



THE BEACON SCHOOL

January 26, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Class of 2025,

This is your official welcome to the college search and application process! The College Office staff is excited to start our work with eleventh graders next month, and have many things planned for your families over the semester. The College Office believes that any student who wants to go to college can. While we will be communicating with you throughout the process, you'll find some information and resources to keep in mind below.

College Office website: Please visit our website beaconcollegeoffice.com to find general information, important office documents, test prep options, College Now course information, dates of upcoming events, videos of previous events, and much more.

Maia Learning: Over the coming weeks, we will be visiting all Junior history classes to provide students with instructions on how to access Maia, a web-based research and data management tool. Students already have access using their DOE email to log in [here](#). They should use the Google login feature with their DOE email. No password is necessary. Parents already have accounts under the email provided to Beacon. Please check your email for password reset instructions. If you have any difficulties logging in, please contact our intern Hannah Caterino at hc3301@nyu.edu.

Junior Questionnaire: This questionnaire located in Maia Learning focuses on students' thoughts about their experiences at Beacon and their post-secondary goals, and allows counselors to get to know more about each student. It is required that students complete their questionnaire in advance of scheduling their individual Junior College Meetings. This task will be listed on their homepage.

Junior College Meetings: These one-on-one meetings between students and their counselor will take place throughout the spring, and provide an opportunity for each student to discuss the application process as it pertains to them individually with their counselor. Counselors will provide a list of school suggestions based on this meeting, but please keep in mind that these are just suggestions and intended to provide students with a starting point for their college research. Meetings with parents/caregivers will take place in the fall.

Parent questionnaire: This questionnaire provides an opportunity to offer insights about your student, allowing us to better support them in the college process. You should see this questionnaire on the homepage when you log in. Please complete this prior to your student's meeting with their counselor.

Standardized testing: Most (but not all) colleges do not require standardized test scores at this time. You can review the most up-to-date list of testing-optional schools at fairtest.org. All Beacon Juniors are automatically registered for the April 16th free in-school SAT. Students can register themselves for additional tests at collegeboard.org and actstudent.org. The SAT and ACT offer free online practice questions through [Khan Academy](https://khanacademy.com) and the [ACT website](#). In addition, Beacon offers a variety of test prep opportunities, many of which are free or low-cost, which students can learn about through our [Weekly Bulletins](#) and on our [website](#).

Beacon College Planning Guide: This comprehensive manual covers many topics including how to research schools, campus visits, interviews, writing essays, asking for letters of recommendation,



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considerations for students with special needs, athletics, testing, financial aid/scholarships, etc. Some of these topics will be discussed in advisory, but we feel that this is an absolute MUST read.

Personal statement: We encourage juniors to start working on their Personal Statements (main college essay) after the [Common Application](#) releases their prompts this spring. In addition to this main essay, many colleges also require additional supplemental essays, and will release those prompts on August 1st. To help students get started, the College Office will be visiting advisories to conduct 45-minute essay workshops with juniors this spring. We will be focusing on what colleges will be looking for in this type of essay. Our interns will be available for a limited number of one-on-one essay meetings this spring. We suggest that students complete the main essay by summer's end so they have time to focus on supplements in the fall.

College research: Now is the perfect time to begin the lengthy process of researching the thousands of college options available. Tours and info sessions are the best way to get started. February and April break are ideal times to visit in person. Register on colleges' websites well in advance.

Parent events: On Tuesday, March 12th at 6:00pm, the College Office will be hosting Virtual Junior College Night. We will be discussing the application process as it relates specifically to students attending Beacon. We will be distributing a link prior to the event. We'll also be hosting a Financial Aid Night, an admissions panel and a parent panel later in the semester. If you are unable to attend any of these events live, we will make videos available afterwards. If you have any questions, we also encourage you to attend one of our informal Junior Parent Coffee Talks coming up over the next few months (upcoming dates and Zoom links will be included in Weekly Bulletins). The first one is scheduled for February 13th at 12pm on [Zoom](#).

Summer planning: It's never too early to start planning for the summer. It's a great opportunity for students to develop new skills, make money, learn more about a career, or earn college credits. Our Weekly Bulletins will list any opportunities that come to our attention, or you can check out the resources on our [website](#).

Senior year: In the fall, we will be hosting several college-related evening events and another round of individual meetings which parents/guardians will be invited to attend. Students are encouraged to attend our college rep visits and continue researching colleges.

Advisory: We'll be distributing a lot of information through advisories this spring, including an informational visit from current seniors, a financial aid workshop, and an essay writing workshop. We'll also be providing advisors with [this timeline](#) to review with their advisees, in addition to the [Beacon College Planning Guide](#).

We look forward to working with you!

Counselors:

Deborah Heller, dheller2@schools.nyc.gov | Student last names A-G
Lindsay Peyton, lpeyton@schools.nyc.gov | Student last names H-N
Dara Kornblatt, dkornblatt@schools.nyc.gov | Student last names O-Z
Valerie Flores, vmitchell9@schools.nyc.gov | Support for students with IEPs