

District Counseling Newsletter

Bayport -Blue Point School District

March/ April

2011

A Letter from the Counseling Dep't...

Dear Community,
It looks like this winter will never end. The cold and snow is still here and we are all looking for a break to warm up our bones and wear our summer cloths.

With that said, you, as well as the Counseling Staff will have to continually remind our children that they need to stay tuned into school. With AP exams, finals, Regents and other state exams, spring is not a time to sun ourselves and take it easy. It is also a time for high school juniors to start the college selection process.

This time of year most colleges roll out the red carpet for students to view and speak with them about their specific schools. To sign up for these visits, students will need to visit college websites and fill out a registration form on line. This is a great time for juniors and their parents to visit without any pressure of time. Please take advantage of these opportunities.

While speaking of taking advantage of opportunities, the counselors are hoping that all their junior students and their families will make



Spring and Summer are just around the corner!!!!

an appointment to discuss college planning. You have received a letter from Mr. Haas inviting junior families to the Junior College Planning Conference. These conferences are the beginning of the college selection process for your children and offer you much information concerning the nuances of college application. Please call the

Counseling Center to schedule a time for your meeting.

Seniors are now in the midst of deciding on their college selection. There are many factors that come into play in making that decision; therefore we have included some articles on financial aid and transition for your reading. If at any time you or your children need assistance with this decision, please call the Counseling Center to meet with your counselor. We want to wish you a happy spring (whenever it comes) and remind you we are here to help with whatever is going to make your children successful in school.

The Counseling Staff

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What determines the amount of aid you receive?

The primary factor in determining the amount of aid you receive is your financial need. The following formula shows how financial need is calculated:

Cost of Attendance - Expected Family Contribution = Financial Need

Determining Cost of Attendance (COA)

The Office of Financial Aid calculates your COA for an academic year based upon certain assumptions and certain individual factors. Cost of Attendance includes tuition and fees, as well as allowances for books

and supplies, living expenses, transportation, and personal costs. Factors such as course of study, grade level, residency status, etc. are also used in determining your COA.

Determining Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

Your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is the amount that you (and your parents if you are a dependent student) are expected to contribute to your educational costs. This figure is determined from all the data you and your parents supply on the [FAFSA](#) and/or the [CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE](#) Application.

Determining Financial Need

Your financial need is calculated as being the difference between the Cost of Attendance and the Expected Family Contribution, as demonstrated by the formula above. The amount of aid you

receive is then based upon your financial need but may vary from school to school depending on educational costs, aid policies, and amount of aid available to give. In general, the higher your financial need, the greater your eligibility for gift aid (money that you do not have to pay back). Even if you have no financial need, you are still able to receive non-need based aid, such as certain scholarships or [Federal Unsubsidized Stafford Loans](#).

If your college offers aid that is less than your financial need, then you have a [financial aid gap](#). Your financial aid office should be able to work with you and make recommendations to help you pay for the difference between the amount you have been awarded and the actual cost of attendance.



Most colleges release their decisions based on when you applied for admission. If some of your friends have already received decision letters, but you haven't, it may be because they applied under a different admissions program than you.

Early Decision is the early admissions program in which applying early will get you an early answer about college acceptance. The early decision program is binding, meaning that if you are accepted to a college under early decision, then you must attend that school. For this admissions program, applications are normally due by November 1st of your senior year, and selections are usually made by mid-December.

Early Action is similar to early decision in that applying early will get you an early answer. However, early action programs are not binding, meaning that you do not have to attend the college if accepted. However, you usually do not have to make your final decision until May 1st of your senior year.

Regular Decision. For reg admission, app deadlines are usually in Jan or Feb of your senior year. Decision letters are generally sent out at the end of March or early April.

Deferred means that the college is not willing to assure you an early spot in the incoming freshman class but has not denied your application for admittance either. Your application will be reconsidered

during regular admissions. In some cases, the college may be looking for more information about you, such as grades from your senior year or new test scores, before they make a decision. In other cases, depending on the institution, a deferment is not such a good sign. The percentage of students that are deferred and end up getting in is not very high. You can try to get in contact with the admissions office to market yourself better, such as letting them know about new awards or recognitions you have received during your senior year, etc. Just be sure not to begin a flood of phone calls to the admissions office begging for admittance. It's also a good idea to have alternate plans with another school in case you do

not get admitted.

Waitlisted. The college has finished reviewing your file and made a decision to put you on a waiting list for admission. The college has sent out their acceptance letters and is waiting to see how many students commit to their school. If fewer students commit to enrolling than originally expected, the college will begin to fill the openings with students from the waiting list. Unlike a deferment, new information does not usually change a wait-listed decision, but it never hurts to send in your final senior-year grades and/or senior-year awards/recognitions. Your chances of being admitted after being wait-listed will vary depending on the school. Go ahead and make alternate plans with another

Making your summer break count...

The end of the school year doesn't give you an excuse to be lazy. Summer is a great time to continue learning. Here are some tips to enhance your skills throughout summer:

Visit your local library. Public libraries are great resources for additional learning materials. Talk with a librarian to locate items targeted to your needs. What is not available locally often can be retrieved through interlibrary

loan programs.

Seek out tutors. Talk with your teachers and school counselors for help locating individual coaching in areas in which you want to improve or even expand your understanding.

Use every opportunity to learn. Taking a family vacation? Spend time learning about the area you will visit, such as its history and demographics. Painting your house? Learn about the chemistry of paint or calculate

the amount of paint you'll need to cover the desired square footage.

Read, read, read. Summer is a great time to read a book without a deadline. Immerse yourself in each one, researching the author and relevant history.

Take a trip around the world in 80 days. Since summer break typically lasts about 80 days, map your own way around the globe by studying different areas each week. By taking advantage of every opportunity,



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Staying active outside of the classroom..

Activities that you do outside of the classroom will be taken into consideration when it comes to competitive college admission and scholarships. Try to be as well rounded as you possibly can. Your extra-curricular and co-curricular (activities that augment and enhance your in-class experiences) involvements can be part of the package of criteria that college admissions staffs consider with your application. Here are a few helpful hints:

Keep a record of your involvements beginning your freshman year of high school. In almost all situations the depth of your experiences is more important than the number. Don't worry about trying to do everything under the sun. Try to do as much as you can within the activities that you choose.

Choose activities that are "meaningful and important" to you. Not everyone is going to be in the Key Club or the captain of the baseball team, but that is okay.

Take advantage of leadership roles and opportunities that develop in the activities you have chosen.

Some scholarships are based entirely upon community service. Get involved.

Don't neglect your own individualism. Continue to nurture your own special talents and interests. These things may set you apart from others when it comes down to an admissions decision.

Bridge programs that help ease the transition from high school to college

Making the shift from high school senior to college freshman can be intimidating to some students. Thankfully, there are bridge programs available to help make the transition much easier. Get familiar with these beneficial bridge programs that are offered in most communities and through many colleges.

TRIO Bridge Programs

The Federal TRIO Programs are educational outreach programs designed to encourage and assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO programs, such as Student Support Services and Upward Bound, offer bridge courses to help students make the college transition. TRIO staff works with area colleges to provide academic counseling, financial aid counseling, and academic and career development workshops. Before starting college (usually during the summer before freshman year), eligible students follow a curriculum where they learn how to:

- Survive in college**
- Choose and build a career**
- Be a leader among their peers**
- Develop good study habits**
- Get involved on campus...and much more**

To be eligible for TRIO programs, student participants must meet federal low-income guidelines, and/or meet first generation guidelines, and/or be a student with documented disabilities. For more information about bridge programs offered by TRIO, visit www.ed.gov or contact your selected college's TRIO program.

College Bridge Programs

Individual colleges also offer their own bridge programs to help entering freshmen have a smooth transition. These school-specific programs vary among colleges, but most offer:

- College level courses (earn college credit hours)**
- Development seminars**
- College life workshops**
- Social events**
- Mentoring provided by current ...and more**

Since most colleges offer bridge programs during the summer, participating freshmen are afforded the opportunity to move in to their dorms in advance of other freshmen and returning students, which further aids in an easier transition. Eligibility and payment requirements for individual college bridge programs will vary from school to school. Contact the student services department at your selected college or university for specific information regarding the school's bridge program.

Dual enrollment is a program that allows high school students (usually sophomores, juniors, and seniors) to enroll in college courses for credit prior to high school graduation. While not technically a bridge program per se, dual enrollment does allow students to transition from high school to college easily. Students can get a taste of what college is like without being completely overwhelmed with a whole new environment. As with bridge programs, the eligibility and financial requirements vary among states and schools. Check with your high school counselor for more information or read [High School Dual Enrollment](#).

Because college differs from high school in a number of ways, these above-mentioned programs are available to help students make the transition to college as smooth as possible. Bridge programs give entering freshmen the opportunity to become more socially and culturally acclimated to college life as well as provide beneficial resources for continued success throughout college.

We're On The Web
WWW.BBPSCHOOLS.ORG