

*GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT*

***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)***

**How does a student get to see his/her counselor?**

**Why would a student want to see his/her counselor?**

**What are the high school graduation requirements?**

**How does a student get ready for college?**

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**What financial aid and scholarships are available to help students to pay for college?**

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**What can a student do if he/she is not doing well in a class?**

**How can parents monitor a student's progress?**

**What can be done when a student misses work due to illness?**

**What is necessary to be promoted from one grade to the next one ?**

**What should you do if you fail a required course ?**

**Can students with good grades go to summer school?**

**What are the eligibility requirements for participation on athletic teams?**

**What is the Service-Learning requirement?**

**How can a student obtain a Work Permit?**

**How does a student get to see his/her counselor?**

Students can make appointments to see their counselor by coming to the Guidance Office and filling out a green "Guidance Appointment Request" form. The counselor will send the student a Hall Pass as soon as possible, usually within a day or two.

**Why would a student want to see his/her counselor?**

Counselors offer a huge variety of services, including (but surely not limited to) college and scholarship information, career counseling, long-range planning, addressing schedule problems, credit checks, personal counseling, crisis counseling, conflict mediation, standardized testing, etc.

**What are the high school graduation requirements?**

English—4 credits (not including English dept electives like journalism, yearbook, creative writing, etc.)

Social studies—3 \_ credits (government, world history, US history, economics)

Math—algebra, geometry, and at least one more math credit

Science—biology and at least 2 more science credits

Fine arts—at least one credit in art, drama, or music

Technology—at least one credit

Phys Ed—one credit of Fitness

Health—half credit

Electives—at least 2 credits

World language—at least 2 credits OR 4 credits in the Work Experience Program

PLUS at least 75 hours of community service-learning,

and each student must pass 4 **H**igh **S**chool **A**ssessments (government, algebra, biology, English 10)

## How does a student get ready for college?

Getting into college has become increasingly difficult in recent years. The problem is that everyone wants in, but the colleges don't have room for everyone, so they take the best students who apply. In other words, to get into college nowadays, you really have to be an "academic competitor."

### THINGS THAT MOST PUBLIC 4YR COLLEGES WILL WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOU IF YOU APPLY FOR ADMISSION (listed in order of what the colleges think is important)

1. Which of the harder courses have you taken in high school?

They want you to take a full load of the hardest English and social studies you can handle (honors or GT), as many of the upper-level maths and sciences as possible, and another year of world language.

2. What were your final grades in the hard courses?

3. What is your over-all GPA from the beginning of grade 9 through the end of grade 11?

For example, Towson Univ has proven to be "medium-difficult" to get into. It usually does not admit students with less than a 3.3 GPA. If your GPA is not close to this, you need to work hard to fix it **NOW**.

4. What is your rank in your graduating class?

The closer you are to # 1, the better. This is based on your Quality Point Average.-->You get more points for high grades in honors and GT classes.

5. How well did you do on the ACT or the SAT?

If your ACT or SAT scores are good, scholarships might also result from your answer to the following question: "What extra-curricular activities have you participated in?"

## What should a student do to prepare for the S.A.T. and/or the A.C.T ?

These tests are not designed to measure a student's intelligence. Instead, they have been very cleverly designed to find out how much time and effort the student has spent preparing for the test. In three words, the "secret" of doing well on these tests is "practice, practice, practice." No one who is serious about these tests makes the mistake of taking them without a great deal of practice.

## What financial aid and scholarships are available to help students to pay for college?

Counselors have lots of information about merit-based and need-based financial aid. Each December the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is offered to seniors and their parents, and the counselors provide a variety of ways that students can receive financial help from the Maryland Higher Education Commission. The Guidance Department publishes a Scholarship Newsletter each month for seniors, and many local scholarships are offered to seniors each Spring.

## **How does a student request a schedule change?**

Each January, students get the opportunity to select their courses for the following year. Students may make adjustments in their course selections until mid-August. After that time, no changes will be permitted unless:

- A student failed a pre-requisite course and is therefore ineligible for the next course in the sequence
- A student earned credit in summer school and, as a result, becomes eligible for the next higher course in the sequence
- A student accidentally registered for the wrong level of a course (example: registered for French 2, but really should be in French 3)

During the first week of school, students who need a schedule change for one of the three reasons listed above may discuss their request with their counselor.

BUT, students need to understand that they are never permitted to reduce the rigor of their program unless they have the recommendation of the teacher whose course they seek to drop. Likewise, students are not permitted to drop GT/AP courses without parent permission.

And of course, students are never permitted to select their own lunch shift, and are never permitted to select a particular teacher.

## **What can a student do if he/she is not doing well in a class?**

Teachers offer “coach class” after school to assist students. Help is also available from members of The National Honor Society.

## **How can parents monitor a student’s progress?**

Parents are very strongly encouraged to use the school system’s website: [www.bcps.org](http://www.bcps.org)  
Among many other things, this website provides the dates of the distribution of interim reports, the end of each grading period, and the distribution of report cards.

The purpose of Interim Reports is to inform parent and student about the student’s progress in each class at the mid-point of the marking period. If a problem exists at that mid-point, the “beauty” of the Interim Report is that it provides an “early alert” before a small problem that can be fixed grows into a larger problem.

As always, parents are encouraged to stay in touch with teachers throughout each marking period. Teachers can be reached by phone or e-mail. To reach a teacher by phone, parent needs to phone 410-887-1219 and leave a phone number where the teacher may call back during the school day. Many teachers live long distances from the school or have other obligations which make phone calls in the evening not possible.

All faculty members are available by e-mail by the following pattern:

First initial of first name last name at bcps.org      example: [bsmith@bcps.org](mailto:bsmith@bcps.org)

Or you may simply go to the school’s website and click on the teacher’s name.

### **What can be done when a student misses work due to illness?**

1. If a student is absent for less than 5 days, the student should ask his/her teachers for make-up work when the student returns to school.
2. If the student is absent for 5 days or more, parent should phone 410-887-1217 to request that make-up work be sent to the main office for the parent to pick up after school, or the parent may want to contact the student's teachers by e-mail (see previous item)
3. If the student is likely to be absent for 4 weeks or more, the county provides a "home tutoring" service. To request this service, parent needs to phone the student's counselor or the school nurse. A doctor's verification is required.

### **What is necessary to be promoted from one grade to the next one ?**

To pass GRADE 9, you must pass English 9 or social studies 9 and enough of your other classes to earn at least 4 credits.

To pass GRADE 10, you must pass English 10 or social studies 10 and enough of your other classes to have earned at least 9 credits. Also, you must have passed English 9 and social studies 9.

To pass GRADE 11, you must have earned at least 13 credits during your first three years of high school, and you must be enrolled in all courses necessary to complete your graduation requirements.

### **What should you do if you fail a required course ?**

1. Summer school, IF you meet the admission requirements (and if summer school offers the course)

Registration forms are available each Spring from the student's counselor. A student may take only one original credit course each summer.

If possible, you are **strongly** encouraged to attend summer school. You will be there each morning for 5 weeks. You'll still have your afternoons free, and the second half of the summer will be completely yours.

2. Night school

the good news--it keeps alive your chances of graduating on time if you make the mistake of falling behind in your graduation requirements, and it's cheaper than summer school

the bad news--each class is 2 hours long per night for 10 months; if you need more than two classes in night school, select option #3

3. an extra year in high school

### **Can students with good grades go to summer school? Why would they want to?**

Students who want to take an original credit course in summer school in order to qualify for a higher level course during the next school year are welcome to do so.

### **What are the eligibility requirements for participation on athletic teams?**

A student may not have more than one failing grade of "E" on his/her most recent quarterly report card.

### **What is the Service-Learning requirement?**

Maryland State Department of Education high school graduation requirements include a service-learning component by which each student is required to complete a minimum of 75 hours of community service. (This requirement is pro-rated for students transferring in late from private high schools and public high schools in other states.)

All service-learning activities must be approved in advance by this school's Service-Learning Coordinator, Mr. Keith Johnson, and students must submit to Mr. Johnson their documented verification of service before credit can be granted.

### **How can a student obtain a Work Permit?**

Work Permits are available from the secretary in the main office. A student under the age of 18 needs a permit only when an employer has agreed to hire him/her. It is not needed when simply applying for jobs.

When an employer does agree to hire a student, the student comes to the main office to pick up a Work Permit, gets parent and employer to fill out their sections of the permit, and then brings the permit back to the main office for the required authorizing signature at the bottom.

If parent signature or employer signature is not on the Work Permit when student returns it to the main office, the required authorizing signature cannot be given.