



College Counseling at Brooklyn Friends School

The college counseling program at Brooklyn Friends emphasizes thoughtful self-evaluation, thorough research, and careful planning at every step of the college process. In keeping with our mission statement, our goal is to help students learn about, apply to, and matriculate at colleges where they will be intellectually challenged and socially engaged, and where they can continue to develop their unique talents and abilities, in preparation for lives of leadership and service.

Essential to our program is close communication and collaboration among students, their families, teachers and advisors, and the College Counseling office. The Director and Assistant Director of College Counseling get to know students very well over the course of 10th, 11th and 12th grades, meeting with them frequently to advise them on all aspects of the college search and application process, and eventually writing school recommendation letters for all seniors. They maintain relationships with college admissions personnel, and advocate on behalf of students, while also encouraging students to take responsibility for their college search and develop the confidence to be their own best advocates in the application process.

The College Counseling office is available as a resource to all Brooklyn Friends students and families, and holds information sessions each spring to explain our college counseling program and offer advice on academic planning to 7th, 8th, and 9th grade families.

In the spring semester of 10th grade, each student and his or her family meet individually with a team of academic administrators that includes one of the college counselors. In this meeting we hope, in an informal and supportive atmosphere, to help students begin to clarify their educational and academic goals, become aware of the Upper School's curricular options including the IB, and begin developing a multi-year plan to get the most short and long-term benefit from the BFS program.

10th graders take the PLAN, a pre-ACT exam, and 11th graders take the PSAT, a pre-SAT. Scores on those diagnostic tests allow us to develop a customized strategy for college testing and preparation for each student, in consultation with his or her family.

The formal college counseling program begins in November of 11th grade with a College Process Planning meeting for families. Starting in January, students gather in weekly small group "Junior Seminar" sessions to learn about the application process, research colleges, and begin preparing the components of their applications. The Director and Assistant Director of College Counseling also meet individually with each student and his or her family, encouraging parents to take an interested and supportive role in their child's college search. 11th graders prepare for and take the SAT and/or ACT, visit colleges (independently and on BFS-led trips), begin working on their application essays, and compile a preliminary list of colleges of interest.

The college counseling program continues in 12th grade with a weekly Senior Seminar, and frequent meetings to discuss students' progress and offer support and guidance at every step of the application process. From September through November, dozens of admission officers from colleges all over the country visit BFS for informational meetings with interested students; our small size offers students an opportunity to interact one-on-one with college representatives—often the very people who will be evaluating their applications—that they would not have elsewhere. Throughout the fall, students work on finalizing their college lists and preparing their applications; early applications are mailed in November, with notifications received in December; regular applications are generally sent before New Year's, with notifications arriving around April 1. The college counselors are available throughout the spring to meet with students and their families to help them evaluate their offers of admission and aid and make their final decisions.