



College Admission Criteria

What Colleges Look For

Before you send an application to a college you must, as best you can, determine if you meet its admission criteria. Take a hard look at yourself, your academic potential, and your accomplishments. The mere fact that you attend BB&N—or any other high school, for that matter—does not mean that your college of choice will accept you. Being at BB&N affords you the opportunity to get an excellent education. What you do with that opportunity is up to you. The more selective a college is, the higher its standards are for admission. The best gauge of how you will do in college is your performance in high school. If you have pushed yourself, colleges will note that. If you have combined SATs of 2400, but have only earned C grades, they will note that as well.

1) Colleges will judge you on the courses you have taken and the grades you have earned. *Simply meeting BB&N's graduation requirements will not be enough to make you competitive in the admissions process at many institutions.* Most selective colleges expect the ideal applicant to have taken the following courses:

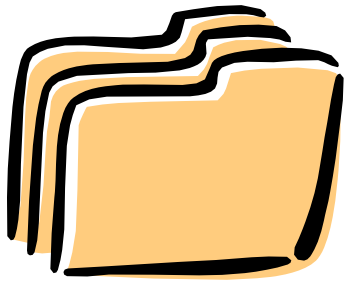
- 4 years of English
- 4 years of mathematics
- 3-4 years of natural science
- 3-4 years of foreign language
- 3-4 years of history and social sciences

While colleges like to see Honors and AP courses in a student's program (if the high school offers them), you should not get in over your head. Accept your limitations as well as your strengths. Nothing is gained on the college admissions front by taking an AP or an Honors course and receiving a C or a D.

2) Make sure that you have taken the specific courses and tests required by the institution to which you are applying. For example, to apply to engineering colleges, you should take four years of math through Calculus, Physics (Honors if recommended), and the Physics Subject Test.

3) A stellar academic record alone will not ensure your admission to the most selective colleges. What else can you bring to the college: athletic, musical, or artistic talent, uncommon intellectual pursuits, research experience, diversity?

4) Although test results are only one factor in the selection process, they are important. As a rule, the more selective the college, the more important the test scores. Do your scores fall within the range presented by most successful students to an institution? If they are below that range, are you being realistic?



When an admissions committee opens your folder to consider you for admission, they will see the following:

Your official transcript

Your official transcript from BB&N will list all your BB&N Upper School courses, and your letter grades but not your grade point average. **We do not include the grade point average because we would prefer that colleges focus on the grades you earn in each of your classes, rather than simply focusing on a single number. SAT/ACT scores are not included on the transcript.** Colleges will consider the rigor of your courses within the context of BB&N's curriculum, whether you have received any Citations of Honor, and other academic awards or distinctions. Improvement in the senior year is helpful, but it will not remove the stigma of a poor record in the first three years. If you entered BB&N after grade 9, colleges will evaluate your earlier coursework on your transcript from your previous high school.

Completed application and essay

The application will include all personal information, extracurricular and athletic activities, jobs you have held, and the like. Colleges look closely at the your part of the application, particularly the quality of the essay. Each year, we see students who improve their chances of admission because their essays are strong. Students can also be denied admission to colleges for which they were qualified because their application demonstrated little thought or care. The quality of your application is the one aspect of this process that you completely control; take advantage of the opportunity to help yourself. Start early and remember that neatness and spelling count!

Required supplementary materials

Supplementary materials may include a graded paper or an institution-specific essay. These requirements will vary from college to college. Be sure you check with each institution to make certain you have fulfilled its respective requirements.

Faculty recommendations

Usually, most colleges require that you submit two letters of recommendation. Ideally, one should be from someone who can speak to your ability to express yourself in writing, which usually means an English or history teacher; the second should be from someone who can evaluate your capacity to think in abstract, analytical, and logical terms, often a science or math teacher. You should select teachers from your junior or senior year as colleges want to hear from the people who have taught you most recently. Your counselor will also assist you in choosing which teachers to ask.

School Statement

The School Statement is a distillation of your BB&N experience. Your counselor reviews all the teacher, advisor, and coach comments that have been written throughout your time at the Upper School. We also draw from your questionnaire and your parents' questionnaire. We refer to the notes from our meetings and talk regularly to teachers and other BB&N adults who have come to know you well. The statement is based on what all those who have known you at BB&N have had to say about your work, your citizenship, your development, your goals and your beliefs. A great deal of care goes into providing a complete, positive, realistic, and confidential statement.

Interviews

Many schools view your request for an interview as a sign of interest, and this interest can benefit you in their appraisal of your application. However, other college admission offices offer interviews as a way for you to evaluate the school rather than as a means to evaluate you. Regardless, the impression you leave in an interview may become part of your application file.

Additional recommendations

You may wish to include additional notes or recommendations from athletic coaches at BB&N if you are an athlete, or from an activity leader if you excel in another area outside of the classroom (music, dance, studio art, theater, journalism, etc.). Never send extra recommendations without first discussing it with your counselor. Colleges simply do not want extra recommendations and flooding your file with letters may actually hurt your chances at some colleges.

The BB&N Profile

Without a doubt, colleges respect a BB&N diploma and recognize the hard work it represents. One of the ways we convey this information is through the School Profile. BB&N sends a School Profile to each college with the student's transcript. This Profile includes our median SAT scores, number of National Merit scholars, a junior year grade distribution chart, and general requirements.

Test Scores

Your file will contain an official report of all of your SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Test, and ACT scores that you arrange to send. **Note that you must have these reports sent directly from the testing agency.** The College Office will not send your scores as colleges do not accept our score report as an official score report. Be sure you know the testing requirements for each institution.

Reporting Disciplinary Cases to Colleges

Increasingly, colleges are asking questions of both the student and the college counselor about disciplinary infractions. In fact, a question about disciplinary action is on the Common Application. These questions need to be answered truthfully. The BB&N policy for reporting disciplinary action is stated in the Upper School Handbook, and states the following:

If a student is asked on college applications whether or not he/she has been involved in a disciplinary procedure that resulted in a probation, suspension, or dismissal, that student must respond to the question honestly and accurately with a brief, written explanation. Such an explanation must be approved by his/her college counselor. If BB&N discovers that the student has not contacted the college, or has not answered the question honestly and in a forthright manner, BB&N will immediately contact the colleges directly. Otherwise, it is the policy of BB&N not to respond to the question unless, once applications have been submitted, there is a disciplinary procedure that results in a change of status for the student. In that case, BB&N will contact those colleges directly to which the student has applied, after a period of ten days, thus allowing the student to make the initial contact. (US Handbook 256)