. The form can be obtained through Naviance, or from their website (www.commonapp.org). Check on the Common Application website to see what schools accept the Common Application.

The Common App Tips:

- Use the same name on everything
- Put your name and either your address or your social security number on everything you submit
- Answer all questions
- Use a reliable and appropriately named email account
- Make sure that if you put down a special field of study or college division, it actually exists at the college to which you are sending the application
- If you are planning to apply for financial aid, make sure to check that box
- Optional information is just that, but if you are going to fill out that section, make sure you fill it out completely
- List your best SAT and/or ACT tests and the dates taken, if sending in scores
- Make sure you list all awards or distinctions that you have received
- Do not sell yourself short with activities, but do not go overboard. You can add more detail in the “Additional Information” section of the Common App if you would like to, but be careful about sending too much additional information
- List activities according to importance to you and years involved
- There are only 32 weeks in the school year – do not overstate your hours or time commitment

Standardized Tests

Standardized testing is an important factor in admissions decisions at most highly selective colleges and universities. We have found that students who plan carefully and familiarize themselves with the test format through use of practice materials usually are able to attain scores that accurately reflect their school performance. We want you to understand the testing requirements and, just as importantly, to keep testing in perspective.

You are responsible for sending official test scores to each college. If you coded colleges on your standardized test registration forms, then you have already sent official copies.

Most tests that colleges require for admission can be administered in a modified format. These modifications to the test administration process are only available to students with documented disabilities. Such modifications can include extended time, large print test materials, as well as administration by audiocassettes or the use of braille.

“Which one do I take, SAT or ACT?”

SAT – a three-hour-and-50-minute exam that measures Evidence-Based Reading and Mathematics with a maximum combined score of 1600 (800 per section). There is an optional Writing portion for this exam. Registration can be done online at www.collegeboard.org

ACT – a three-hour-and-25-minute exam that measures English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. There is also an optional Writing portion for this exam. The maximum score is 36. Registration can be done online at www.act.org

Score Choice – allows students to choose which test administration to submit to colleges/universities. The colleges/universities have to agree with this practice. If all scores are submitted, colleges/universities may super score (take the highest of each section) when reviewing your application.

Test-Optional Schools – students choose to report scores only if they feel it will help in the admissions process. Some schools will ask for a graded writing sample in place of test scores. A complete listing of test-optional schools can be found at www.fairtest.org

Extended Time

Extended time, sometimes referred to as a timing accommodation, is used to help students who need additional time to complete activities, assignments, and/or tests that are assigned to them. Typically, extended time is used in one continuous block- for example, while the rest of the class has sixty minutes to complete a test, a student with extended time may have ninety minutes to complete the same test. Students with extended time are not given more or less questions, just additional time to complete the assignment they are given.

Common Extended Time Accommodations: These accommodations are typically included in documents such as IEPs, 504 Plans, or Disability Services files.

- Time and a half (150%), which extends a 60-minute period to 90 minutes- this is the most common extended time accommodation
- Double time (200%), which extends a 60-minute period to 120 minutes
- Triple time (300%), which extends a 60-minute period to 180 minutes
- Alternative testing environments, such as a testing center
- Taking tests at an alternative time to accommodate for additional time- for example, if the test center would close before I could get extended time, I would go earlier in the day
- Use of time-saving tools such as a scribe for bubble sheets or access to a keyboard
- Breaks during exams to stretch or get water

College Board considers all requests for accommodations needed by students with documented disabilities. Read about some of the accommodations they provide:

<https://accommodations.collegeboard.org/how-accommodations-work/about-accommodations>

Writing the College Essay

The essay provides an opportunity for you to show your individuality and creativity in your application.

Colleges want you to tell them about those parts of your personality and character that make you different from the rest of the applicant pool. This is the forum in which you can add creativity to your application. The following tips might help as you sit down to write your essay:

1. Be yourself!
2. Avoid writing in strictly biographical facts. The essay is an opportunity to elaborate on the facts you provided in your application.
3. Pick a topic of genuine interest.
4. Do not feel that you must be perfect. Many good essays contain admissions of a candidate's weaknesses and strengths.
5. Be aware of length limits.
6. Proofread, Proofread, Proofread!

This is your opportunity to give the reader a better sense of you, your values, or your perspective. The best essays are the ones an admissions officer would describe as reflective, thoughtful, and well-written. Again, have an objective adult review what you have written. A fresh set of eyes is better than those that have looked at the same page over and over again.

More tips for essay writing:

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-essay-tips>

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/your-college-application/write-your-essay/6-tips-for-crafting-your-best-college-essay>

Financial Aid

Financial aid is one of the most complex facets of college admissions. Qualification for need-based aid is determined through a variety of measures, and many schools offer some form of merit scholarship. These scholarships can vary in amount, and can make private college tuition more competitive with public college alternatives.

Types of Financial Aid

Your financial aid package will depend on your “financial need”, on your academic records, and on additional qualities. Three kinds of financial aid are available:

1. **Grants:** Financial awards which do not have to be paid back.
2. **College Loans:** Financial awards made with a formal agreement for repayment with interest.
3. **Work-study:** A federally funded program that provides part-time employment to students to earn money for educational expenses.

What is the FAFSA?

The FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The federal government uses it to determine your eligibility for federal aid, which includes grants, scholarships, work-study and loans. The FAFSA becomes available on October 1st of each year.

What is an FSA ID?

The FSA (Federal Student Aid) ID gives you access to Federal Student Aid’s online systems and can serve as your legal signature. Allowing you to: (1) electronically sign your FAFSA, (2) check the status of your electronic FAFSA, and (3) make any changes necessary to your personal information online.

What is the Student Aid Index (SAI)?

The Student Aid Index (SAI) is a figure that projects what a family can pay for higher education in the upcoming year. Your family's SAI is determined by the federal government through the information supplied in your FAFSA.

A family with an "SAI" of \$10,000 will be judged with no need at a CUNY school with costs less than \$10,000, while they may qualify for \$15-30,000 at the most expensive of the country's private colleges and universities.

What is a SAR?

A Student Aid Report (SAR) is a report that is generated after you complete your FAFSA. It contains all the information you wrote or entered on the FAFSA, and it is your official record or proof that the federal processor received your FAFSA. You should receive a SAR 1–2 weeks after filing.

Note your Data Release Number (DRN), a four-digit number located on the bottom left-hand corner of your SAR. You will need it to apply for aid to any school you did not originally list on your FAFSA.

Check if your SAR has been selected for verification. If there is an asterisk (*) after your EFC, it means your SAR has been selected for verification.

What is the CSS PROFILE?

The College Scholarship Service (CSS) profile determines your eligibility for non-governmental financial aid, such as the college's own grants, loans and scholarships.

When you register for the CSS Profile, you will need the PROFILE code of the school or program to which you are applying. You can find a worksheet for this at www.finaid.org/fafsa/cssprofile.phtml .

You can register for the CSS PROFILE online at www.collegeboard.org

Taking a Gap Year

Why take time off?

There are many reasons for taking time off before attending college. You may want more time to find yourself outside of academia. A change of environment can give students' added focus and enthusiasm when they return to school. If a student isn't ready for college, time off can cultivate maturity and self-discipline. Special programs can prepare students so they don't waste time and money by doing poorly in school. Time off can also allow students to work and save money so they don't have to work as many hours when they return to school.

Options during a Gap Year:

- AmeriCorps: offers local and national community service opportunities to individuals who want to make a difference in the lives of others and in the world. <https://americorps.gov/>
- The Council on International Educational Exchange: offers programs for college-bound graduates who want to volunteer, teach, or live abroad learning and exploring different cultures during their gap year. <http://www.ciee.org>
- City Year: offers its members a variety of benefits such as educational and living stipends, health insurance, and more in exchange for a year-long commitment to transform schools in the U.S and Africa. <http://www.cityyear.org>
- Gap-Year.com offers an abundance of information on taking time away from school to travel abroad, work, volunteer, and more! <https://efgapyear.com/>
- StudyAbroad.com offers a wealth of information on opportunities to study in another country as well as volunteer and internship programs. <http://www.studyabroad.com>

Timeline for Juniors

October

Take PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) in October. The date and time will be announced, and the College Office will distribute materials.

October, November, December

Research colleges and scholarships, find out about SAT/ACT prep classes and attend fairs. Plan to meet with college representatives who visit school during the fall, if you can do so during a free period.

March-May

- Attend the BCCHS College Night with your parents/guardian.
- Complete Parent and College Assessment Guide Surveys on Naviance.
- Schedule your appointment with the College Counselor to discuss tentative college plans. These meetings should include your parent/guardian. You will receive a College Search Interview Summary form. Please keep your copy. Use your College Search Interview Summary form to assist in your college search.
- Plan to attend the BIG APPLE College Fair (dates will be announced).
- All juniors should plan to take at least one SAT/ACT exam by September of their senior year.
- Complete your College Recommendation Surveys in Naviance for the two teachers who have agreed to write you a recommendation letter.

Timeline for Seniors

September

- Check the College Office Newsletter and the College Office Website.
- Continue to finalize their college list using the College Search Interview Summary Form along with your own research.
- You **MUST** complete all surveys, letter of recommendation forms and your summer assignment package. These must be submitted to your advisor within the first two weeks of September. No recommendations will be written until you do so. You **MUST** register two months prior to taking the October SAT or ACT exam in order to get placement close to your home.
- Continue researching colleges and listing schools of interest on your Naviance account under the “Colleges I’m thinking about” link, and by visiting each college’s website.
- Early Action, Early Decision (ED/EA) applicants must attend ED/EA meetings and complete required forms.

October, November, December

- Take the October SAT I or ACT and Register for the November and December SAT I, or ACT testing dates.
- You must list schools you intend to apply to on your Naviance account, moving schools from “Colleges I’m thinking about” to the “Colleges I’m applying to” list by the dates given by the College Office.
- Take note of deadlines, as there may be colleges that have regular deadlines as early as October and November.
- You must know the College Office deadlines to meet your college application deadlines
- FAFSA is available to be filed in early October using prior-prior year tax returns.

January and February

- CSS Profiles are due as soon as possible after January 1 for regular decision. You must know the deadline of your CSS Profile schools.
- Regular college applications are due
- First semester grades are sent to colleges

April, May, June

- Traditional reply dates are April 1-10
- Acceptance/deposit due to one college only by May 1
- Wait-list decisions generally come in the end of May or the beginning of June

Resources

Financial Aid

<http://www.FAFSA.ED.GOV> – Best way to get Federal Student Aid forms.

<http://www.finaid.org> – Most complete financial aid site.

<https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm> – FSA ID (Financial Aid Signature)

<http://www.nasfaa.org> – National Association for Student Financial Aid Administrator

<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp> – CSS Profile

Scholarships

<http://www.fastweb.com> – Fastweb

<http://www.ihad.org/> – “I Have a Dream” Foundation

<http://www.scholarships.com> – Scholarship

<http://bcchscollege.weebly.com/scholarships.html>

College Search

www.naviance.com

<http://www.fairtest.org>

<http://www.collegeboard.org>

<http://www.bigapplecollegefairs.com>

<http://www.collegeview.com>

<http://www.collegeweeklive.com/event-schedule>

<http://www.princetonreview.com>

Athletics

www.ncaa.org

www.naia.org

www.nationalrecruits.com

Career Services

[O*NET Interest Profiler](#)

<http://www.careerbuilder.com>

[My Future: Career](#)

Summer Programs

<https://www.summerstudyinusa.org/>

<http://www.lead-america.org>

<http://bcchscollege.weebly.com/summer-programs.html>