

*Bergenfield High School*  
*Guidance Department*  
*Bergenfield, NJ*

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR LIFE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

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# INTRODUCTION

Wow! What an exciting time! What a scary time! You are finally near the end of your public school experience. You can now no longer put off the answer to the question, "What am I going to do after high school?" For some, this is a very hard question to answer; for others, it is easy. The answer you choose is usually based on your interests and your high school successes or failures. You may choose to go to college. You may also desire to go to a specific college, however, in today's competitive college market there is no guarantee that you will get into the college of your choice. The key question here is, "Do you want to go to college?"

You may decide you do not want to go to college but rather to a vocational school. You will then need to decide what vocation you want to pursue and what schools provide technical training in that vocation.

You may decide you want to go into the military. This is not as simple a decision as it seems. You need to ask yourself if you want to be in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard. Do you want to be an officer? If you do, then you will need to go to college. Do you want to go to one of the United States Military Academies? If you do, you need to get started right away.

You may decide that you want to go into the work world. If so, what do you want to pursue? Do you have the skills to do the job? Do you need more training? Where can you get more training?

What if you have no clue? We would suggest that you use the Naviance program and first take a look at the Career Interest Profiler and the Personality Assessment. These tools will help you begin the process of looking at possible careers. Once you find some careers that interest you, you can then use Naviance to find more information about the particular careers and what training you would need to obtain a job in these careers.

To access Naviance, please proceed as follows:

- Open a web browser such as Microsoft Explorer
- Type in the following address: [www.Bergenfield.org](http://www.Bergenfield.org)
- Go to Resources > Student Resources > Naviance Student Portal
- (Parents can go to > Parent Resources> Naviance Parent Portal)
- The log on page will appear
- User name -
- Password -
- If you do not know your user name or password please e mail Cathy Dovi at [Cdovi@bergenfield.org](mailto:Cdovi@bergenfield.org)

If you are still undecided about what you want to do speak to your guidance counselor, speak to your parents, speak to people who have jobs that you think you are interested in, read some books about careers etc., We hope by now, you get the picture that in order to move to the next phase of your life you will need to do much thinking and research. If you do nothing, then when you graduate you will have a diploma but no objectives/goals to look forward to. This is the time to apply all the work habits and research skills that your teachers and parents have been trying to instill in you since kindergarten.

**Good luck with your search and always remember that we are here to help you.**

## **Section 1 COLLEGE SELECTION**

- If you are interested in going to college, the first question you need to ask yourself is "why?"
- If you still are interested in going to college you now have a great deal of work to do to determine the right fit for you.
- Do you know what you think you might major in? Be aware that it is not uncommon to change your major.
- Do you know what college you think you would like to go to? Remember, just because you want to go there does not mean they will accept you.
- The last two questions are questions that people often ask related to college but given that so many students change their major and/or the college they wish to attend, there are other questions to answer that may actually be more important.
- What type of college do you want to go to, PRIVATE OR PUBLIC?
- Do you want to go to a large (10,000+ students), medium (5,000 + students) or small (maximum up to 5,000 students) college or university?
- Do you want to be in a suburb, rural area or urban area?

### **What do I do next if I do not know what I want to major in or where I want to go?**

- We strongly suggest that you visit a large, medium and small size school in different locations. Visit private and public schools. Make appointments with the admissions counselors, go on college tours. Remember, if you go to a school outside of NJ there is a good chance you will live there. You need to feel you can live in that environment.
- Talk to people who went to different colleges to find out what their experiences were like
- Read about choosing a college/major.
- Think about a large university if you are undecided as they will offer many majors.

### **What do you do if you think you know what you want to major in?**

- If you know what you might like to major in you can now start narrowing your search, however, remember there is a good chance you will change your major during your college career.
- If you know your major, you can use the NAVIANCE program to find out all the schools in the United States that have that major.
- Each school has a section of their web site that describes the school, where it is located, general admission requirements and what life on campus is like. Don't take their word for it, visit the schools you may be interested in attending. A virtual tour is not the same as getting out onto the campus

### **You now have a list of schools; what should you do now?**

- Do you meet their admission requirements? If yes, great. If no, is it possible for you to meet the requirements in the first semester of your senior year?
- Read about the schools.
- Visit the schools.
- Speak to your parents and guidance counselor.

### **WOW, this is more work than I thought it would be. Am I done now?**

#### **NO!**

- At the beginning of senior year you need to start the application process.
- Go on the school's web site and download the application or check with the guidance office for procedures you need to follow.
- Line up your teachers and guidance counselor for letters of recommendation. You may wish to do this before the end of junior year since your teachers this year will know you better.
- Complete and submit to your guidance counselor all applications by Thanksgiving.
- For state schools and/or schools that have rolling admissions, complete your applications as soon as possible.

### **Should money be a factor?**

- Up to this point we have not talked about money and money should not limit your search. There are many ways to pay for colleges and if you get into the school of your choice the financial aid office will work with you to help finance your education.
- Unfortunately because of economic factors you may not always be able to go to the college of your choice. Therefore, it is important to also look at schools that are within your family's economic ability.

### **How Colleges Select Students**

The college selection process is a two way street; you apply and then they decide if you meet the criteria to attend their college.

- Colleges look for well-rounded students. They tend to look at three main areas:
  - Academic profile (transcript, SAT/ACT scores)
  - Extracurricular involvement
  - Personal characteristics
- The emphasis on each of the above areas varies from college to college.
- Some schools look only at grade point average, class rank and SAT scores.

- Other colleges put a great deal of emphasis on personal characteristics.
- Others see extracurricular involvement as an important component.

### **Academic Profile**

- Courses taken
- Did you take an honors track?
- Did you take a strong Mathematics and Science program?
- Did you take a competitive Humanities program?
- Did you take a full load of courses?
- What does your senior schedule look like?

### **Academic Performance**

- What have your grades been?
- Are your grades consistent from year to year?
- Does your course performance correlate with your standardized test scores?

### **Grade Point Average**

- What is your grade point average?

### **Class Rank**

- What is your class rank?
- Colleges will look at class rank differently; this is based on their past experiences with students now in attendance in their respective programs. Bergenfield students who have good class ranks have been successful in being admitted to competitive schools.

### **Standard Test Scores**

- Standardized test scores level the playing field, as they are nationally normed and give the college a good indicator of your ability level compared to other students in your grade level nationwide.
- SAT Scores
- SAT II Scores
- ACT Scores

### **Extracurricular Activities**

- Colleges are looking for students who participate in extracurricular activities.
- They are looking for the quality of involvement, not the quantity of organizations to which you belong.
- Do not just focus on school activities. Colleges are also interested in your involvement with your church, temple, youth center, a local hospital, etc.
- Make sure you let the college know of all your activities in school, community and/or work

## **Personal Characteristics**

### **A. Letters of recommendation**

- Most competitive colleges require at least two teacher recommendations.
- The colleges look for letters from teachers who have taught you recently.
- Ask your teachers well in advance if they would be willing to write you a letter.
- Be sure to ask teachers that know your character well and whose classes you performed well in.
- Be sure to thank them for their help.
- Complete your senior survey format by the end of June so that your guidance counselor can write you the best possible recommendation.

### **B. Interview**

- Each year, fewer and fewer colleges require an interview.
- If you wish to be interviewed, you can always request one from the colleges you are interested in. This could be a real plus for you to be proactive and take the initiative.

### **C. Application and Essay**

- This is important. Be neat, pay attention to spelling and grammar and other miscellaneous details. This tells schools a great deal about you as a person and your overall presentation
- A poorly completed application can indicate indifference or a poor command of English.
- This is the chance for you to shine and let the college know something about you that cannot be clearly expressed when evaluating your transcript.
- This becomes even more important since most colleges do not require interviews.

## **COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PLANNING CALENDAR**

### **JUNIOR YEAR**

#### **Year Long**

- A. Work hard, obtain good grades; this is the most important thing you can do.
- B. Start thinking about what you may wish to do and do some preliminary searches.
- C. Talk to others about possibilities.
- D. All Juniors should prepare to take the SAT/ACT or both in the spring of junior year
- E. Sign up for SAT II subject tests if necessary

#### **February**

- A. Register for the March SAT/ACT.
- B. Start thinking about the courses you wish to take next year.

#### **March**

- A. Start looking for a summer job, internship, etc.
- B. Take SAT/ACT if Registered
- C. Register for May SAT\ACT

#### **April**

- A. Register for June SAT/ACT, if necessary.
- B. Visit colleges during spring break.

#### **May**

- A. Take SAT/ACT.
- B. Take AP Exam if enrolled in an AP course.
- C. Begin to prepare for finals.
- D. Junior grades are critical

#### **June**

- A. Contact your counselor if you are considering a military academy or ROTC scholarship before summer vacation.
- B. Follow through on requesting your letters of recommendation.
- C. Hand in your completed senior survey.

#### **July & August**

- A. Register for October SAT/ACT.



- B. Visit colleges.
- C. Obtain applications from college visits and/or on-line.
- D. Work on updating your academic and activity resume.

## **SENIOR YEAR**

### **September, October and November**

- A. Talk to your guidance counselor regarding college plans.
- B. Obtain letters of recommendation.
- C. Obtain and complete college applications.
- D. Talk to the college representatives that are in the commons during our fall college fairs.
- E. Visit the September FDU College Fair.
- F. Take the SAT's in October and/or November.
- G. Double and triple check application deadlines.
- H. Give your guidance counselor a three week lead time to process your applications.
- I. Follow up with your counselor to ensure teacher recommendations and applications have gone out.

### **December**

- A. Guidance must receive all applications by Thanksgiving for schools with application deadlines of January 1.

### **January**

- A. Attend Financial Aid night with speaker Brother David at BHS in early January.
- B. Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on-line [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

### **February & March**

- A. Local scholarship booklets are given to seniors in their homerooms. Applications are available in guidance and must be submitted by the designated deadline.
- B. By request, mid-year report cards will be sent out by the guidance office.

### **April**

- A. Colleges will let you know of their decision.
- B. Carefully read their decision and financial aid package.
- C. When accepted by the college you wish to attend, you are generally required to inform them of your decision by May 1.
- D. Notify the other colleges that accepted you that you will not be accepting their offer.

### **May**

- A. Take AP exams if you are in AP courses. Have scores sent to the college you are going to.
- B. Send thank you notes to everyone who assisted you with the college admissions process.

### **June**

- A. Make sure your final transcripts are sent to the college you will be attending.

## **Section 2: Vocational School Selection**

- Searching for a vocational school is much like searching for a college; we strongly suggest that you read Section 1 before you read this section.
- You need to first determine the vocation you are interested in.
- You may wish to use the Naviance survey tools to help you with this task.
  - Career Interest Profiler
  - Personality Assessment
  - You then need to find schools that provide training in your area of interest.There are a number of ways to do this:
- **Use the Naviance program**
  - To access the Naviance, please proceed as follows:
  - Open a web browser such as Microsoft Explorer
  - Type in the following address [www.Bergenfield.org](http://www.Bergenfield.org)
  - Go to Resources > Student Resources > Naviance Student Portal
  - (Parents can go to > Parent Resources> Naviance Parent Portal)
  - The log on page will appear
  - User name -
  - Password -
  - If you do not know your user name or password please e mail Cathy Dovi at [Cdovi@bergenfield.org](mailto:Cdovi@bergenfield.org)
- Speak to your guidance counselor
- Discuss your decision with your parent
- Do an internet search
- You need to find out the requirements for admittance:
- Do you meet them?
- Can you meet them by the time you need to apply?
- You need to find out when applications must be submitted and what components must be submitted with them.
- What is the cost of the program? How can you finance it?
- During senior year, you need to complete the application and adhere to the timelines the vocational school has set.

### **Section 3: The Military**

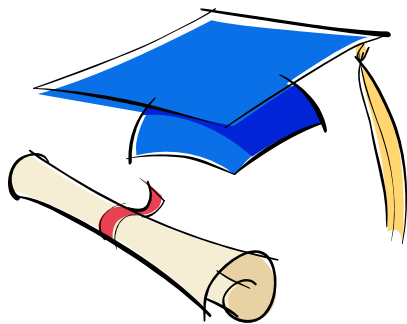
- The Military is an option you may wish to pursue.
- Spending time in the military may help you pay for college however one should not join the military for this reason only.
- You should join the military because you want to serve your country and you feel it is the right thing to do.
- If you still wish join the military, you need to think if you wish to be an officer or an enlisted member.
  - To be an officer you must go to college. You must either go to a military academy or a college that has an ROTC program. If you are interested in this option, you need to start planning now.
- If you are going in as an enlisted member you need to first learn what are the different jobs (M.O.S. Military Occupation Specialty) open to enlisted members of each branch of the military. For example, if you wish to be a pilot in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines or Coast Guard you need to be an officer first.
- Each branch of the military has a different mission. You can find out about the missions by speaking to your guidance counselor, going to the web site of each branch, or talking to a recruiter. Remember, the web site and recruiters are trying to convince you to join that branch of the military.
- There are some basic differences:
  - The Navy is mostly sea based. To advance in the Navy you need to be on duty at sea.
  - The Air Force is air based. In order to advance quickly you need to be a pilot. To be a pilot you need to be an officer.
  - The Army is ground based. Promotion or advancement is usually based on time and experience in the field.
  - The Marines are a quick strike force that is self contained. They are usually the first troops in for any conflict. They are considered part of but separate from the Navy. They are the ground support forces for the Navy.
  - The Coast Guard's mission is to protect the shores of America; they can also be deployed in times of conflict.

## **Section 4: The Work World**

- This option is put last on purpose.
- This option is the one that may seem appealing to you now, but in a few years you may wish you had picked a different option.
- Research has shown over and over again that if you do not go to college or have technical training you are more likely to earn less money than those who have participated in formal career training. This often will also result in a lower standard of living and less of an opportunity to advance in your position in the world of work.
- This, however, may be a good option for you if you feel you need time to decide what you would like to do.
- Prior to you deciding on this option we strongly suggest that you at least try to go to a vocational school. Please read the vocational section to find out more about this option

## **Section 5: ACADEMIC UNITS FOR COLLEGE PREPARATION**

SUBJECT	MINIMUM FOR NJ HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION	RECOMMENDED FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE	TYPES OF COURSES TO TAKE
English	4 years	4 years	Composition, American, Literature and World Literature, British Literature
Math	3 Years	4 Years	Algebra I and II; Geometry; Trigonometry or Pre-calculus; Calculus
Science	3 Years	3-4 Years*	Physical Science; Biology; Chemistry; Physics; Electives such as: Environmental; Anatomy & Physiology; or advanced courses in any of the above disciplines
History/Social Studies	3 Years	3-4 Years	World Civilization; US History I & II; Government; Politics
World Languages	1 Year	3-4 Years	Concentration in one language preferred
Visual or Performing Arts; Career Ed; Consumer, Family, and Life Skills or Vocational Technical Ed	2 Years (1 visual, 1 consumer or Voc Tec Ed)	3+ Years	Art; Dance; Drama; Music; Family and Consumer Sciences; Industrial Technology; Computer Science
Electives	1 year	3+ years	Academic rather than vocational electives, such as Economics, Psychology, Statistics, or Communications
Health & Physical Education	4 years		
* at least 2 years should be laboratory Science			



## Bergenfield High School

### Section 6: College Application Process 2011 - 2012

#### **The Basics**

Give your counselor your completed **Senior Questionnaire/Survey** and **Transcript Release Form by June 30 of your junior year**. Counselors need this information to write a letter of recommendation. All colleges request a letter of recommendation from the guidance counselor.

- Contact prior to the end of your junior year two teachers for letters of recommendation.
- Colleges prefer a recommendation from a teacher you had for a major academic subject in your junior year. Teachers from the elective disciplines (Music, Art, Computer Science, etc.) are excellent resources when you plan to major in any of these areas. These recommendations should always be in addition to the academic recommendations previously mentioned. Choose teachers you feel will best write on your behalf.
- Have the teachers complete the Common Application Form/ Teacher Evaluation. Copies of this form are in the guidance office.
- Have the teachers return the completed letters of recommendation to your guidance counselor (it will take each teacher a minimum of two weeks to complete a letter).
- Bring your completed college application(s) personally to your guidance counselor or apply on-line directly to the college(s) of your choice. OR print out the completed application and submit it through guidance. Make sure the application is completely filled in, signed and dated.
- Bring in an addressed (to the college) large 10 x13 envelope with four (4) stamps for each college you are applying to. If we are sending out the application make sure you also include a check or money order made out to the college to cover the fee charged by the college for processing the application.
- We will send out the application plus, letters of recommendations, transcripts, resumes, essays, etc. It will take us at least two weeks to send out the material from the time you give us the envelope.
- Make sure you are aware of the college deadline for submission of the application; give yourself at least two months lead time.

### **HOW TO ADDRESS THE ENVELOPES**

1 10x 13 envelope with four stamps. We use this envelope to send out an official transcript, school profile and letters of recommendations. If you did not apply on line your application will be included in this envelope.

Bergenfield High School 80 S. Prospect Ave. Bergenfield, NJ 07621	4 Stamps
College Name College Address	

- A. Your completed application packet will take at least two weeks to process
- B. Before you bring in your paper application check to see that all information is filled out
- Type neatly or carefully print out all information in black ink
  - Avoid erasing or using white out, never cross out
  - Staple your check to the paper application

## **Section 7: Additional Resources**

### **College Information**

1. Resources with objective data and information
2. Barron's profile of American Colleges/ Barrons
3. The College Handbook/ The College Board
4. Peterson's Four- Year Colleges/ Peterson
5. College Admissions Index of Majors and Sports / Riverside

### **Resources with college rankings and ratings**

1. The Gourman Report/ Princeton Review, <http://www.review.com/college>
2. Competitive Colleges / Petersons, [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)
3. US News and World Report [www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/cohome.htm)
4. Guide to the Best Colleges in the U.S. (Kaplan) Simon and Schuster

### **College Information WEB Sites**

1. Naviance program <http://connection.naviance.com/bergenfieldhs> every Bergenfield High School Student has a password to use this site.
2. College Board Online, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). Register for exams (SAT), get tips on applying for financial aid, look up high school and college codes, take sample SAT and PSAT exams, search for college and scholarship information
3. CollegeNet, [www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com) this is a well -designed and rated source of information about colleges, scholarships, and financial aide.
4. College View, [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com) Search for information about two and four year colleges, learn about scholarships
5. College Opportunities On-Line, [www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool](http://www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool) This is the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. provides a direct link to over 9,000 colleges and universities in the United States as well as arts colleges, specialized colleges community colleges, career or technical colleges and trade schools  
Collegetours.com  
Ecollegetours.com
6. [www.collegetours.com](http://www.collegetours.com) & [www.ecollegetours.com](http://www.ecollegetours.com) have been listed as good web sites to go to for information on colleges

### **Testing information**

## **STANDARDIZED TESTS**



**SAT:** The SAT is a 3-hour-and-45 minute test that measures students' basic knowledge of subjects they have learned in the classroom-such as reading, writing and mathematics-in addition to evaluating how they think, solve problems and communicate. Most students take the SAT for the first time in the spring of their junior year and again in the fall of their senior year. It is strongly recommended that you sit for the SAT for the first time by the spring of junior year and take the exam at least two times.

**SAT Subject Tests:** SAT subject tests are hour long, content-based tests that allow you to showcase achievement in specific subject areas where you excel. These are the **ONLY** national admissions tests where **you** choose the test that best demonstrates your achievements and interests. In addition to your other admissions credentials (high school record, SAT scores, teacher recommendations) they provide a more complete picture of your academic background and interests. Some colleges require that you complete an SAT subject test as part of their application requirements. If you choose to take a subject test they can serve to enhance your application and possibly help with course placement.

**ACT:** A national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in English, Mathematics, Reading and Science. The ACT plus writing includes the four subject area tests plus a 30-minute writing test. The ACT includes 215 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes to complete. Actual testing time is 2 hours and 55 minutes (plus 30 minutes if you are taking the ACT plus writing).

- To register for the SAT and SAT subject tests and to learn more, go to [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).
- To register for the ACT go to [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).

### **SAT/ACT Prep Agencies**

Junior year is the time to start to prepare for the SAT by enrolling in a group course, individual tutoring or practicing on your own. Please find below a list of some companies and websites to research that offer group and individual services as well as online services. You may also purchase practice books on your own through collegeboard.

- Huntington Learning Centers ([www.HuntingtonLearning.com](http://www.HuntingtonLearning.com))
- Sylvan Learning ([www.sylvanlearning.com](http://www.sylvanlearning.com))
- Kaplan ([www.KapTest.com](http://www.KapTest.com))
- Princeton Review ([www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com))
- Revolution Prep ([www.revolutionprep.com](http://www.revolutionprep.com))
- I need a pencil ([www.ineedapencil.com](http://www.ineedapencil.com)) offers free test prep information
- Collegeboard ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com))

## **APPENDIX**

### **Types of Admissions**

1. **Early Decision: Early decision plans are binding.** You agree to attend the college if accepted and if the college offers an adequate financial aid package. Although you can apply to only one college for early decision, applying to other colleges through the regular admission process is allowed. If you are accepted by the first-choice college early, all other applications must be withdrawn.
2. **Early Action: Early action plans are similar to early decision plans, but are not binding.** If accepted, you can choose to commit to the college immediately, or wait until the spring. Under these plans, you may also apply early action to other colleges. Usually, candidates have until the late spring to let the college know their decision.'
3. **Single Choice Early Action:** This is a new option offered by a few colleges. This plan works the same way as other early action plans, but candidates **may not apply early** (either early action or early decision) to any other college. You can still apply to other colleges under regular decision plans and are not required to give a final answer to the early-application college until the regular decision deadline.
4. **Rolling Admissions:** Admissions procedure by which the college considers each student's application as soon as all the required credentials have been received (e.g., school record, test scores). The college usually notifies applicants of its decision without delay.
5. **Open Admissions:** Schools that take any high school graduate until all the openings are filled. Almost all two-year colleges have an open admissions policy.

### **Other College Terms**

6. **Common Application:** A standard application form accepted by approximately 400 colleges in lieu of their own form. Please visit [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).
7. **SAT Subject Tests:** One hour, primarily multiple-choice tests that measure achievement in specific subject areas.
8. **Transcript:** Official record of a student's coursework at a school or college. A high school transcript is generally required as part of the college application process.
9. **Waitlist:** A list of applicants who may be considered for acceptance if there is still space after admitted students have decided whether or not they'll attend.
10. **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** The need analysis form produced by the U.S. Department of Education that is required for students seeking aid by nearly all colleges and universities.
11. **Deferral:** When a student's application for early decision or early action is postponed, and will be considered with the regular decision applicant pool. A college may want to wait until additional information is provided by the student before a decision is made.

- 12. Grade Point Average (GPA):** Indicates a student's overall scholastic performance. It is computed by assigning a point value to each grade.
- 13. Greek Life:** Refers to the presence of fraternities and sororities on campus.
- 14. Legacy:** An applicant whose parents or grandparents are graduates of the college or university to which he/she is applying.
- 15. Undergraduate:** A college student earning a bachelor's degree.
- 16. Work-Study:** A federally funded program in which students take campus jobs as part of their financial aid package. To participate in a work-study program, students must complete the FAFSA.

**College Admissions: How are Decisions Made?**

College admissions counselors take into consideration a holistic view of the total student package but give primary emphasis to his/her academic record. The following areas of the student's academic record and extracurricular activities receive careful consideration.

- 1. Curriculum:**
  - a. The scope, sequence and level of difficulty of each course taken (CP, honors, AP)
  - b. The relevance of the courses to the applicant's intended undergraduate major.
- 2. Academic Achievement:**
  - a. Academic performance: consider courses in length and rigor over four years
  - b. Grading patterns over four years
  - c. National Merit Commended Students (PSAT), scores on the SAT/SAT Subject/AP/ACT tests.
- 3. Other:**
  - a. Recommendations 1) teachers 2) counselors
  - b. Self-Presentation: 1) personal essay 2) personal attributes 3) admissions interview
  - c. Activities: 1) in school 2) in the community 3) summer experiences 4) leadership experiences 5) special talents 6) volunteer experience
  - d. Other considerations: 1) legacy 2) academic reputation of high school and the number of past successes of students from the school 3) overall appearance of the completed application and content and structure of required essays 4) compliance with application instructions.
- 4. College Interests:**
  - a. Admissions officers also consider the needs of their institution when they evaluate a candidate for admission. Colleges want a diversified student body and therefore, a student's gender, geographical origin, academic interests, and talents are among other consideration.

### **College Fit: Choosing the Right School**

To prepare for the journey ahead, it is important to identify your preferences in a school so you know what to look for and what questions to ask as you begin your school visits. Do you want to be in a big city or a quaint college town? Are you interested in staying close to home or traveling to other parts of the country? Here are some things to consider:

#### **1. Academics:**

- a. What is the school's general reputation?
- b. What is the reputation regarding my intended major?
- c. Is my intended major readily available so that I can graduate in 4 years?
- d. How big are the classes?
- e. Are classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?
- f. Are special services such as tutoring available?
- g. What is distinctive about education here?
- h. What is the most popular major on campus and why?
- i. How would you characterize the academic pressure and workload?
- j. Do you think that students are generally enthusiastic about their classes?
- k. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the advising system?
- l. What is the quality of student and faculty relationships? Is the faculty interested in and accessible to students after class? Do professors hold regular office hours?
- m. Are curriculum changes in the works? How will that affect my college years?
- n. Are any departments being cut back or discontinued?
- o. How are your facilities on campus such as computer labs and library?

#### **2. Affiliation or Institution:**

- a. Public
- b. Private
- c. Religious
- d. Vocational
- e. Two-year
- f. Four-year
- g. Single-sex
- h. Coeducational
- i. Military

#### **3. Size of undergraduate student body:**

- a. 7,500 +
- b. 5,000-7,499
- c. 2,500-4,999
- d. 1,000-2,499
- e. Less than 1,000

#### **4. College Setting:**

- a. Large city
- b. Medium city

- c. Small city
  - d. Suburban
  - e. Small Town
  - f. Rural
- 5. Students, Social Life and Campus Activities:**
- a. How would you characterize the majority of students?
  - b. Is the campus community lively and spirited?
  - c. What do students do for fun?
  - d. What is the role of fraternities and sororities on campus? If I don't join, could I have a satisfactory social experience?
  - e. From what economic background are the majority of students?
  - f. What do students like most about the college? Least?
  - g. Is there a diverse student population?
  - h. Is campus security adequate?
  - i. How is the food?
  - j. Are there internship/study abroad opportunities?
  - k. Division I, II or III sports? Intra-murals
- 6. Costs:**
- a. Costs of tuition, room and board
  - b. Books
  - c. Hidden fees-parking, registration, fitness center
  - d. Availability of grants/scholarships
  - e. Availability of loans
  - f. Availability of part-time jobs
- 7. Retention, Graduation and Placement Rates**
- a. What percentage of students return for their sophomore year?
  - b. What is the graduation rate of entering students?
  - c. What percentage of students is placed in jobs in their field?

### **Preliminary College Checklist**

It is important to prepare and research your college options during junior year so that by senior year you are ready to start your applications in the fall and follow guidance deadlines. Please find below the initial steps to ensure a smooth transition into senior year and life beyond high school.

Because of the competitive nature of the admissions process and the fact that there are no

guarantees of admissions to even the most qualified candidates, it is important be realistic about your options and have a college to fall back on even if it may not be your primary choice. As you narrow down your college lists, be sure to include within those lists of schools a **first-choice college, a “reach” college, a couple “match” or “highly probable” choice and two “safety” schools.** Here are some steps you should take:

1. Check college websites, call or e-mail requests for applications, catalogs and financial aid information.
2. Attend college fairs, open house programs and student information sessions. Inquire about interviews at these functions.
3. Go on college visits in the spring and schedule campus tours.
4. Review your transcript with your guidance counselor to ensure accuracy of courses listed and grades received.
5. Take standardized tests (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, ACT)
6. Complete your senior survey which includes the **student self-description, parent’s perspective, and list of activities and consent to release official records.** These forms are available in the guidance office. The senior survey is used by your counselor to help in writing a strong recommendation letter on your behalf.
7. Familiarize yourself with college deadlines and the deadlines in the guidance office. For example, college applications should be completed and all supporting material turned into your guidance counselor by Thanksgiving of senior year.
8. Start to think about teachers you feel comfortable asking for recommendations letters. You should ask **two** teachers from junior year. They should be teachers whose classes you are excelling in, whom you have developed a strong rapport with and in subjects related to your intended major. Since teachers need to be given advanced notice, it is suggested you start asking teachers at the end of junior year (April-June).
9. Start to work on your college essay. It is a good idea to ask your English teacher for feedback.
- **Remember to pay attention to deadlines! Counselors must receive material 3 weeks in advance.)**

**BERGENFIELD HIGH SCHOOL**  
**Bergenfield, NJ 07621**

## **Transcript Release Form**

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF STUDENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF BIRTH

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student ID

PLEASE! Read, complete and return this form to the Guidance Office.

Dear Parent:

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1974 requires that you be notified that your child's record or a transcript is being forwarded to another agency, educational institution, or prospective employer. **Rather than delay the mailing of a transcript and adversely affecting your child's application, we are asking that you complete and return the following form:**

I give permission to Bergenfield High School to:

Send transcripts, schedule, SAT, ACT scores and any other scores requested to **any Federal, State or Local agency, institution of higher education, and** any other educational institution or prospective employer THAT MY CHILD REQUESTS.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF STUDENT (18 Yrs)

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF PARENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

*If the student is 18 years of age, he/she may sign this form in place of a parent.*

TrancriptReleaseform.doc

**BERGENFIELD HIGH SCHOOL  
GUIDANCE OFFICE  
Bergenfield, NJ 07621**

## **A Parent's Perspective for the College Letter of Recommendation**

To the parents of juniors:

As part of your child's college applications, his/her guidance counselor will write a letter of recommendation which is required by most colleges and universities. Information supplied by you and your child becomes an important part of his/her college planning file. Student appointments will be scheduled in the fall.

As counselors, we are asked to comment on your child's academics, personal characteristics and level of involvement in extracurricular activities. In order to write the best possible recommendation we need to gather information from several sources including your child, his/her teachers, club/activity moderators, coaches, our personal files, and official school records. At this time, we are requesting your input.

We have many opportunities to get to know your child, but no one may know him/her as well as you. **Your input is essential.** For instance, there may be facets of his/her life about which we have little awareness. This information may be just the ingredient the counselor needs to write a narrative which will help to distinguish your child from his/her peers.

Please sign the release form so that in the fall we can start sending out transcripts with your child's applications. The student's signature is required if he/she is 18 years old when this document is submitted.

We ask that your son/daughter fill out the enclosed Senior Survey. This survey will also help us to better know your son/daughter and therefore, help us to effectively complete the narrative in the college process.

Please return this packet to the Guidance Department within 10 days of receipt of this information. We look forward to working with you. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,  
The Guidance Department

Arthur Freiman  
Director of Pupil Personnel

Ligia Alberto James Butler Cyndi Covello Melissa Yoskowitz  
Guidance Counselors



### **A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE**

How would you describe your child in personal terms; his/her character, goals, values, traits, accomplishments, relative maturity, independence, integrity, originality, initiative, creativity, leadership, and/or citizenship? SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OR ANECDOTES WOULD BE HELPFUL.

If you had to describe your child with five adjectives, what would they be?

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Why do you consider the above qualities to be an accurate portrayal of your child's personality? Please provide specific examples.

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What do you consider to be your child's outstanding accomplishments over the past four years?

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Please describe any special occurrences which might have affected your child during his/her high school years. Is his/her record a true index of his/her ability or have outside circumstances interfered with his/her academic achievement or extracurricular involvement?

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## Senior Survey

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL SECURITY # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

HOME TELEPHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

ETHNIC BACKGROUND \_\_\_\_\_ INTENDED MAJOR/CAREER \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Please list all Extracurricular Activities, Volunteer Commitments, Work Experiences, and Hobbies. Please list any office held, the grade in which you participated, and the length of time you served in this activity/capacity.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	POSITION/OFFICE HELD	GRADE	LENGTH OF TIME
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VOLUNTEER	DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES	DATES OF INVOLVEMENT
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PART TIME WORK	JOB DESCRIPTION	DATES OF EMPLOYMENT
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Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Print)

**SPECIAL INTERESTS/HOBBIES**

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Have you received any Scholastic, Extracurricular, or Community Honors, Awards, or Formal Recognition since 9th grade? If so, please list below and explain briefly.

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In your opinion, what have been your strongest areas of academic and personal development since 9th grade? Include any events or persons that have aided you in this growth.

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What do you consider to be your principle strength(s) and cite example(s) to illustrate your point.

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What has been the most challenging event or experience in your life, how have you coped with it, and how or what did you learn from it? A RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED.....

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Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Are there any "Special Circumstances" that your counselor should know about, such as a change in financial conditions, your home environment, or your physical condition? Please indicate these changes and how they have impacted your life.

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What unique characteristic(s) about yourself would you like your counselor to emphasize in your recommendation that will reflect on your individuality and help you stand out from the others? Please explain.

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Personal characteristics are an important part of your profile. What words would you use to describe yourself?

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| a. _____ | f. _____ |
| b. _____ | g. _____ |
| c. _____ | h. _____ |
| d. _____ | i. _____ |
| e. _____ | j. _____ |

## **NCAA Eligibility Rules**

### **What is the NCAA Eligibility Center? Why is it Important?**

The NCAA Eligibility Center took over operations for the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse in November 2007. The Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all students who want to play sports at an NCAA Division I or II institution as freshmen. In order to practice, play and receive an athletics scholarship, students need to meet certain academic benchmarks. An additional certification process exists to make sure the student is still an amateur, which is necessary in order for the student to compete.

### **Academic Credentials + Amateurism Status = College Eligible**

#### **What are the Academic Initial-Eligibility Requirements?**

The following requirements must be met in order for a student to be able to practice, play and receive a scholarship at an NCAA Division I or II college or university.

#### **Division I:**

1. Graduate from high school;
2. Complete a minimum of 16 core courses;
3. Present the required grade-point average (GPA) (see the sliding scale in the Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete for Division I);
4. Present a qualifying test score on either the ACT or SAT (see the sliding scale in the Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete); and
5. Complete the amateurism questionnaire and request final amateurism certification.

Division I Core-Course Breakdown (Courses Must Appear on your List of Approved Core Courses)

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
- 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your high school)
- 1 extra year of English, math or natural or physical science
- 2 years of social science
- 4 years of extra core courses from any category above, or foreign language, nondoctrinal/comparative religion/philosophy

#### **Division II**

1. Graduate from high school;
2. Complete a minimum of 14 core courses (Note: increase to 16 core courses for class of 2013 and beyond);
3. Present a minimum 2.000 core-course grade-point average (GPA);
4. Present a minimum 820 SAT score (critical reading and math only) or 68 sum ACT score qualifying test score on either the ACT or SAT; and
5. Complete the amateurism questionnaire and request final amateurism certification.

[Click here](#) to download a quick reference sheet with the requirements.

Division II Core-Course Breakdown :( Courses Must Appear on your List of Approved Core Courses)

- 3 years of English
- 2 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)
- 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your high school);
- 2 additional years of English, math or natural or physical science (**3** years required in 2013 and beyond)
- 2 years of social science
- 3 years of extra core courses from any category above, or foreign language, nondoctrinal/comparative religion/philosophy (**4** years required in 2013 and beyond)