

Brookline High School
Guidance and Counseling Department
Developmental Guidance Program

***The College Option for Life After Brookline
High Graduation***

JUNIOR SEMINARS

January - March

*PRESENTED BY:
SCHOOL COUNSELORS OF JUNIORS*

Key online resources:

BHS Guidance Dept website- <http://bhs.brookline.k12.ma.us/guidance>

Naviance - <https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=brookline>

ACT info and test registration – <http://act.org>

SAT info and test registration – <https://collegeboard.org>

Test optional school lists - <http://fairtest.org/university/optional>

Colleges that require or recommend SAT Subject Tests (**only 14 colleges REQUIRE/ RECOMMEND SAT Subject Tests**) - <http://www.compassprep.com/subject-test-requirements-and-recommendations/>

TOEFL info and test registration - <http://www.ets.org/toefl>

Common Application - <https://apply.commonapp.org/login>

JUNIOR YEAR AT BHS

September

Focus on taking a balanced course load and achieving the best possible grades in these classes.

Register for the PSAT Exam

Students will be notified of the test date and registration process in Homeroom. Online registration is available using links communicated from BHS Guidance.

October

Branch out!

Join a club, try out for a sports team, volunteer, get a job, or take on a new hobby. Colleges want to admit students who not only cultivate existing interests, but also explore new interests and gain experiences. These experiences can help students to think about possible career interests and goals that may be part of a college major, a 2-year certification program, or a career in the trades.

Kaplan online training

Prepare for the PSAT by joining online live classes covering a variety of test subjects. (kaptest.com)

PSAT Exam

The PSAT is also the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST). (nationalmerit.org)

Careers in trade

Thinking that a trade opportunity after graduation may be your goal? See the BHS career counselor or your guidance counselor for more information.

November

Have fun during Thanksgiving Break!

Try to speak with friends home from college. Talk to family/friends who have careers in areas you may be interested, including technical and trade opportunities.

December

PSAT results arrive.

Start studying for the SATs.

Take some practice exams, sign up for a prep class, download some helpful apps.
• collegeboard.org
• khanacademy.org
• kaptest.com

Meet with your guidance counselor.

Plan whether you'll take the SAT or ACT test. Note that many schools are now test-optional. (fairtest.org) You can also stop by the College-Career Center 279 to ask the college counselor questions during drop-in hours posted outside the door.

SAT or ACT?

There are differences between the two tests which you can research. Meet with your **guidance counselor** or the **BHS college counselor** to discuss your strengths and advantages for each test.

January

Check out Naviance

Students should start exploring colleges using Naviance (naviance.com). If a student does not have login information for his/her account, he/she should contact guidance counselor.

February

Junior Night

Introduction to post-secondary planning for parents and students.

College visits

Students should take time during February vacation to visit colleges they have been researching for the last few months. (Visits can be set up by visiting the school's website and arranging an official tour.)

Junior guidance seminars begin (2 sessions; end of Feb+early Mar)

Students will meet with their counselors in a group setting to learn about the college application process. The seminars include information regarding Naviance, post-secondary planning, standardized testing, resume writing, college forms, and teacher recommendations. Gap Year programs and other educational opportunities will also be covered.

March

SAT Exam

Students must self-register one month in advance. For more information, visit the College Board website. (CollegeBoard.org)

Spring college fairs

BHS hosts a college fair with over 100 colleges in attendance. Specific information will be available closer to the event.

SAT Subject Tests

Only a small number of schools recommend or require 2 or 3 SAT subject tests. Visit each college website for requirements. Go to: compassprep.com/subject-test-requirements-and-recommendations/ for updated information on which colleges require (only 8 in 2017) or recommend (only 14 in 2017) Subject Tests.

April

Individual post high school planning meetings

Students meet with their guidance counselors or BHS college counselor to continue the post-secondary planning process.

Virtual college visits

Some colleges provide video chats for online visits. CollegeWeekLive provides online events for over 500 colleges. (collegeweeklive.com)

ACT Exam

Students must self-register one month in advance. For more information, visit the ACT website. (act.org)

BHS Job/Career Fair

May

SAT OR SAT II Subject Exams

Students must self-register one month in advance. For more information, visit the College Board website. (CollegeBoard.org)

AP Students AP Exams

Advanced Placement Exams are offered in the beginning of May. Visit the AP College Board website (apstudent.collegeboard.org) and consult your teacher for more information.



Teacher Recommendations

Talk to your counselor about who to ask for a recommendation. Typically colleges ask for **two** teacher recommendations: one from a Humanities class and one from a Math/Science class. Teachers will expect specific information from students in September such as a list of colleges, addresses and envelopes.

SAT OR SAT II Subject Exams

Students must self-register one month in advance. For more information, visit the College Board website. (CollegeBoard.org)

ACT Exam

Students must self-register one month in advance. For more information, visit the ACT website. (act.org)

Summertime!

Make plans!

While summer is a time to relax from school, it's also a great time to stay busy with activities such as jobs, summer camp, internships, volunteering, etc. Colleges prefer that students keep exploring new interests, cultivating existing interests, and gaining new experiences.

Work on your college list

This is a great time to start editing your college list. If you fall in love with a particular college, consider an early decision (ED) or early action application (EA).

Visits colleges

Continue to visit colleges, keeping a list of pros and cons for each school. College visits should be set up by visiting the school's website and registering for an official tour. Look up information for each of your choice colleges.

College Essay

Students should start working on the first draft of their college essay over the summer. The essay questions tend to be similar from year to year. Speak with your English teacher or counselor about choosing prompts.

When it comes out in August, review and start filling out the **Common Application**. This can help reduce the amount needed to be done in Fall. (www.commonapp.org)

• **Peer Recommendations**

Podcasts:

- Slate's "Getting In"

Books:

- Demystifying the College Process
- Fiske Guide to Colleges
- Insider's Guide to the Colleges
- Colleges That Change Lives
- Princeton Review - Complete Book of Colleges
- The Advocate - College Guide for LGBT Students
- The Gap Year Advantage
- The Insider's Guide to Success in the Two Year Colleges

Websites:

- CollegeNavigator.gov
- bigfuture.collegeboard.org

BHS Guidance Junior Year Timeline

JANUARY

- Attend **junior seminar #1** in advisory
- **Gap Year Fair** –Study for **midyear exams**
- Be sure to check your PSAT score at College Board website
- Arrange college visits for Feb vacation, if ready
- **Schedule appt with your school counselor** to begin college research

FEBRUARY

- Students and parents attend **Junior Night-**
- Plan challenging and balanced senior year course load
- Research interesting summer courses, jobs, or activities
- **Junior seminars #2 continues in advisory**
- Investigate colleges by researching and using resources – Naviance, college homepage, college guides – books and online, visits to campuses
- **PreACT offered for both juniors and sophomores at BHS** – (registration info in advisory beginning of Feb)
- Ongoing - Schedule appt with your guidance counselor to develop preliminary college

MARCH

- **BHS College Fair** - Cafe
- **Attend REQUIRED Junior Seminar #3** (ELA MCAS)
- Investigate colleges by researching using resources – Naviance, college homepage, college guides – books and online, visits to campuses
- Ongoing - Schedule appt with your guidance counselor to develop preliminary college list
- Consider registering for SAT Subject tests in AP courses you are finishing this year
- Arrange college visits for April vacation, if ready

APRIL

- Arrange college visits for April vacation, if ready
- **PreACT score report overview** and handout – X block TBD
- **College Support for Students with Disabilities Panel** —
- Ongoing – Schedule appt with your guidance counselor to develop preliminary college list
- Investigate colleges by researching using resources – Naviance, college homepage, college guides – books and online, visits to campuses
- **Begin to identify teachers whom you may ask for recommendations**
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MAY

- AP exams, if appropriate
- **Continue to evaluate your college list** and meet with your guidance

counselor. Eliminate colleges from the original list that no longer interest you and add others as appropriate

- **Add colleges to “Colleges I’m Thinking About” on your Naviance account**
- Continue to identify teachers whom you may ask for recommendations

JUNE

- Continue college search
- Add colleges to “Colleges I’m Thinking About” on your Naviance account
- Arrange college visits and/or interviews for summer
- Continue to work hard on junior year courses and **prep for final exams**
- **Ask two teachers to write recommendations** if you haven’t already

SUMMER

- Continue to work on college list
- Explore Early Decision / Early Action options
- Study for SAT/ ACT if necessary
- Continue extracurricular and community service activities
- Earn money for college
- Get a head start on the college application process by writing a college essay draft and creating your activities resume
- August SAT - NO SSD Special testing available at BHS

Internet Resources

Naviance - <http://bhs.brookline.k12.ma.us/naviance.html>

Fairtest - Test Optional Schools (schools not requiring SATs/ACTs) - <http://fairtest.org/university/optional>

Colleges That Change Lives- <https://ctcl.org/>

Campus Tours (virtual tours/info) - <https://www.campustours.com/>

NEBHE's Tuition Break program, the New England Regional Student Program (RSP), enables thousands of New England residents to enroll at out-of-state New England public colleges and universities at a discount. Students are **eligible** for the RSP Tuition Break when they enroll in an approved major that is not offered by the public colleges and universities in their home-state.

New England includes the following six states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

<http://www.nebhe.org/programs-overview/rsp-tuition-break/overview/>

College Board - SAT info and test registration, college/scholarship/career search – <https://collegeboard.org>

NCAA Eligibility Center – Considering playing Division I or II College Sports? – create required certification with the NCAA; Division III – create a NCAA Id - <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) info - <https://www.collegechoice.net/rankings/best-historically-black-colleges-universities/>

Students with Learning Challenges – interesting article in the Atlantic Monthly - <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/09/there-is-no-right-way-to-learn/501044/>

College Navigator - <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

Study Abroad resource - <https://www.studyabroad.com/>

2 Year Colleges/Community Colleges – <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/college-101/tips-on-college-transferring-from-a-2-year-to-a-4-year-college>

Gap year information-

- <https://www.teenlife.com/category/gap-year/>
- <https://gapyearassociation.org/>
- https://www.volunteerforever.com/article_post/cheap-affordable-volunteer-abroad-programs-low-cost-overseas-projects
- <https://thinkingbeyondborders.org/choosing-gap-year-program-2018/>

6 Ways to Clean Up Your Social Media Before College

Excerpts from article posted by [Taylor Carson](#) in **HIGH SCHOOL**; Posted May 2017

****2016 Kaplan Test Prep survey says –“40% of college admissions officers browse social media profiles to learn more about admissions candidates”]**

Remember the two Ps: professionalism and positivity. "Employers and colleges are very particular about who they recruit and associate with them," Jade says. "At the end of the day, it is simply not worth tainting your image on social media."

Before college, clean up those pages—it is never too early to plan for your future!

1. Make sure your pictures say something positive - Believe us—we know how tempting it can be to post anything and everything on social media. But, a good piece of advice is to make sure every image you post represents something good about you!

Jade believes millennials should shy away from posting anything related to partying, drinking and drug usage, nudity, profanity and excess negativity. "Posting this type of content can create a negative reflection of you and can harm your chances of getting into certain colleges, internships and jobs," she says.

A good rule to live by is that if you have to contemplate posting it, you probably shouldn't.

2. Watch your language - This one goes without saying, but it is definitely worth repeating. You never know who's scrolling through your social media pages these days, so shy away from foul language. Profanity—from racism, to sexism, to homophobia, to explicit language—that you may think is a joke can cause viewers to reconsider the great person you probably are!

Jade warns pre-collegiettes that this kind of language can harm your reputation even if you are a great individual. "You may be an honor student with a good heart, but for those who don't know you personally, all they are gathering as an impression for you is what they see online," she says. "By using profanity, you can appear immature, unpolished and unprofessional."

3. Balance personal and professional - Social media background checks have gained extreme prominence in the past decade. Over [45 percent of employers](#) admit checking out their candidates on social media. The way you behave online plays a big factor in how people judge your potential in the classroom (and eventually, the workplace).

By keeping your online content and messaging clean and positive, you can share aspects of your personal life without worry. Jade says, "As long as you refrain from using profanity and posting anything vulgar or too negative, you can easily maintain a professional and personal presence."

Although it may feel otherwise, you really do not need to post all the details of your personal life on the Internet. Trust us—a few years down the road, you will cringe at some of the things you posted! Post the highlights of your life, but leave some of the details to the imagination.

4. Share content that is relevant to your area of study - You may still be undecided about what you want to do in life, but honing in on and exploring your interests is a great way to utilize the Web. It goes without saying, but social media sites like Twitter and LinkedIn are great sources for networking (at any age)! It is never too early to get started on making a name for yourself—especially in fields like communications or business.

"By posting and interacting with content that is relevant to your field of study or work, you are exuding passion, interest and knowledge in that subject," Jade says. Networking is an essential part of making a name for yourself in any industry, and social media is a great tool for doing it!

5. Don't post about alcohol or drug use - Just don't do it. Literally. Ever. In no way is this ever a good idea.

Some high schoolers may not think their online image is something to be too worried about, but according to Jade, they should rethink this. "I would explain [to these people] that they are creating a negative image of themselves and although they may not see it as a big deal, employers and colleges DO," she says.

6. Cut down your "Friends" list - In high school, it was probably cool to be friends with as many people as possible on your social media profiles. However, this will have little benefit in your collegiette life. In fact, it will probably become more of an annoyance than anything else.

Isabel Calkins, a sophomore at New York University, wanted to make sure her online friends were her actual friends. "Before college, I unfriended literally every single person I did not know," she says. "Then, once that was done I did the same with people I knew but had never talked to, like people in older grades or friends of siblings, etc. It's not that I was posting inappropriate things but I just wanted a fresh start."

Common Application Essay Prompts 2019-20

The word limit on the essay will remain at 650.

The goal of the essay is for applicants to **TELL THEIR STORY** in a way that is not shown through other parts of the application **IN THEIR OWN WORDS**.

College Board website (*Adapted from [The College Application Essay](#) by Sarah Myers McGinty*) suggests:

- Be yourself
- Start working on your essay early
- Ask a teacher or parent to proofread your essay to catch mistakes. You should also ask the person who proofreads your essay if the writing sounds like you. Note that admission officers will be able to tell if your essay was edited by an adult.

Common Application Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Exploring Financial Aid and Scholarships

MEFA: Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority – Learn more about types of financial aid, the financial aid process, and how to access FREE financial aid advice and forms completion for MA state residents- <https://www.mefa.org>

NEBHE's Tuition Break program, the New England Regional Student Program (RSP), enables thousands of New England residents to enroll at out-of-state New England public colleges and universities at a discount. Students are **eligible** for the RSP Tuition Break when they enroll in an approved major that is not offered by the public colleges and universities in their home-state.

New England includes the following six states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

<https://nebhe.org/tuitionbreak/>

FAFSA- Access to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid -

<https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

CSS Profile Financial Aid form – required by approximately 300 colleges, including helpful tips, resources, and tutorials - <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>

Fastweb – free online access to over 1.5 million scholarships to help pay for college - <https://www.fastweb.com/>

FTC Federal Trade Commission – Scholarship and Financial Aid Scams consumer information - <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/financialaid>

Financial Aid Facts - <https://www.finaidfacts.org/>

Scholar Snapp - Common App's Scholar Snapp has made it easier for students to apply for scholarships by allowing students to apply to multiple scholarships without having to re-enter your information each time. Fill out one application and simply import it, or “snapp” it, to a Scholar Snapp profile to use again next time. Learn more about connecting your Common App with Scholar Snapp at appsupport.commonapp.org

Naviance account – under Scholarships & Money (Colleges::Scholarships and Money::National Scholarship Search).

COMPARISON OF THE SAT AND THE ACT

	SAT	ACT	KEY DIFFERENCES
FOR-MAT AND LENGTH	5 sections Writing & Language; Reading; 2 Math; Essay Total testing time: 3 hours, 50 minutes (includes essay)	5 sections English; Math; Reading; Science; Writing Total testing time: 3 hours, 35 minutes (includes essay)	The SAT has a stronger emphasis on math, whereas the ACT has a stronger emphasis on science. Overall testing time and section lengths are similar. SAT questions generally require more critical thinking, but the SAT also provides 30-40% more time per question.
SCORING	Total Score: 400-1600 Evidence-Based Reading and Writing: 200-800 Math: 200-800 Essay (not added into total score): 2-8 in each of three domains	Composite Score: 1-36 (average of 4 test scores) English: 1-36 Math: 1-36 Reading: 1-36 Science: 1-36 Writing (not averaged into composite score): 2-12	The ACT Composite Score is the average of your four test scores, so a change in one test score may not be reflected in the Composite. The ACT Composite is divided into relatively few possible scores, so an increase of one point can represent a significant difference in abilities. The SAT Total Score is the sum of the test scores.
WRITING & LANGUAGE/ ENGLISH	Revise and edit a piece of writing Standard English grammar and usage Punctuation Logical structure Effective rhetoric	Revise and edit a piece of writing Standard English grammar and usage Punctuation Logical structure Effective rhetoric	The SAT Writing & Language and ACT English Tests are similar in format and content. The SAT has more emphasis on rhetoric and typically has more complex passages, but offers about 33% more time per question than the ACT does. The SAT also includes questions relating to data graphics.
MATH	Pre-algebra through basic trigonometry 12 Grid-In questions (no answer choices) Strong emphasis on Algebra Calculator prohibited on one section	Pre-algebra through basic trigonometry Extensive range of concepts tested Formulas not provided 5 answer choices per question (rest of test has 4)	The SAT and ACT Math Tests cover similar ranges of concepts. The ACT requires a broad, basic knowledge of many concepts. The SAT requires a deep knowledge of a core set of concepts, particularly algebra. The SAT offers about 38% more time per question than the ACT does.
READING	4 single passages and 1 paired passage 2 passages include diagrams/charts 2 vocabulary-in-context questions per passage 2 evidence questions per passage	4 single or paired passages Consistent order of subject areas: Literary Narrative and Prose Fiction, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences	The ACT Reading Test emphasizes basic reading comprehension but challenges students with its speed. The SAT Reading Test emphasizes defining vocabulary in context, understanding the role of the author, and defending answers with textual evidence. The SAT typically contains more complex passages, but offers about 43% more time per question.
SCIENCE	The SAT does not have a stand-alone Science section, but 21 science questions are included throughout the Math, Reading, and Writing & Language Tests	40 questions distributed over 6 or 7 passages Emphasis on charts, diagrams, etc. Science is a reasoning test—rarely requires prior specific science knowledge	The ACT Science Test measures interpretation, analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. The test uses scientific language and reasoning, but rarely requires any specific knowledge from your academic science classes. While there are science questions throughout the SAT, there is no specific Science section.
ESSAY	50 minutes Analyze a passage and evaluate author's reasoning and rhetoric Student opinions discouraged Scored on 2-8 scale on each of three domains: Reading, Analysis, Writing	40 minutes Evaluate three perspectives on a contemporary issue Student opinions encouraged Scored on 2-12 scale on each of 4 domains: Ideas & Analysis, Development & Support, Organization, Language Use & Conventions	The ACT essay emphasizes crafting and comparing arguments. The SAT essay emphasizes understanding and analyzing how arguments are crafted. The ACT allows for more creativity, whereas the SAT requires strong analytical reading skills and provides more time to write the essay.



BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL
Guidance Department
115 Greenough Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

PARENT BRAG SHEET

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As we enter these next crucial months in the college application process, we want to assure you that we will be meeting regularly with your child. As part of this process, we write a counselor recommendation or official school report for your child as a required part of the college application. College admissions committees look to us to highlight strengths and weaknesses, special qualities or accomplishments, explanations of unusual circumstances in academic or personal lives. We consider such areas as family background, hobbies, personal experiences, summer experiences, interests, values, special talents, explanation of the high school records (grades, test scores, etc).

If you have suggestions for the recommendation of your child, please send them directly to your child's guidance counselor at the high school. Don't spend time worrying about your writing style. Your comments are just for the counselor to use as a guide. The guidance counselor should receive this information as soon as possible. Please check with your child to be sure that they have completed the Student Self-Description Form and given it to their guidance counselor.

Name of Student: _____

Name of Guidance Counselor: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Please respond to the following questions on another sheet of paper:

1. What do you consider to be the outstanding accomplishments of your child during the past three or four years? Why did you select these as most important?
2. In what areas has your child shown the most development and growth during the past three or four years?
3. What do you consider to be your child's outstanding personality traits?
4. If you had to describe your child in five adjectives, what would they be?
5. Are there any unusual or personal circumstances that have affected your child's educational experience or personal experiences?

*1. Brookline High School Self-Description Form

Full Legal Name

2. Preferred Name/ Nickname

3. Personal Pronouns

4. How many members are there in your family group including yourself?

5. Please list your siblings' name, age, relationship, school

6. Please tell us the highest level of education achieved by your parents/ guardians.

7. Were you born in this country?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. If not, where were you born and when did you arrive?

9. Is English spoken in your home?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. If not, what language do you speak?

11. How many Languages do you speak and what are they? What are the languages you are trying to learn?

12. Please list the jobs that you have currently or in the past, along with dates of employment and your hours of work each week.

13. Please list your extra-curricular activities during 9th grade and the summer between 9th and 10th grades, along with the amount of time each week and any leadership distinctions earned.

14. Please list your extra-curricular activities during 10th grade and the summer between 10th and 11th grades, along with the amount of time each week and any leadership distinctions earned.

15. Please list your extra-curricular activities during 11th grade and the summer between 11th and 12th grades, along with the amount of time each week and any leadership distinctions earned.

16. Please list your extra-curricular activities during 12th grade, along with the amount of time each week and any leadership distinctions earned.

17. Of all of these activities, which is most meaningful to you and why?

18. Describe an accomplishment, special talent, creativity in academic/ non-academic areas.

19. What are/ were your favorite classes at BHS and why?

20. What are some possible college majors that you are considering?

21. What careers interest you?

22. Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability? Why or why not? Do you have a disappointing grade? How would you explain it?



23. Write five words that describe you



24. How would a parent and/ or good friend describe you?



25. Do you have a favorite quotation or line from a book, movie, or song that tells something about you? If so, please indicate it below.



26. Please describe anything that has happened in your life (health, home or family) that has affected you as a student.



27. Is there anything in your personal background that might factor into your college choice? (Examples: citizenship, ethnicity, financial aid, health, learning differences, LGBTQA+, religion, etc.). If so, please explain.

