

BHS CLASS OF 2010

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS, FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Important Dates – SAT Registration – Financial Aid
- College Admissions
- Application Process/Deadlines/Interviews/Visits
- Recommendations
- Keep Guidance Up to Date
- Check Guidance Bulletin Board/College & Military Visits

September 9, 2009

Class of 2010 Student:

As your senior year begins you will soon be involved in exploring colleges, career and job opportunities. This handbook is a publication to help you, the prospective graduate, with this process. We hope you will use it as a resource and refer to it frequently.

College and career options are too many and complex to be chosen by chance. To make an intelligent decision you must consider the following:

- Know yourself – strengths and weaknesses**
- Know your objectives and goals**
- Know the realistic options open to you**

Make judgments carefully and seek advice from parents and members of the high school staff. Your best interest is our primary concern.

We look forward to working with you!

The Berlin High School Guidance Office Staff,

**Mr. Proulx, Guidance Director and Senior Counselor
Mr. Skoglund, Guidance Counselor
Mrs. Tremaine, Guidance Secretary**

COLLEGE BOARD – SAT TEST DATES

2009 – 2010

NATIONAL TEST DATES

TEST

October 10, 2009 *	SAT & Subject Tests
November 7, 2009 *	SAT & Subject Tests – includes Language Tests with Listening
December 5, 2009	SAT & Subject Tests
January 23, 2010	SAT & Subject Tests
March 13, 2010	SAT Only
May 1, 2010 *	SAT & Subject Tests
June 5, 2010 *	SAT & Subject Tests

* **Tests administered at Berlin High School**

Test Center Code: 30-105

Register @ www.collegeboard.com

Note: SAT Exams will not be administered in December, January or March at Berlin High School. All BHS administration dates are subject to change.

PSAT/NMSQT

Saturday, October 17, 2009

Advanced Placement Program Exams

May 3 – 14, 2010

IMPORTANT DATES

SEPTEMBER 9	Deadline for October 10 SAT's (Regular registration fee - \$45.00)
OCTOBER 1	Deadline for November 7 SAT's
SEPTEMBER 15	NH College Fair at Berlin High School
SEPTEMBER 24	Parental Survival of the College Admissions Process BHS Library – 6:30 – 8:30
NOVEMBER 1	Check your application for Deadline for Early Admission and Early Notification at colleges (Bring to Guidance Office)
NOVEMBER 7	SAT & Subject Tests
NOVEMBER 9	Second quarter begins. College applications can be submitted to guidance.
NOVEMBER 15	Early Action Applications due at UNH
DECEMBER 7	All Paper College Applications due in the Guidance Office
DECEMBER 10	Financial Aid Night – BHS Library – 6:30 – 8:30
DECEMBER 12	All Online Applications should be submitted by this date
JANUARY 1	File FAFSA (Financial Aid Form) by paper or electronically
MARCH – first week	Scholarship Packets distributed
APRIL/MAY	Check for local scholarships not listed in packets
APRIL 1 (tentative)	Spring Award Packaging Seminar BHS Library – 6:30 – 8:30
MAY 1	Deadline for college deposits and notification
MAY 3 – 14	Advanced Placement Exams
JUNE 7 (tentative)	Senior Awards Day
JUNE 11 (tentative)	Graduation

CHOOSING A COLLEGE MAJOR

- Identify your favorite subjects from high school
- Consider your personality, values, strengths and weaknesses
- Objectives and Goals
- Take a career assessment questionnaire
- Gather information – Options open to you – use this information to narrow your choices
- Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss career possibilities, special summer programs and internship opportunities

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS

- Type of Institution
- Size and Location
- Demographics
- Curriculum
- Proximity of Family/Friends
- Activities
- Costs
- Admissions Policy

SPECIAL CAMPUS PROGRAMS

- Co-Op
- Internship
- Study Abroad
- Honors Program
- 3-2/Joint Degree Program
- ROTC Programs
- Services for LD Students
- New England Regional Student Program

TAKING THE TOUR

- Schedule your visit – if possible when college is in session and high school is not
- Make the most of your visit – talk to as many different people as possible
- Try the food and see a dorm – eat in college snack bar or cafeteria and stay overnight in a dormitory
- Collect materials – get to know more about the college you are visiting
- Reflect and write – pros and cons – keep notes – likes and dislikes

QUESTIONS TO ASK ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVES

- Are first-year students guaranteed housing? What kinds of living accommodations are there? Dorms? Campus Apartments? Foreign language or theme (chem. free, etc.) houses? Percentage of students that live on campus?
- What percentage of students receive grants and scholarships?
- How many core courses are required for graduation?
- What percentage of the faculty hold a PHD?
- What percentage of students go to graduate school?
- What is the average class size during the first year?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program you are interested in?
- What extra-curricular activities are there on campus?
- What are the facilities like? What is the campus security program like?
- What percentage of students are placed in employment (within their major) after graduation?
- What types of research facilities are on campus? (e.g. library, lab facilities, computer availability)?
- What are the school policies regarding freshmen vehicles?
- What types of academic and emotional support services are available?
- Can freshmen select their own roommates?

QUESTIONS TO ASK STUDENT TOUR GUIDES

- What did you do for fun last weekend? Do people stay on campus?
- Can first-year students have a car on campus? Do you need one?
- What classes are you taking right now? How much time do you spend on homework?
- Where do you usually study? What types of activities are you involved in on campus?
- How accessible are professors out of class? Are tutors available for extra help?
- Are you happy you chose this college? Why?

QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY BE ASKED DURING AN INTERVIEW

- How did you first hear about our college?
- What are your career goals – long and short term?
- What is your intended major? Minor?
- What are your interests outside of school?
- What accomplishments or activities in which you have participated have had a particular effect on you or your life?
- What are your academic strengths and weaknesses?
- How familiar are you with this college and its program?
- What are your priorities in selecting a college? How does this college fit those priorities?
- Are there activities in which you hope to become involved while here?
- How do you see yourself contributing to our college community?
- What have you read most recently? Did it make an impression on you? The way you think? Your approach to life?
- How do you see yourself contributing to your community and society in the future?

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Without a formal application, colleges will not consider you. The college or university is looking for five basic types of information.

- Application
- SAT & Achievement Scores
- Official Transcript
- School Recommendation
- Letters of Recommendation

Berlin High School CEEB # 300040

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Research colleges, majors and admission criteria in the guidance office
- Write or call colleges – ask for a view book and an application unless applying on line
- Schedule an appointment with college admissions for a tour and interview
- Sign up for any tests which are required by each college
- Check the application and/or the college catalogues to insure that you are aware of all deadlines – deadlines are your responsibility
- Ask teachers for letters of recommendations well in advance
- Type your essay – have someone proof read your essay for content and grammar and typing errors – pay attention to the word limits
- Be sure that both you and your parents sign all areas where a signature is requested
- Submit your completed application
- Mrs. Tremaine and Mr. Proulx are notaries public should your application need to be notarized
- Bring acceptance letters to the guidance office
- You and your parents should attend the financial aid night at the high school library
- By May 1, let colleges know of your intentions regarding attendance at their institution

ON LINE APPLICATIONS

More and more students are taking advantage of the internet to file their applications. Some colleges will waive the application fee if you apply on line. If you choose to file your application on line, there are several points to keep in mind.

- Make copies for yourself and the guidance office.
- Review the application form first. You may be required to write an essay on line. Download a blank application so that you can do a rough draft, correct it and then have it ready when you file your application. What you send the colleges should be a complete and polished work. Edit and re-edit the mechanics, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Be sure to keep to the assigned number of words. Have others edit your work again. Don't be shy about getting feedback it could hurt you if you have errors that go unchecked!
- Let the guidance office know when you file on line so that we can send the necessary supporting documents.
- Most schools will send you a confirmation by e-mail that they have received your application. If you do not receive one, do not hesitate to call the admissions office to check.
- Make sure you check the college application site to see if any supplemental forms need to be completed such as School Counselor forms, Teacher Recommendation forms, a Notarized Residency statement, Mid-year and Final forms.
- In order for your applications to be processed, the guidance office must send a transcript, school profile, guidance counselor letter and letters of recommendation if required on your behalf. These will be sent on line or via the mail.
- It is important to watch for deadlines for submission of your applications to the colleges of your choice. You do not want to miss any deadlines that would prevent your application to be reviewed.
- More and more colleges are using the Common Application plus supplement to process their applications and the online form is the most efficient. You will be asked for your guidance counselor's email.

FILLING OUT THE PAPER APPLICATION

The college application should be typed or neatly printed. Do not cross out, write over, or use “white out”. Use a photocopy of your application as a rough draft. This application is your request for admission to an institution of higher learning. It should reflect your most conscientious effort.

Your completed application should be returned to the guidance office for review by your counselor. *Make sure to include a check, money order of fee waiver* to cover the application cost (do not include cash). The guidance office will forward your completed application, a guidance counselor recommendation, an official transcript, and additional letters of recommendation to the college or university. A record of the date of submission will be entered in the guidance office file for future reference.

You must insure that requests for school and teacher recommendations are made well in advance of your application deadline. In addition, check your application for additional forms to be given to the guidance office such as mid-year report and final report.

Check the application, college catalogue, or on line site to insure that you are aware of all deadlines outlined by the college. Deadlines of importance are: Application, Standardized Tests (SAT and Achievement), Financial Aid and Housing.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

DO:

1. Type or neatly print with a pen
2. Use a photocopy of the application as a rough draft
3. Bring completed application to your guidance counselor for review by or before December 7.
4. Check application deadlines of the colleges/universities to which you are applying for possible earlier dates. Deadlines are your responsibility.
5. Have parents review your application and sign where appropriate.
6. Proof read your essay and ask for a second opinion from a teacher, parent or your guidance counselor.

7. Include a check for the amount of application cost.
8. Request recommendations from teachers well in advance of application deadline.
9. Check the application, college catalogue or on line to insure that you are aware of all deadlines, for example: application, financial aid, housing, testing.
10. Make a photocopy of your final application and of any financial aid forms that you send out this year.
11. Bring acceptance letters to the guidance office.
12. Let colleges know if you are or are not going to accept their offer of admission.

DO NOT:

1. Cross out, write over, or use "white out"
2. Use Pencil
3. Send in the application yourself (it will not be complete without an official transcript and a letter of recommendation from your counselor.
4. Use cash for application fee. It will not be accepted.
5. Miss deadlines.
6. Bring an application to the guidance office the day before it is due.
(It takes us several days to process your application.)
7. Forget to let colleges know of your final decision.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE ADMISSION DECISIONS COME IN

Inform your counselor of any action by colleges on your applications.

Most students will receive some rejections. Try not to take a rejection personally. Admissions decisions are made based on the needs of the school and the composition of the applicant pool that year. Sometimes students are rejected by schools they would have been admitted to in a previous year. **You are not a failure** if you did not get into a particular school. If you have been careful in your research and investigation of colleges and have followed the rule about applying only to schools you would gladly attend, you will be fine. If you hear negatively from a school that you had considered a safety, see your counselor immediately. Each spring, counselors receive a list of colleges across the country that still have openings.

Seniors should hear from all their schools by April 15 and have until May 1, the Candidate's Reply Date, to let the colleges of your choice know you plan to attend.

When you are sorting out acceptances and trying to decide the school you will attend, it will be helpful to:

1. talk to several people – counselors, friends, current students
2. visit the campuses again
3. compare the courses, activities and other opportunities among the schools and compare expenses and/or financial aid packages.

Be sure to attend the Spring Award Packaging Seminar sponsored by the New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation on April 1, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the Berlin High School Library.

Once the decision is made, you need to send in a deposit by May 1, the Candidate's Reply Date. Courtesy dictates that you inform other colleges that you will not attend.

You may be notified that you are on a Waiting List, which means that the college has many more qualified applicants than they can accept. Waiting List status dictates that the admissions officers feel that you can do the work but that there is simply not enough room in the freshmen class. While it does happen that students are removed from the wait list, **this is rare**. See your counselor for advice.

SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING RECOMMENDATION

Date

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms:

I am applying for admission to _____ College/University and would value a letter of recommendation from you on my behalf. I would appreciate it if you would return the attached evaluation form and your letter of recommendation to the guidance office by _____.

Thank you very much for your help in this application process.

Sincerely,

(Your signature)
Your full name – typed
First, M.I., Last

HELPFUL INFORMATION:

I am involved in the following extra-curricular activities:

My career plans are as follows:

I was a student in your class for:

(Copy of this sample letter is available in the guidance office.)

LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Various local businesses, civic organizations, school organizations and individuals make scholarships available to graduating seniors. Each of these scholarships has specific criteria. For example, to qualify for the Guardian Angel Credit Union Scholarships, one of the student's parents must be a member of that union. Some scholarships have long term requirements.

Each scholarship application requires some work on the part of the student. In addition to filling in the personal information on the application, many of the scholarships require the student to write an essay, sometimes on a specific subject. Those scholarships that are based on need require some financial information. In the past, some scholarships have gone unclaimed because no student fit the criteria or because students chose not to write the essay.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Each scholarship specifies who chooses the recipient from among the applicants. Many organizations have their own selection committees. Some prefer that select committees from the school choose from the applicants. Some committees are standing committees; others are ad hoc committees. Each of these is given specific criteria for choosing the recipient. The committees have little latitude, especially for those scholarships that specify certain careers or professions.

Because there are so many varied committees from different organizations, it is difficult to arrange coordination among them. Therefore during Berlin High School's annual award night, it sometimes seems that a few seniors are awarded many scholarships. This, in fact, does happen. Two different businesses may choose the same individual to receive their scholarships. They do not communicate among each other to discuss who their choices are. Individuals and businesses are providing the funds for these scholarships and they control how these funds are disbursed.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

In the past, the guidance office has made scholarship applications available to seniors during the late winter and early spring. The notices were posted on the bulletin board outside of the guidance office and were read during the daily announcements. Students stopped by when they could pick up the applications. This worked well when there were only a few local scholarships available. With the increase in the number of scholarships over the past few years, this system has become cumbersome.

During the first week of March, the guidance office will provide each senior with a scholarship packet. The packets will list the name, a short description, the criteria and the deadline date of each available scholarship. The listing is for those local scholarships for which a formal application is available.

Every year, some scholarships are offered on a one-time basis or new ones are made available. We will continue to post notices for these. We will not post notices for those listed here. If any of those listed here are withdrawn by their sponsors, we will inform the student.

We will ask each student to read carefully the description of each scholarship or program. Then complete the checklist on the last page and return it to Mrs. Tremaine in the guidance office who will then assemble a packet of applications. It is the student's responsibility to observe deadline dates. Deadline dates are based on past years' applications. Once applications are sent to businesses or organizations, the process is closed.

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

- If you are planning on playing sports in college (Division 1 or 2), it is important for you to register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Normally this is done at the end of your junior year or no later than the beginning of your senior year.
- You will need to download forms for transcript release to be sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse, the first form to send the transcript at the end of your junior year or beginning of your senior year and the second form for your final transcript to be sent after graduation.
- After registering, the clearinghouse will determine your eligibility for college sports.
- Registering will put you on a national database that will let coaches know it's alright to contact you as a prospective athlete.
- **Website – www.ncaa.org**

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

- **Don't wait to receive your notice of admission to apply for Financial Aid!**

THE FORMS

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

- The FAFSA cannot be filed until after January 1st
- You can file online, however this requires a PIN number for you and a PIN number for a parent to sign electronically
- To apply for a PIN number visit www.fafsa.ed.gov and follow the links. It may take 2-4 weeks to receive the PIN, so make sure you process your request well in advance.

CSS PROFILE (College Scholarship Service)

- This form is required by many private schools
- The form can be obtained in the Guidance Office, by visiting www.collegeboard.com or by calling 1-800-778-6888

ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL AID FORMS

- In addition to the previously mentioned forms, some schools may have supplemental Financial Aid forms included with their application.

FINANCIAL AID SUPPORT

NHHEAF (New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation)

- NHHEAF is a non-profit agency that can assist you with all aspects of the college process including Financial Aid
- NHHEAF is located in Concord and can be reached at 1-800-525-2577 ext. 119 or online at www.nhheaf.org

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

- The Office of Financial Aid at the schools to which you are applying can be of assistance should you have any questions.

TIPS FOR FILLING OUT FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS

There are three (3) possible types of application: the FAFSA available through the US Department of Education; the CSS/Financial Aid Profile from the College Board and the individual college's form. Most students will only need the first. Check the college catalogues, on line or guidance to see if the other two are required.

Schools will sometimes have two (2) deadline dates for financial aid forms. The priority filling deadline is for school based aid and the second is for government based aid. A good rule of thumb is to observe the priority date.

Apply as early as possible. Early completion of the forms can make the difference on receiving school based aid. Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1. It is not necessary to wait until federal tax returns are completed to fill out the FAFSA. You can estimate. The CSS/Financial Aid Profile should be completed at least four (4) weeks prior to the school's priority deadline date. If the college uses its own form instead of the CSS/Financial Aid Profile, you should file four (4) weeks before their deadline date.

Although paper forms of the FAFSA are still available, the Department of Education prefers electronic filing at www.fafsa.ed.gov. To sign the FAFSA electronically, the student and parent will need a PIN. You can obtain your PIN at the FAFSA website. The CSS/Financial Aid Profile must be done online at www.collegeboard.com. There is no cost with the FAFSA but there is with the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. Fee waivers are automatically granted if the student qualifies based on the information provided.

Make sure income information on the application is the same as that reported on your family's federal income tax form. The colleges may compare the two when they do the verification process.

Make copies of all your applications.

If a change in family circumstances occurs after the application has been completed, advise the school's financial aid officer and the people who got the original form. Unpleasant things like death, divorce, disability, or job loss may make a difference in aid.

If parents are divorced or separated, report the income and assets of the parent with whom the student lives the greater part of calendar year preceding the year of college enrollment.

If the parent with whom the student lives remarries, the income and assets of the stepparent have to be reported.

If the student does not have a social security number, they must get one now. It will be needed for the application.

Attend the financial aid workshop given on December 10 at the high school.

Pick up the worksheets in December. Spend some time during winter vacation getting records ready, so the forms can be filled out and sent right after the first of the year.

As always, if you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the guidance office.