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# Blue Ridge School

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## College Counseling Handbook



Introduction to College Counseling.....	4
Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
Your Role in the Process.....	6
Your Counselor's Role in the Process.....	6
Your Parent's Role in the Process .....	7
What's Important.....	7
Course Selection .....	7
Campus Involvement and Activities .....	9
College Visits .....	9
Organization and Planning .....	10
Nuts & Bolts Of The Application Process.....	10
Transcript .....	10
Application .....	10
Standardized Test Scores .....	22
Recommendations.....	22
Essays/Personal Statements .....	22
Finding The Perfect Fit .....	24
<i>Investigating Schools.....</i>	<i>24</i>
Talking to Alumni and Current Students.....	24
College Representative Visits .....	24
Research, Research, Research! .....	24
College Counseling Timelines.....	25
Freshman Year .....	25
Sophomore Year .....	26
Junior Year .....	26
Senior Year .....	27
Naviance Family Connection.....	28
<i>College Counseling Portal.....</i>	<i>28</i>

What is Naviance? .....	28
Logging in to Naviance .....	29
Researching Schools in Naviance.....	29
Adding Colleges in Naviance .....	30
Requesting Transcripts in Naviance .....	30
Connecting Family Connection and Common Application .....	31
Requesting Teacher Recommendations in Naviance .....	31
Useful Tools in Naviance.....	31
<b>Surveys .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Junior Year Survey .....	33
Game Plan Survey .....	33
Graduation Survey.....	33
Year 1 Survey .....	33
<b>Important Websites and Passwords.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Information for Prospective College Athletes..</b>	<b>34</b>
NCAA Eligibility .....	35
Official Test Scores and NCAA Eligibility .....	35
<b>Glossary of Terms .....</b>	<b>36</b>

# Introduction to College Counseling

My name is Mrs. Amber Wilkins and I will be your college counselor this year! I am excited to work with you as your resource during this exciting time of your life. Rachel Korn (2006) said, college might be considered the best four years of your life, but you have to get there first.

My job is to help you get there! To give you a little information about myself, I am originally from the Hampton Roads area but live in Staunton with my husband Eric, daughter Ari, and dog Baby. My experience is in college counseling, college admissions and residence life. I came to Blue Ridge School from Mary Baldwin University where I was most recently the Interim Director of Admissions and Early College Coordinator. Prior to Mary Baldwin, I was the Registrar and Assistant to the College Counselor at Nansemond-Suffolk Academy and the Residence Life Director and Interim College Counselor and Registrar at Stuart Hall School. I have served as a member of the Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrar's and Admissions Offices committee as well as attended numerous college counseling and admissions regional and national conferences.

My role at Blue Ridge is to provide you with the necessary tools you need to navigate the sometimes complicated and confusing college admissions process. My goal is to work individually with each of you, to make you aware of the full range of college options and ultimately to help you find one that continues to challenge you academically and aligns with your interests, values, and career goals.

I am so excited that I have the privilege of getting to know each one of you this year and even more excited to see where you will end up. From everything I have heard about each one of you, I have full confidence in your abilities, and your potential to be successful during this process. Keep in mind, that there is a school out there for each one of you. It is about fit, and most importantly, it is about where YOU will be the most successful.

As you embark on this journey, remember that you are not alone. The faculty and staff here at Blue Ridge are committed to your success. Every day, Blue Ridge School works with young men to hone their strengths, realize their potential and move confidently into the future.

I will spend the next few months learning about your interests, your passions, your worries, and your fears to better support you through this process.

Before the summer is over and you are back on campus, I have a few assignments that I need you to complete to get the process moving:

- Log in to Naviance (instructions can be found on page 29 of this handbook). If you don't remember your username or password, please email me at [awilkins@blueridgeschool.com](mailto:awilkins@blueridgeschool.com) so I can reset this for you.
- Please complete the **Junior Year Survey** found in Naviance by logging in, clicking on "about me," clicking on "completed surveys" and selecting "junior year questionnaire."
- Please complete the **Game Plan Survey** found in Naviance by following the steps above except click on "Game Plan."
- Parents, please complete the **Senior Parent Questionnaire** found [here](#).
- Read through this College Counseling Handbook.

Your senior year will fly by quickly (I mean it) and before you know it, you and your family will be packing up your bags and heading off to your college of choice. So enjoy this process, pay attention to details and deadlines, and use this handbook as your college application resource guide and manual. It was created for you.

I will be meeting with the entire senior class on September 7<sup>th</sup> from 1pm-3:30pm. During this time, we will schedule our monthly 1:1 check in meetings. Please have your surveys submitted no later than September 7<sup>th</sup>. Parents, I will be available during registration and move in for individual meetings as well. If you would like to set up a time for a phone call before registration, as well as to schedule a meeting during registration and check in, please visit [here](#) to schedule a time that is convenient for you. I can be available via phone, skype, etc.

Please do not hesitate to call me, email me, or stop by my office! Enjoy the rest of your summer and see you in a few short weeks!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Amber Wilkins

[awilkins@blueridgeschool.com](mailto:awilkins@blueridgeschool.com)

434-992-0558

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Your Role in the Process

Remember that your role is vital in order to make this process a success. The most important thing to remember is that you guide this process. Remember that it is you who is going to school. Take some time for self-reflection. Know yourself. Think about your college must haves. Honestly assess your strengths, weaknesses, plans for the future and your goals. Take ownership of this process. Prioritize your deadlines, research requirements and seek out assistance when needed. Remember to be aware of deadlines. If you don't write things down, now is the time to do so. If you miss a deadline, there is sometimes zero opportunity for forgiveness in the college admissions world. Work hard. Remember that first trimester grades matter. Manage your time and be willing to give up a Saturday or Sunday to work on your applications and application requirements. Check your emails and respond to all college counseling communications. If you don't understand something, ask questions. Get organized and use Naviance as your tool to do so. Communicate in advance with your parents and your college counselor.

*“Applying to college is hard. The organization that is required to get all these things out and the time and the effort you put into the essays is phenomenal. And the terror that you feel: Is it worth all of this? Am I going to get in? Or am I going to get the thin envelope? You just have to remember: It will be over someday. You’ll get in somewhere. It will work out (Christina, Columbia University).”*

## Your Counselors Role in the Process

My role in this process is to keep you informed and be a resource to you and your family. As your counselor, I promise that I will stay informed of higher education trends and changes. I will communicate with colleges and universities to learn more about offerings and resources. I will be your advocate when needed. I will provide you with every opportunity to be successful during this process. As your counselor, I will submit all of your application materials in a timely manner. I will write a recommendation letter on your behalf that best describes your strengths and potential for success. I will be available should you have any questions or concerns. I will coordinate and offer standardized test prep for students. I will



provide opportunities for college nights and college representatives to speak with students. I will be your biggest supporter and advocate.

## Your Parents Role in the Process

### *Parent to Parent*

*“Remember, it’s your kid who is going to school, and not you. As a parent, you tend to think in terms of what you would want for yourself. But you have to adjust that thinking for what is best for your child. It’s a different kind of thinking, but it’s really important. For instance, if I was the one going to school, being away from home would be important. But for my son, he needs to have the support of his friends. He’d struggle away from here. You have to keep that sort of thing in mind (Jim Inge, 2006).”*

*“I allowed my daughter to go through this process on her own. If she is old enough to go to college, she should be independent enough to write her college essays and fill out the college applications. However, stay involved with your children’s progress. Discuss their goals with them. And help them be realistic about where they are applying (Anonymous, “How to Survive Getting Into College,” 2016).*

As a parent, your role is to support your son during this process. Talk with him, check in with him, provide your knowledge and expertise, but ultimately, let him own this process. As a parent, it is important that you discuss financial expectations with your son early in the process. Allow your son to guide this process, but stay informed and stay in touch with your son’s counselor.

## What’s Important

### **Course Selection**

Colleges want to see students who challenge themselves and perform well in their chosen curriculum. If a student is applying to a highly selective college, but has only taken one or two advanced classes, it is likely that the admissions officer reviewing that applicant will wonder whether or not that student is prepared or motivated enough to handle the academic rigors of that particular institution.

When it comes to course rigor and grades, many families ask “Is it better to get an ‘A’ in a regular course or a B in an advanced course?” In reality, students should be taking courses with increasing rigor each year, and maintaining strong grades in those classes. The best thing that students can do is get the ‘A’ in the advanced course!

Keep in mind, however, that colleges look at course rigor in the context of the high school itself. Blue Ridge will submit a school profile to each school that a student applies to so admissions representatives can be informed about the number and types of courses Blue Ridge offers.

<p><b>English Course Titles:</b>  <b>American Literature</b>  <b>Writers Workshop</b>  <b>ELL College and TOEFL Prep and ELL Advanced</b></p> <p><b>History Course Titles:</b>  <b>US History 12</b>  <b>PVCC Western Civilization</b></p> <p><b>Science Course Titles:</b>  <b>Anatomy and Physiology</b>  <b>Astronomy</b>  <b>Biology (or Honors Biology)</b>  <b>Chemistry (or Honors Chemistry)</b>  <b>Mountain Ecology</b>  <b>Environmental Science</b>  <b>Honors-Independent Study Physics</b>  <b>Physics</b>  <b>Topics in Physics</b></p> <p><b>Math Course Titles:</b>  <b>Algebra I</b>  <b>Algebra II (or Algebra II Honors)</b>  <b>Discrete Math</b>  <b>Pre-Calculus</b>  <b>PVCC Pre-Calculus</b>  <b>PVCC Calculus I</b>  <b>PVCC Calculus II (Honors Advanced Calculus)</b>  <b>ADV Post Calculus</b></p>	<p><b>Foreign Language Course Titles:</b>  <b>Mandarin I, II, III, IV</b>  <b>Portuguese I,II,III,IV</b>  <b>Spanish I, II, III, III Culture, IV, V</b></p> <p><b>Religious Studies:</b>  <b>Judaism</b>  <b>Christianity</b>  <b>Islam</b>  <b>Buddhism</b>  <b>Greek and Norse Mythology-Religion</b>  <b>Native American Studies</b></p> <p><b>Art Course Titles:</b>  <b>Advanced Art</b>  <b>Art Independent Study</b>  <b>Ceramics</b>  <b>Computer Art</b>  <b>Studio Art</b></p> <p><b>Music Course Titles:</b>  <b>Beginning Chorus</b>  <b>Advanced Chorus</b>  <b>Learn to Sing</b>  <b>Music Theory</b>  <b>Music Theory-Advanced Keyboard</b>  <b>Instrumental Music</b></p> <p><b>Theatre Course Titles:</b>  <b>Introductory Theatre</b>  <b>Theatre Production</b></p>
<p><b>Technology Course Titles:</b>  <b>Web Based Programming</b>  <b>Problem Solving With Technology</b>  <b>Intro to Robotics</b></p> <p><b>Other Electives:</b>  <b>Creative Writing</b>  <b>Public Speaking</b>  <b>Writers Workshop</b></p>	<p><b>Technical Theatre</b></p> <p><b>Outdoor Course Titles:</b>  <b>Appalachian Studies</b>  <b>Outdoor Appreciation</b>  <b>Outdoor Leadership I, II</b>  <b>Outdoor Living Skills I, II</b>  <b>Outdoor Service Learning</b>  <b>Wilderness and Remote First Aid</b></p>



**Blue Ridge Dual Credit Course Offerings:**

PVCC Pre-Calculus (is two different courses)

MTH 163-Pre Calc I-3 credit hours

MTH 164-Pre Calc II-3 credit hours

PVCC Calculus

PVCC Calc I

MTH 173-Calculus with Analytical Geometry I-5 credit hours

Honors Advanced Calculus or PVCC Calculus II

PVCC Calc II

MTH 174-Calculus with Analytic Geometry II-5 credit hours

PVCC Western Civilization-3 credit hours

## **Campus Involvement and Activities**

Meaningful involvement in student activities, clubs and organizations is important in the college admissions process. Colleges like to see well rounded students who are passionate about the things that they are involved in. Many times, more is not always better, think quality over quantity. For example, do not feel like you have to be involved in every single club or activity at school. As long as you are passionate and dedicated to what it is that you are doing, colleges will see your potential.

When completing the campus involvement and activities sections of your college applications, please list all sports, volunteer activities, work, school clubs and leadership positions you have participated in.

Prioritize your activities and work experience. Consider creating a resume in Naviance in order to help you keep activities organized.

Describe activities in a way that reveals as much as possible.

## **College Visits**

Visiting a college or university that you are interested in is important in order to get a feel for the campus culture and environment. Visiting a college, apart from staying on top of deadlines and requirements, is one of the most important parts of the college search and application process. College visits should be done during times that are convenient for the university/college that you are visiting. Many colleges and universities post their campus visit options on their webpages. Some schools offer opportunities for you to stay overnight in a residential dorm room and others only allow group tours.

## **Organization and Planning**

It is extremely important to stay organized during the college admissions and search process. Make sure that you and your family have conversations about expectations and that you keep detailed notes and a calendar of important dates and deadlines. This is not the time to put things off until the last minute. Stay ahead of the game and stay on top of things. Doing so, will help you to stay as stress free as possible.

# Nuts & Bolts of The Application Process

## **Transcript**

The transcript is an important part of the application process. Your college counselor is responsible for sending official copies of all transcripts to any college/university for which you are applying. You will also be provided an unofficial copy of your transcript so you are aware of your cumulative GPA and are able to report this on any college applications that requests this information. The transcript is the most important academic document in your application.

## **Application**

Many colleges/universities ask for similar information on their applications. It is important that you complete each application completely and accurately. Applications typically include questions about your personal information, address, contact details, demographics, citizenship, etc. Always keep a copy of your application after you have submitted it. Many schools require essays and/or personal statements as part of their application process. Your college application is your chance to provide information to a college or university about you as a person and as a student.

## ***The Common Application***

The Common Application is an undergraduate college admission application that allows students to apply to any of its member colleges and universities using one application. Member institutions may also require unique college-specific questions, and ask additional questions as part of a supplemental application.

As Blue Ridge School uses Naviance Family Connection, it is important that you complete the “Common Application Account Matching” section. In order to complete it, you must FIRST complete the FERPA agreement in your Common Application account. In order for your counselor to send your transcript electronically to any school with a common

application, you must complete this step. More detailed instructions can be found in this handbook.

**Profile:**

The Common Application Profile consists of eight sections of basic information about you. It is the framework for your application. Each section in detail is listed below for your convenience.

**Personal Information:**

You must provide your full legal name as it appears on your social security card (passport for international students). Be sure this is consistent with your high school records and the name you use for the SAT/ACT.

**Address:**

Permanent home address, as well as any temporary address (i.e. Blue Ridge School).

**Contact Details:**

This section provides admission offices the information they need to communicate with you quickly and easily. Make sure that you use an appropriate email address and that you set up your voicemail.

**Demographics:**

Responses in this section are optional, but the advice is that you answer these optional questions. You are best served by giving admission officers as clear of a picture of who you are. Colleges are looking to enroll a diverse class on numerous dimensions and this is part of the way they figure this out.

**Geography:**

Birthplace, countries lived in, etc. This section simply adds background to the admission officers' understanding of you.

**Language:**

Proficiency is key, Spanish I does not equal proficiency.

**Citizenship:**

Providing your Social Security number is required for US Citizens and Permanent Residents who are applying for financial aid via the FAFSA. If you do not have a social, please leave this section blank.

**Common Application Fee Waiver:**

There are guidelines that determine eligibility for application fee waivers and certifications for which you qualify. If you feel that your financial circumstances qualify, check with your counselor.

## Profile-Address:

Your home address should be the main address listed. You can list Blue Ridge as an alternate mailing address if you would like college information and materials to be sent here during the school year.

☐ Education  
☐ Testing  
☐ Activities  
☐ Writing  


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☐ Courses & Grades  
0 College(s) Require

Personal Information

▼ Address

Permanent home address \*  
1234 Blue Ridge Way  
Apt 15  
Baron, VA 24401-2680  
United States of America  

Edit Remove

Alternate mailing address \*  
☐ No alternate address  
☒ Send mail to a temporary or alternate address  

Clear

Current/mailling address \*  
273 Mayo Dr  
St George, VA 22935-1370  
United States of America  

Edit Remove

Is this a temporary address? \*  
☒ Yes  
☐ No  

Clear

From date \*  

September 1 2017

To date \*  

May 31 2018

Back

Continue

**Blue Ridge School Address:**

**273 Mayo Dr.**

**St. George, VA 22935**

## Family-Parent Information

This section provides background information on your household, parents/legal guardians and siblings.

Respond fully to every question. The level of detail may seem beside the point, but it is another factor that helps admission officers get a better understanding of who you are, where you've come from and how you may get to where you are going.

Colleges take into account circumstances that have impacted you throughout high school (from grades to activities).

The screenshot shows the 'Common Application' interface for the 'Family' section. On the left is a sidebar with navigation links: Profile, Family (selected), Education, Testing, Activities, Writing, and Courses & Grades (0 College(s) Require). The main content area is titled 'Family' and includes a 'Preview' button. Below the title is a 'Household' section with the following questions and options:

- Parents' marital status (relative to each other) \*
- With whom do you make your permanent home? \*
- Do you have any children?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No  
[Clear](#)

At the bottom of the Household section are 'Back' and 'Continue' buttons. Below this is a list of family members to be added:

- ▶ Parent 1
- ▶ Parent 2
- ▶ Sibling

## Questions for Your Family

It is important that you ask your family the questions below before completing any of your college applications.

Parent's Marital Status

If divorced, what month and year?

With whom do you make your permanent home?

If parent is deceased, month and year?

Parent's country of birth

Parent's occupation

Parent's highest level of education

Names of college/universities attended, degree received and date graduated

### Education Section - Current or Most Recent School

Providing this information allows colleges to begin evaluating your application even without all the other required material.

The screenshot shows the 'Common Application' interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation links: Profile, Family, Education (highlighted), Testing, Activities, Writing, and Courses & Grades (0 College(s) Require). The main content area is titled 'Education' and includes a 'Preview' button. Below the title is a link to 'View Education Tutorial'. A red header bar reads 'Current or Most Recent Secondary School'. The form fields include: 'Current or most recent secondary school' with a search icon and a 'Find School' link (annotated with an arrow pointing to a callout box); 'Date of entry' with month and year dropdowns; 'Is this a boarding school?' with Yes/No radio buttons; 'Did or will you graduate from this school?' with Yes/No radio buttons; and a 'Clear' link. At the bottom, a section asks to indicate if any options affected progression through or since secondary school, with checkboxes for: Did or will graduate early, Did or will graduate late, Did or will take time off, Did or will take gap year, and No change in progression. Two callout boxes on the right provide additional information: one pointing to the 'Find School' link with the text 'Click on the link to search for Blue Ridge School' and 'School Code: 472-020', and another stating 'Graduation Date: May 26, 2018'.

**Common Application**

- ☐ Profile
- ☐ Family
- ☒ **Education**
- ☐ Testing
- ☐ Activities
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Courses & Grades  
0 College(s) Require

**Education** Preview

[View Education Tutorial](#)

**Current or Most Recent Secondary School**

Current or most recent secondary school \*

[Find School](#)

Date of entry \*

Month Year

Is this a boarding school? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Clear](#)

Did or will you graduate from this school? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

[Clear](#)

Please indicate if any of these options will have affected your progression through or since secondary school. Check all that apply. \*

☐ Did or will graduate early

☐ Did or will graduate late

☐ Did or will take time off

☐ Did or will take gap year

☐ No change in progression

Click on the link to search for Blue Ridge School

School Code: 472-020

**Graduation Date:**

May 26, 2018



**Common Application**

- Profile
- Family
- Education**
- Testing
- Activities
- Writing
- Courses & Grades  
0 College(s) Require

## Education

[View Education Tutorial](#)

► Current or Most Recent Secondary School

▼ **Other Secondary Schools**

If you have attended any secondary schools not listed in the previous section, please indicate the number of schools. \*

Select

[Back](#) [Continue](#)

► Colleges & Universities

► Grades

► Current or Most Recent Year Courses

► Honors

► Community-Based Organizations

► Future Plans

If you have attended any other high schools you need to indicate this here

If your schooling was interrupted by illness, disciplinary issues, military service, travel, natural disaster displacement or other circumstances, you must note that here and follow up with an explanation in the Additional Information portion of the writing section. You should discuss this with your high school counselor as well and a further explanation can be provided, but will not be a substitute or in place of.

**Counselor**

[View Counselor Tutorial](#)

Counselor's prefix

Select

Counselor's first name \*

Counselor's middle initial

Counselor's last name \*

Counselor's job title \*

Counselor's email

Counselor's phone

+1 000-000-0000 Ext, if any

[Back](#) [Continue](#)

Counselor Prefix: Mrs.

Counselor First Name: Amber

Counselor Last Name: Wilkins

Counselor Job Title: College Counselor

Counselor Email: [awilkins@blueridgeschool.com](mailto:awilkins@blueridgeschool.com)

Counselor Phone: 434-985-2811 ext. 222

## Education Section-Grades

**Common Application**

- ☐ Profile
- ☐ Family
- ☒ Education
- ☐ Testing
- ☐ Activities
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Courses & Grades  
0 College(s) Required

### Education

Preview

[View Education Tutorial](#)

▶ Current or Most Recent Secondary School

▶ Other Secondary Schools

▶ Colleges & Universities

▼ Grades

Grduating class size (approx.) \*

Class rank reporting

Cumulative GPA

GPA scale

GPA weighting

[Back](#)

Grduating Class Size: 52

Class Rank: N/A

Cumulative GPA: On  
Unofficial Transcript

GPA Scale: 4.0

GPA Weighting: Unweighted

## Education Section - Current Year Courses

By entering your current courses you are committing to completing them. If you change courses for any reason, it is your responsibility to notify colleges you have applied to.

Important Information for This Section:

We use a TRIMESTER scheduling system at Blue Ridge School.

Official Course Titles are on page 7 and 8

We offer both Dual Enrollment and Honors courses at Blue Ridge School.

Some courses are only Trimester Electives, indicate which trimester you will be taking which course or if it is a full year course.

## Education Section - Colleges and Universities

If you have taken any Dual Credit or other college level courses, enter that information on this page. Course names can be found on page 7 and 8.

Dates will be from September (and the year you started that course) to May of the following year.

You will not have earned a degree so leave that blank.

**Common Application**

- ☐ Profile
- ☐ Family
- ☒ **Education**
- ☐ Testing
- ☐ Activities
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Courses & Grades  
0 College(s) Required

**Education** Preview

[View Education Tutorial](#)

► Current or Most Recent Secondary School

► Other Secondary Schools

**▼ Colleges & Universities**

If you have ever taken coursework at a college or university, please indicate the number of colleges. \*

1 x

**College 1 \***

Piedmont Virginia Community College  
501 College Dr  
Charlottesville, VA 22902-7589  
USA  
CEEB Code: 5561

[Change](#) [Remove](#)

**Course details**

☐ Dual enrollment with high school

☐ Summer program

☐ Credit awarded directly by college

**College 1 from date \***

Month Year

**College 1 to date \***

Month Year

**Degree earned**

Select

## Education Section - Honors

This section refers only to academic honors—not sports or citizenship awards.

Examples:

Headmaster's List

Dean's List

National Honor Society

End of the Year Academic Award

These are all school levels of recognition.

In the Future Plans section, colleges are trying to get a sense of your interests and goals in order to build that picture of what you are. In many cases, your answers do not commit you to a particular field of study or career. If you do not see what you are looking for select “other” and skip ahead.

## **My Colleges Tab**

This section is where you can complete the required supplemental applications to colleges on the Common Application. This page will detail application fees, decision plans and relevant dates and recommender requirements.

Note: Since we utilize Naviance Family Connection you DO NOT need to indicate recommenders on the Common Application.

### **My Colleges Tab - Supplements/Questions** ***Considerations for Supplemental Applications***

Give additional writing requirements the same time and attention that you give the main essay.

Adhere to word limits. (Admission officers already read...a lot)

If you have immediate family that are alums of this particular institution, be sure to provide that information.

Be honest about your financial need.

It is okay to select “undecided” for an academic major.

Read instructions carefully

If you are applying Early Decision remember this is binding. You must read and sign the agreement, your parent and guardian must read and sign the agreement, and your counselor must read and sign the agreement.

### **My Colleges Tab-Final PDF Review**

This is your last chance to make any changes or edits. You should have a trusted family member look over the final product (do not rely on a peer).

Once you start submission you will have an opportunity to print out the application—it is wise to print and keep a paper copy for your records.

Payment is submitted at the same time as you submit the Common Application.

College specific writing supplements can be submitted separately.

Once all items are submitted completely, a green checkmark should appear in the Dashboard (don't forget the supplement!)

## My Colleges Tab - Recommenders and FERPA

The screenshot displays the 'My Colleges' tab in a web application. The top navigation bar includes 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', 'College Search', and 'Financial Aid Resources'. The left sidebar shows a list of colleges: 'Randolph College' (selected) and 'Randolph-Macon College'. The main content area for Randolph College includes:

- Contact Info:** Phone: (800) 745-7692, Fax: 434-947-8996, Email: admissions@randolphcollege.edu, Address: 2500 Rivermont Avenue, Lynchburg, VA 24503 USA. Links for 'View College Website', 'Virtual Tour', and 'College Navigator (Department of Education)' are provided.
- Application Deadlines:**
  - Fall First Year:** Early Action - 11/15/2017, Regular Decision - 03/01/2018
  - Spring First Year:** Regular Decision - 12/01/2017
- Other Deadline Information:** We encourage you to apply by March 1 for priority financial aid packaging, but we accept and welcome applications after March 1.
- Application Information:**
  - Application Fees:** First Year Domestic Fee- \$0, First Year International Fee- \$0
  - Standardized Test Policy:** Always Required, SAT w/o Essay or ACT w/o Essay

The right sidebar contains 'Instructions and Help' with sections on 'What timezone will display on my application submission?' and 'Where are the application requirements for a specific school listed?'. A 'Deadline Information' section at the bottom right states the application deadline is at 11:59 PM of the stated deadline date.

Before any recommendations can be submitted on your behalf you must first sign the FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Waiver). You have the right to view the recommendations written on your behalf if you so desire. We advise though that you WAIVE your rights, agreeing that you will not ask (nor will you be granted the ability) to view your recommendations. We advise this because the letter of recommendation can carry a great amount of weight in the process and colleges will know if you have waived your rights. If you do not waive your rights colleges can assume that your recommenders are not being as honest as they may have been if you had waived your rights.

You must sign this prior to a recommendation being sent on your behalf

To do this you must first have a college listed in the My Colleges List

If you are not applying to a school with the Common Application, you may get a paper version of this from your counselor.

Dashboard My Colleges Common App College Search Financial Aid Resources

**Randolph College**

**Application**  
(0 of 3 Completed)

- ☐ Questions
- ☐ Recommenders and FERPA
- ☐ Review and Submit -

**For All Colleges**

- **FERPA Release Authorization**  
You must complete the release authorization process, which will allow transcripts and recommendations to be submitted on your behalf through Naviance eDocs.

Release Authorization

**Release Authorization**

1 ✓ Instructions > 2 Form

The next screen will ask you two important questions about your release of and access to your educational records under FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Since FERPA is a complex law, we want to provide some key information before you respond.

- How does FERPA relate to your college application?**  
FERPA gives you the right to review confidential letters of recommendation under certain circumstances IF:
  - You are enrolled in college and that college saves the recommendations for enrolled students, OR
  - You are 18 or older.
- In a moment you'll be asked if you want to waive this right. Why would you want to do that?**
  - Waiving your right lets colleges know that you do not intend to read your recommendations, which helps reassure colleges that the letters are candid and truthful.
  - Some recommenders may refuse to write a letter for you unless you waive your rights. Check with your counselor or teachers to see if any of them follow such a policy.
- Still unsure how to respond?**
  - That's OK. Many students are. Before you move on, take a moment to discuss your decision with your counselor, another school official, or your parent/legal guardian. For more information about FERPA, visit the [Help Center](#).

☒ I have fully read and understood the FERPA Release Authorization explanation above. \*

[Cancel](#) [Continue](#)



✕

## Release Authorization

1 ✓ Instructions

>

2 Form

☐ I authorize every school that I have attended to release all requested records and recommendations to colleges to which I am applying for admission. I also authorize employees at these colleges to confidentially contact my current and former schools should they have questions about the information submitted on my behalf. \*

[Back](#) [Cancel](#) [Save](#)

✕

## Release Authorization

1 ✓ Instructions

>

2 Form


☒ I authorize every school that I have attended to release all requested records and recommendations to colleges to which I am applying for admission. I also authorize employees at these colleges to confidentially contact my current and former schools should they have questions about the information submitted on my behalf. \*

Please select one: \*

☐ I waive my right to review all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf.  
☐ I DO NOT waive my right to review all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf.

☐ I understand that my waiver or no waiver selection above pertains to all colleges to which I apply and that my **selections on this page cannot be changed once I sign and click Save below.** \*

Signature \*

Date \* 08/08/2017 

[Back](#) [Cancel](#) [Save](#)

## **Standardized Test Scores**

It is your responsibility to have your standardized test scores sent officially. Blue Ridge School does not report test scores on the transcripts nor do we provide official copies.

Common Application and other college applications allow you to enter your test scores electronically on the application. By providing this information, it allows the college to begin evaluating your application even if they haven't yet received official scores (YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SENDING OFFICIAL SCORES FROM ALL TESTING AGENCIES).

You will need to check with each college to which you are applying for their testing reporting requirements (this can be found on their website). You may also find the requirements within the college specific supplements under My Colleges on the Common Application.

If you are reporting scores for SAT/ACT, provide your highest scores in each area even if those scores are from different test dates. If you are taking a future ACT/SAT, answer "yes" so that the admission offices can anticipate receiving further score reports.

If you are applying to test optional schools, you can choose not to self-report. You may still need to send official scores though in order to be considered for merit scholarships.

Standardized tests (SAT, ACT, TOEFL, Advanced Placement, Subject Tests) play a role in the admission process. The degree to which these tests impact admission decisions depends on whether a school is test optional, test flexible or requires students to submit one or more of these test results. If you are eligible for a fee waiver, waivers are available in the College Counseling Office.

Students with documented disabilities are responsible for working with our SSD (Services for Students with Disabilities) Coordinator to submit applications to the appropriate testing agency well in advance of their first test date.

## **Recommendations Essays/Personal Statements**

The purpose of the admissions essay or personal statement is to share more information about yourself than what your transcript and test scores says about you. While some schools do not require an essay or personal statement and say that this is optional, it is our recommendation that you always submit a personal statement or essay if allowed. Always remember to seek out help and assistance with your essays. Have your English teacher proofread them and provide meaningful feedback to you regarding your essays. Make sure that you answer the questions (if provided) completely.

In the Common Application, this portion of the application has three sections: The Personal Essay, Disciplinary History, and Additional Information.

**Personal Essay:**

You have seven prompts with an enforced maximum word limit of 650 and minimum of 250.

This is your chance to get creative and tell the admission officer something about you they may not know already.

Do not make this essay college specific so you can use your personal statement and essay for multiple college applications.

**Disciplinary History:**

This section requires students to disclose any academic or behavioral misconduct that occurred in school along with any criminal conviction, misdemeanor or felony.

At Blue Ridge School, students are expected to, and college counselors will report, all out of school suspensions received during a student's years at Blue Ridge School to colleges to which a student applies or has applied for admission. If a college requests information about a student's high school disciplinary record, students are expected to disclose the information that the colleges seek. The college counselor will report relevant information at the time the application is submitted, while the application is being reviewed, or after the admission decision has been made, depending upon when the infraction occurs.

**Additional Information:**

This section can be used to elaborate on an activity or situation that is not self-explanatory or is not explained elsewhere. This is where academic issues such as a drop in grades or scheduling conflict can be explained.

Do not write an additional essay or repeat information already covered.

If you answered "yes" to any disciplinary question, the explanation should show a responsibility for actions and an understanding of what happened, and show a clear movement forward.

# Finding the Perfect Fit

## *Investigating Schools*

### **Talking to Alumni and Current Students**

Blue Ridge School has a rich history and many of our students are successfully attending colleges and universities across the country. Take the time to reach out to our alumni network to learn more about colleges and universities that are on your list. Sometimes, it can be helpful to have an insider's perspective of a campus.

### **College Representative Visits**

Every school year, Blue Ridge School hosts many college admission representatives from visiting schools. Taking advantage of their visit is a great way for you to learn more about what a school offers, as well as for you to learn firsthand. Many of the times, the visiting representative is also the college admissions professional who will be reviewing your application. During your senior class meeting with your college counselor, a list of potential questions for college representatives will be provided to you.

### **Research, Research, Research!**

Naviance was created for this purpose. To provide you with a database of information for college research. Put together a folder (either electronically or printed) of college research. Make lists of pros and cons for each school to which you are considering on applying. There are a lot of schools out there and researching them is one of the best ways for you to figure out what you like and don't like. College websites can sometimes be tricky, but the admissions pages tend to list great prospective student resources for you to use and are typically found in one place.

Prior to starting your research, you should ask yourself some important questions:

1. Do I want a 2 year or 4 year college?
2. Do I want a public or private institution?
3. What size college would be best for me (very large-15,000 or more, moderately sized-fewer than 15,000 but more than 2,000, or small enrollment-fewer than 2,000)?
4. Do I want to attend a college in a city, in a suburban community or in a rural setting?
5. Would a single gender college suit my needs?
6. Am I interested in a college that has a religious affiliation?
7. What do I think I would like to study in college?

## Additional College Research Resources:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges>

<https://www.petersons.com/search/#>

<https://www.princetonreview.com/college-search>

<https://www.mycollegeoptions.org/CollegeSearch>

# College Counseling Timelines

When it comes to college planning, it may seem like there are a million things to think about. The following timelines will keep you on track and in the know throughout high school.

## Freshman Year

### Freshman Year Timeline

#### Fall

Meet with your advisor. Your advisor is ready and willing to help you make sense of your high school, college and career options. As soon as you can, set up time to discuss your plans for high school and your future.

Get involved in extracurricular activities (both school and non-sponsored). Make the effort to get involved with groups, clubs or teams that interest you.

Pick the right mix of classes. Make sure that you are taking core requirements, such as English, math, science, history and a foreign language.

#### Spring

Build your credentials. Keep track of academic and extracurricular awards, community service achievements, and anything else you participate in, so it will be easier to remember later.

Start learning about colleges. Look at college information in your counselor's office. Attend the spring meet and greet in the college counseling office.

#### Winter

Get off to a good start with your grades because this will impact your GPA. Grades really do count toward college admission and scholarships.

Continue to explore your interests and find ways to take advantage of any opportunities to participate in campus life and internship opportunities.

#### Summer

Make the summer count. There are plenty of ways to have fun and build your credentials during the summer, such as volunteering, getting a job, or signing up for an enrichment program.

## Sophomore Year

Sophomore Year Timeline	
<b>Fall</b> <p>Meet with your advisor Visit the College Counseling Office Take the PSAT and explore careers Stay on track with your courses Begin learning about the college admissions process</p>	<b>Winter</b> <p>Take on new roles! Stay involved with your extracurricular activities and work toward leadership positions in your top activities. Participate in community service opportunities.</p> <p>Read and practice your writing. Develop your reading skills and work on your writing. Find a teacher or another adult who can advise you to do these things.</p>
<b>Spring</b> <p>Keep your grades up and remain focused on your classes.</p> <p>Start your college search. Use college search tools to decide what factors are important to you and see a list of colleges that match your criteria. Attend college fairs when available to you.</p> <p>Contact colleges that interest you.</p> <p>Attend Resume Workshop in Advisory</p>	<b>Summer</b> <p>Make the summer count. There are plenty of ways to have fun and build your credentials during the summer, such as volunteering, getting a job or signing up for an enrichment program.</p>

## Junior Year

Junior Year Timeline	
<b>September</b> <p>Sign up on Naviance to meet with college reps</p>	<b>January</b> <p>Junior Year Meeting # 1</p> <p>Organize a testing plan. Decide when you will be taking your standardized tests and start test prep.</p> <p>Stay involved with extracurriculars and in the campus community.</p>



### Junior Year Timeline

#### October

Sign up on Naviance to meet with college reps

Take PSAT

Evaluate your education options. Decide whether you want to pursue full-time employment, further education or training, or a military career. If you're interested in attending a military academy, talk to your guidance counselor about starting the application process now.

#### February/March

Junior Year Meeting # 2 (w/parent)

Junior Year Survey Due

Attend College Information Panel

#### November

Sign up on Naviance to meet with college reps

#### April

Request Teacher Recommendations

Preliminary College List Worksheet Due

Parent Questionnaire Due

#### December

Take the SAT (through Jan) and ACT (through Feb)

#### May

Take Exams

Meet with College Counselor

## Senior Year

### Senior Year Timeline

#### September

Attend Senior Class Meeting

Complete Game Plan Survey

Meet with College Counselor (Senior and Parent Meeting # 2)

Work on Common Application

Match Common Application to Naviance

Apply to Schools and Add in Naviance

Submit Preliminary List of Colleges to College Counselor

Sign Up for College Visits

Request Recommendation Letters from Faculty

#### January

Most regular decisions are this month. Make sure you have submitted any applications due by this point.

Start looking at scholarship opportunities. Search in Naviance.

## Senior Year Timeline

### October

Meet with College Counselor (Senior Meeting Only)  
 Take SAT or ACT  
 File FAFSA (October 1). Complete CSS profile if needed.  
 Prepare for Early Decision/Early Action Applications.  
 Complete first draft of your common application.  
 Have scores from test organizations sent to colleges  
 Attend activities hosted by colleges  
 Register for TOEFL (ESL students)

### November

Meet with College Counselor (Senior Meeting Only)  
 Early Application Deadlines 11/1 and 11/15  
 Take SAT or ACT (If Needed)  
 Apply to Schools and Add in Naviance  
 Touch base with teachers about recommendations.  
 Complete certification of finances and obtain multiple copies, with original signatures (International students only)

### December

Finalize Regular Decision Application List  
 Complete all applications for Early Decision II and Regular Decision by mid-December. Regular Decision applications should be completed and submitted before the holiday break.  
 Update Naviance (new applications, admissions decisions, etc.)

### February/March

Many selective colleges have February deadlines for financial aid and applications. Make sure you have submitted all necessary applications.

### April

College decisions arrive by April 1st. Meet with your counselor to discuss college admissions decisions; notify each college of your decision (after you receive financial aid offer); discuss alternative choices.

Update Naviance to reflect admissions decisions.

### May

By May 1st, send letter of intent and pay enrollment deposit to one and only one college.

Notify your college counselor of any schools you were accepted and declined an offer.

Exams

Graduation

# Naviance Family Connection

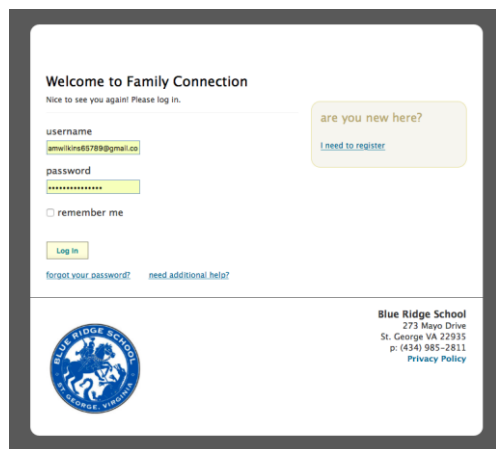
## *College Counseling Portal*

### What is Naviance?

Naviance Family Connection is a web-based program that allows you and your parents to organize and manage your college search process. It also allows for direct communication with your college counselor and the ability for you to follow the process as it happens, which

will hopefully help you be a little less stressed about if and when information is submitted. A Naviance user guide will be provided to all students during their first junior year meeting.

## Logging in to Naviance



Log in to your Naviance account here:

<https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login?hsid=blueridge>. If you lost your log in info, contact your counselor ASAP.

\* Remember to use your Blue Ridge School email when logging in to your Naviance account. This will ensure that you are using an appropriate email address and is easier to reset if needed.

## Researching Schools in Naviance

One of the most useful features of Naviance is that it allows you to find schools that match your interests in terms of size, location, programs of study, etc.

Start your search for colleges by clicking College Search on the left side of the screen. This brings up the Advanced College Search page.

You can specify the types of schools you are looking for based upon the following categories:

Type (public vs. private, type of campus, etc. )

Location (distance from home, particular geographic regions or individual states)

Students (size of the student body, ethnic and gender makeup)

Admission (percent of students accepted who apply)

Extracurriculars (NCAA division sports and activities)

Majors

Costs

Special Programs (e.g. study abroad options, programs for students with disabilities)

**Note:** The more categories you enter parameters for, the more focused the list of schools which you will have listed. You can input search criteria for as many or as few categories as you wish.

At any point, click “Show Matches” to see the list of schools that matches your search preferences. The information you entered when conducting your search will also be shown in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

Before you go any further, don’t forget to save your results (click “Save Search,” type in a name and click “Enter”) so that you can refer back to the list with these specific search criteria. You can create multiple searches with varying criteria to yield different results.

In the three “select for info” columns next to the list of schools, you can get a side by side comparison of the colleges by choosing various sorting options, such as enrollment size, diversity on campus, SAT scores or % accepted.

You can click on the name of a school to pull up all of its information (e.g., location, size, majors offered) in a new window.

Back on your original list, click “pick next” to the name of a school you are considering to add it to your “Hand-Picked List.” After you are done picking all of the schools you are interested in learning more about, click “Add to My Colleges” to move the schools to the list of college on your prospective list.

## **Adding Colleges in Naviance**

If you are applying to any college, you will need to make sure you add the school in Naviance. Doing so allows your college counselor to keep track of when documents are due and allows you to see when documentation has been sent to colleges. It is important that you keep this section up to date.

**Step 1**—After you are able to log in to Naviance (Family Connection), click the colleges tab.

**Step 2**—Click on the link labeled “Colleges I’m Thinking About”

**Step 3**—Add colleges using the search feature or the “lookup” feature.

**Step 4**—As you add colleges, indicate your level of interest and pay attention to the “delivery type” and any deadlines.

**Step 5**—After you add your college(s), click the box(es) and then click the “Move to Application List.” Only do this for those schools for which you actually intend to apply. Note that after you move your college(s) from “colleges I’m thinking about” to “colleges I’m applying to” they will no longer appear in “colleges I’m thinking about.”

**Step 6**—Select the type of decision you are seeking.

## **Requesting Transcript in Naviance**

In order for your college counselor to send your transcript and admissions packet to a college or university, you must request that a transcript be sent. You do so by clicking on the

*“transcripts”* link found under the resources tab in Naviance Family Connection. Once you click on *“transcripts,”* click on *“request transcripts for my college applications.”*

If you have current applications where you have not requested a transcript, the schools will show up under the current applications section. If you have requested transcripts for all of your college applications, but would like to add additional schools, you can do so from this page as well.

## **Connecting Family Connection and Common Application**

**Step 1**-Click “colleges I am applying to,” and, if you are applying to a Common App school, you **MUST** complete the “Common App Account Matching” section. In order to complete it, you must **FIRST** complete the FERPA agreement in your Common App account. If you are **NOT** applying to a Common App school, you can either ignore the Common App Account Matching message OR click “Not Needed” and it will go away.

**Step 2**-Enter the **EXACT** email address you used in your Common App account creation, your date of birth, and click “Match.”

## **Requesting Teacher Recommendations in Naviance**

You can invite your counselor and teachers to write letters for you. You will need to first find out how many teacher recommendations you actually need. For **ALL** Common App schools, you need a counselor letter. For the exact number of teacher recs., refer to the Common App. Just a reminder that you need to ask your potential recommenders in person first, then you can click the “add/cancel request link” in Naviance.

**Step 1**-Use the pulldown menu to select a recommender **AFTER** he or she said “yes” to your recommendation request. You may write a personal note/request for each recommendation request.

If you do not see your teacher listed, please let your college counselor know.

## **Useful Tools in Naviance**

**Visit College Websites:** Through Naviance, you can directly link to the college’s home page.

**View Overlaps:** Through Naviance, you can view student overlaps. If at least one student from BRS has applied to a particular school, you can also view the ten overlap schools (i.e. students who have applied to UVA, have also applied to....)

**View School Stats:** Through Naviance, you can view a breakdown of BRS' application data by type, SAT, GPA and admissions decision.

**How You Compare:** If there are students from BRS who have been admitted to the college, it will show a composite of their GPA and SAT scores and how your academic profile compares (green means you are above and red means you are below the averages).

**General Information:** In Naviance, you can find the college's admissions address, phone numbers, size, location and application deadlines. It will also allow you to email the admissions office directly.

**Admissions Information:** This tab indicates acceptance rates and the requirements to be considered for admission to the college with regard to standardized tests, application fees, interviews and high school courses.

**Financial Aid:** In Naviance, you have access to financial aid information for each school where you will find expected costs for tuition, room and board, and various other fees. The school may also indicate the percentage of students receiving financial aid, and in what forms that aid comes (i.e. scholarships, grants, loans, work study.)

**Majors and Degree Information:** In Naviance, this section provides a general list of programs of study offered at the college, and what type of degree is available. Clicking on the name of the major will bring up a list of schools that also offer that particular program of study.

**Student Life:** In Naviance, students can see what types of organizations are on campus, types of residence halls, sports teams (division), geographic representation of the student body, as well as special services available (e.g. career counseling, services for students with special needs, etc.)

**Maps:** Using Google maps, this tool allows you to get geographic information on schools that fall into one of the groups represented. Once the map comes up on the screen, you can either click a data point or a college name to get information on the location and distance from home.

**College Visits:** You can view dates and times for upcoming college visits to BRS. These typically occur during the fall, but we do have some visits during the spring as well. You can view these dates and RSVP by clicking the visit schedule icon on your Family Connection page.

# Surveys

Surveys are conducted during various times of the college counseling process. Surveys are used primarily by the College Counseling Office, but can be used by other offices across the institution. They are only used internally.

## **Junior Year Survey**

During a student's junior year, students will take a comprehensive survey that will be used by the College Counseling Office to create an individualized college counseling plan for each student and family. The survey will be sent to students in February of their junior year and will be referenced during the first junior and parent meeting.

## **Game Plan Survey**

The Game Plan Survey is a survey that is taken by students the summer before their senior year. The Game Plan Survey allows the college counseling office to have more up to date information about a student's college admissions plan.

## **Graduation Survey**

The Graduation Survey is a survey that will be sent to seniors after graduation. This survey allows the senior to provide feedback to the college counselor and allows the college counseling office to improve for the next year.

## **Year 1 Survey**

The Year 1 Survey is a survey that will be sent to students after completion of their first year of college. This survey will be used by the College Counseling Office and Blue Ridge School with regard to course offerings, student successes prep, etc.

# Important Websites and Passwords

Use this section to record your username and passwords for important college admission websites.

Website Name	Website	Username	Password/PIN
Common Application	<a href="http://www.commonapp.org">www.commonapp.org</a>		
SAT Registration/Scores	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.org">www.collegeboard.org</a>		
ACT Registration/Scores	<a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a>		
Naviance Family Connection	<a href="http://connection.naviance.com/bueridge">connection.naviance.com/bueridge</a>		
FAFSA (Financial Aid Application)	<a href="http://www.fafsa.gov">www.fafsa.gov</a>		
FASTWEB (Scholarship Search Engine)	<a href="http://www.fastweb.com">www.fastweb.com</a>		
Test Optional School List	<a href="http://www.fairtest.org">www.fairtest.org</a>		
FinAid! The Smart Guide to Financial Aid	<a href="http://www.finaid.org/">http://www.finaid.org/</a>		
Merit Aid: A comprehensive guide to merit scholarships	<a href="http://www.meritaid.com/">http://www.meritaid.com/</a>		

## Information for Prospective College Athletes

It is important that all prospective college athletes meet with the College Counselor as soon as possible. Talk to both your College Counselor and your coach to share your thoughts and plan accordingly. You will work closely with both of these individuals to identify your collegiate competition level, review eligibility requirements, and navigate the NCAA and collegiate athlete process.



## NCAA Eligibility

To be eligible to play Division 1 or Division 2 athletics, students must be certified by the NCAA Eligibility Center. Consult the NCAA Guide at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org) for instructions on how to register with the Eligibility Center and for guidance on eligibility requirements.

Prior to the start of every season, the College Counselor will coordinate with all athletic coaches to coordinate an information session on NCAA eligibility and requirements.

## Official Test Scores and NCAA Eligibility

Test scores must be reported directly to the Eligibility Center from the ACT or SAT. Test scores will not be taken off transcripts or from a student score report. When you register for the SAT or ACT, it is important to include the Eligibility Center code of 9999 so the test comes directly to the Eligibility Center at no extra charge. Remember that if you take the SAT or ACT multiple times, NCAA rules require that all scores must be reported to the Eligibility Center.

# Glossary of Terms

**AA (Associate of Arts):** A 2-year community college degree. Also offered by some 4-year colleges.

**Academic Calendar:** Breaks the school year into one of the following: Semesters, Quarters, Trimesters (Blue Ridge is a trimester school).

**Accreditation:** The recognition by an outside agency that a school maintains a high standard that enable students to qualify for admission to other accredited institutions.

**ACT:** The American College Testing assessment is a curriculum based test that includes four sections: English, Math, Reading and Science Reasoning. Each section is scored 1-36 and students receive a composite score of 1-36, representing the average of the four individual scores. There is an optional writing section of the ACT. Test dates, practice exams, and registration information can be found at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

**Admission Requirements:** A set of rules established by each college for a student to be accepted.

**Alternative Loans:** A variety of loan programs available to assist students and parents in covering the costs of a college education. Information is available at college financial aid offices, as well as local banks or lending institutions.

**Applications:** Each college and university will require that students submit an application to be considered for admission. Applications are available from the office of admission, online at the college website, or through Common Application or other outside application agency.

**Application Fees:** Some applications require that students pay an application fee. Fees can range from anywhere between \$25-\$100 or more per application. Some colleges will accept fee waivers from students who have a demonstrated financial need. Students who think they qualify for a fee waiver should see their college counselor.

**B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) or B.S. (Bachelor of Science):** A 4-year college degree.

**Branch Campus:** Some students might apply to a college/university but will only be offered admissions to the branch (or satellite) campus. If you are really interested in the college, you will need to research what the branch campus offers and if this will work for you.

**CEEB Code (School Code):** A six-digit code assigned to each school by ETS (Educational Testing Services) that must be included on all applications and all standardized testing forms. The CEEB code for Blue Ridge School is 472-020.

**Cost of Attendance (COA):** The total estimated amount, including tuition, fees, books, transportation, and personal expenses, that it will cost to go to a college. It is usually expressed as a yearly figure and is used to calculate financial need.

**College Catalog:** A book or online database published by the college describing requirements for admission, degrees, services and course descriptions.

**Credit:** A way of referring to the number of credits which are earned in a course. Also known as semester hours, unit hours, quarter hours or units. On average, a full-time student at a college usually attends 5 classes and earns 15 credits per semester.

**CSS Profile:** In addition to the FAFSA, some colleges also require that financial aid applicants complete the College Scholarship Service's Profile form.

**Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success:** A group of about 80 colleges and universities launched a new application (the Coalition Application) in April 2016. Students across the country in grades 9 - 12 can create a virtual locker in which to collect materials they can customize in support of their applications for admission to member schools.

**College Counselor:** A college counselor works with each student and family to advise and guide them throughout all phases of the college admission process.

**College Campus Visits:** Campus visits are recommended when they are geographically and financially viable for the student and their family. Colleges and universities expect that students living a reasonable distance from campus will make an effort to visit. If visiting the campus is not economically feasible, the student or counselor could contact the admission office directly to explain the situation. Visits should always be arranged through the admission office, and can be coordinated with the following:

- \* **Interview:** A one-on-one opportunity to speak with an admission counselor on campus. Some colleges and universities will offer alumni interviews to students who live too far from campus to visit so that students can meet locally with alumni representatives.

- \* **Group Sessions:** If students plan to visit campus and no individual time is available, they can arrange to participate in a group session where they will hear about the college and have an opportunity to ask questions.

\* **Individual Tour/Campus Tour:** A guided tour of the campus is an important part of the college visit and a great way to get a feel for a college.

\* **Overnight Visit:** Several colleges and universities offer overnight visits. These visits often include—attending classes, eating in the dining halls, attending an event, and sleeping in a dorm to help students make a better decision about a college/university.

\* **Virtual Tours:** Many colleges and universities offer opportunities for students who are not able to visit campus to have a campus tour online. Many are interactive and allow you to ask questions and hear from current students.

**Common Application (Common App):** Several hundred colleges have agreed on one standard form for all applicants to complete. Whereas some schools are exclusive users of the Common App. (meaning they only accept the Common App. and do not use their own unique application), other colleges use multiple applications – they may accept either the Common App. or their own application.

**Common Application Supplements:** Many schools that use the Common App. also request a college-specific supplement: often additional essays.

**Deferment:** When referring to admission, deferment permits an accepted student to postpone enrollment for a certain length of time.

**Demonstrated Interest:** Some colleges and universities will factor a student's level of interest in their institution into the admission decision. Demonstrated interest may be shown through a campus visit, personal interview, or participation at a high school visit with a college representative.

**Deposit:** A fee payable within a specified date of acceptance for admission verifying their intention to enroll. The fee may or may not be refundable.

**Early Action:** Early Action is a non-binding process with an earlier submission deadline. Students are notified of the school's decision in December or January, but do not have to respond to the admission or until the May 1 decision deadline.

**Early Decision:** Early Decision is binding. If admitted Early Decision, all other outstanding applications must be withdrawn. Students may only apply to one school as an Early Decision candidate, and students who are admitted under Early Decision will not have the opportunity to compare financial aid packages.

**ESL:** English as a Second Language (also known as English Language Learning/ELL)

**Estimated Family Contribution (EFC):** After the financial aid applications are completed, the family's financial contribution is calculated. This is the amount that the financial aid office determines a family can contribute to the student's college costs. The entire financial aid package will be based on this figure. The EFCs based on the FAFSA and CSS Profile may vary based on the financial information considered by the two processes.

**Family Connection:** Naviance is a comprehensive K-12 college and career readiness platform that enables self-discovery, career exploration, academic planning, and college preparation. Naviance Family Connection is the parent and student side of the Naviance interface that allows parents and students to get involved in the planning and advising process, research colleges, research careers, and create plans for the future. Family connection also lets the college counseling office share information with families about upcoming meetings and events, local scholarship opportunities, and other resources for college and career information.

**FERPA:** FERPA refers to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. A federal law designed to protect the privacy of education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate data.

**Fee Waiver:** Permits eligible low-income students to submit college application or test registration forms without the fee. The waiver may be granted by a high school or college.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** This form is required in order to be considered for all types of federal student aid, including Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and work study. The FAFSA is also used to apply for some state aid programs. It is completed by parents in January of the applicant's senior year.

**Gap Year:** A gap year is suitable for those students wishing to spend a year exploring a special interest or developing a skill or talent, traveling (purposefully), engaging in community service, working, or a combination of such activities. It can contribute directly to a student's later collegiate success. Gap year decisions are communicated at the end of the admissions cycle, after the attending school has been selected and the deposit has been paid.

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** GPA is figured on class grades and reported to colleges on your transcript. Blue Ridge uses a 4.0 GPA scale.

**Grant:** An award of money which does not have to be repaid. Typically grants are based on financial need. For example, the amount of a PELL grant is determined by a student's EFC.

**Loan:** Borrowed money that must be repaid with interest.

**Major:** The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize: a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years.

**Merit/Academic Scholarship:** Many colleges offer merit or academic scholarships. These grants are not based on need, but on a student's abilities and/or talents. Some colleges will award merit scholarships based on the admission application, but others will require a separate application form.

**National College Decision Day:** National College Decision Day is the deadline for seniors to pick their college. Colleges and Universities that are members of NACAC and have deadlines, use May 1st as their reply deadline for accepting offers of admission. Students must let the college/university that they plan to attend know of their decision by the May 1st deadline and pay their deposit. Students should also let any schools that they have been accepted to, but do not plan to attend, know that they will not be attending these schools. This could open a spot for other students that may have been waitlisted and is a common courtesy.

**Naviance:** Naviance is a comprehensive resource which helps students navigate their career and college search process. The Career Resource Center maintains updated schedules of college visits, scholarships and enrichment opportunities on Naviance Family Connection. Additionally, the site provides other valuable resources such as career profiles, college search

tools, career assessment tools, and information about application outcomes (accepted, waitlisted, denied) for Blue Ridge School students.

**Need-Aware Admission:** Some colleges will factor a student's need for financial aid in their admission decision. This does not mean that schools automatically waitlist or deny a student based on the need for financial assistance. Policies differ from school to school.

**Need-Blind:** A college which offers need-blind admission does not consider a student's ability to pay when making an admission decision. Some need-blind colleges also guarantee that they will meet the full demonstrated need of all admitted students.

**Net Price Calculator:** As of November 2011, the federal government mandated that all college and university websites include a net price calculator, a tool which allows prospective students to obtain an estimate of the real cost of attending a particular institution. Net price calculators (and the information required to use them) will vary by institution, so students should complete the process at each college and university.

**PELL Grant:** The federally funded Pell Grant program provides grants to students who have an exceptionally low Estimated Family Contribution (EFC). The U.S. Department of Education determines a student's eligibility for a Pell Grant, not the individual college or university.

**Personal Statement/Essay:** Many colleges and universities require a personal statement as part of their applications. Students should take particular care with the essay, as it is an opportunity to showcase their writing ability. If a question is provided, students should make sure that their essay answers the question completely. If no question is provided, students can use a brief biographical essay, or may use the essay questions on the Common Application as a guide.

**Prerequisite:** The beginning course in a series. It must be taken and passed before enrolling in the next class. Typically, in college course selection, a school will notify you if you are able to skip a prerequisite.

**Private Institutions:** Private institutions are run primarily through the use of tuition, donations and endowments. Students typically are awarded significant scholarship money

from private institutions in order to make the cost of attending a private institution affordable.

**Profile:** The high school profile is prepared by the high school and will accompany each student's transcript when it is sent to a college or university. The profile describes both the school as a whole and the particular graduating class. The profile will also include a grade scale with information about the current graduating class's performance.

**PSAT:** The Preliminary SAT is offered to Blue Ridge students in October of each year. The test is similar to the SAT, but scores are for preparation and guidance only and should never be reported to colleges. When students receive their scores, the original test booklet is returned along with a score report showing their answers and the correct answers. The scores report also suggests areas where the student needs to improve and offers study tips. The full name for the PSAT is PSAT/NMSQT, which stands for National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. PSAT scores from the junior year are reported to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation for use in determining winners of the National Merit Recognition and Scholarships.

**Public Institutions:** Public universities are run primarily through the use of state and federal funds that are supplemented by tuition, fees, donations, and endowments. Tuition is usually paid at two levels:

**State Residents:** Students who can prove that they live in a particular state pay a lower tuition because it is assumed that their families' taxes support the institution.

**Out-of-State Students:** Students who reside in other states or internationally and pay a higher tuition rate.

**Recommendation Letter:** Colleges and universities may require up to three letters of recommendation for each applicant. Many colleges and universities provide checklists as part of the applications well as including space for written comments. Usually, if three letters are requested, two will be from teachers and one will be from a counselor. Teacher and counselor recommendations are best if they are confidential, and students should be encouraged to waive their right to see the letters through the FERPA on Common App, Naviance, or on the college's online application. Students should request letters of



recommendation through their Naviance Family Connection account and also request these letters with each person face to face.

**Regular Decision:** Many colleges have multiple application deadlines. Regular decision is the standard deadline for the college admission process.

**Restricted Early Action (Single Choice Early Action):** REA is a non-binding early action admission option in which a student may not apply to any other private schools' early program, except:

- \* A college outside of the US
- \* A non-binding rolling admission program
- \* A public college or university whose admission is not binding.

Like EA applicants, a student has until May 1 to decide if she/he wants to attend the college or university. Applicants are asked to sign a statement stipulation that they agree to file only one early application. Restricted Early Action policies vary greatly, so it is important to read them carefully.

**Rolling Admission:** Some colleges evaluate applications as they are received and provide students with a decision throughout the process, and not on a set date.

**SAT:** The SAT is a college entrance exam given by the College Board. The SAT is intended to forecast a student's ability to perform in college coursework.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):** A financial aid requirement which requires students to pass 2/3 attempted credit hours. After four college semesters, a student must have a 2.0 GPA.

**Scholarships:** Financial aid awards to students which do not require repayment and are based on merit, or merit and need.

**Secondary School Report (SSR):** Some schools that do not accept the Common Application will require a secondary school report to be filled out and submitted from the guidance office.

**SSD:** Services for Students with Disabilities allows for special accommodations for the SAT, ACT, and Subject Tests, with accommodations ranging from large-block answer sheets to extended test time. In order for a student to use SSD, the school must confirm that the student has a valid Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or other documentation on file.

**Student Aid Report (SAR):** The information you will receive approximately 2-3 weeks after your FAFSA has been processed. It will report your Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

**Student Support Services (SSS):** These offices are sometimes located on college campuses to provide academic and emotional support for first generation, low-income students.

**Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG):** The Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant is an additional federal grant program which is available to students with the lowest expected family contribution. Like the Pell Grant, eligibility is determined by the U.S. Department of Education and not the individual college or university.

**Stafford Loan(subsidized and unsubsidized):** The Stafford Loan allows students to borrow money for their college education at a more favorable interest rate than most commercial loans. A Stafford Loan is considered subsidized because the interest subsidy is being paid by the federal government while the student is in school, as well as during a six-month grace period following graduation. An unsubsidized Stafford Loan is not based on a student's demonstrated need, and the federal government does not pay the interest on the loan while the student is enrolled in college.

**TOEFL:** The Test of English as a Foreign Language is administered by the Education Testing Service (ETS) and is recommended for students with five years or less of English language usage. Some colleges may use the TOEFL score as a replacement for the SAT Critical Reading score. Registration can be found at [www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl).

**Verification:** A random selection of FAFSA forms are selected by the Department of Education to be verified.

**Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG):** This grant is not need-based, and is available to Virginia residents attending a participating Virginia private college or university. In the past, grants up to \$3,000 have been awarded. For more information, contact the college's financial aid office or go to [www.schev.edu/students/factsheetvtag.asp](http://www.schev.edu/students/factsheetvtag.asp).

**Transcript:** The official record of high school or college courses and grades, generally required as part of the college application.

**Waitlist:** A term used by colleges to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or denying admission, but rather extend the possibility of admission in the future.

**Work-Study:** This federally funded program allows students to earn money by working part-time on campus. Individual colleges have specific expectations for the number of hours students will be expected to work each week as well as policies for the way students will be paid for their work.