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 record, and your accomplishments. The mere fact that you attend BB&N—or any other high school, for that matter—does not mean that any college of your choice will accept you. Being at BB&N affords you the opportunity to be splendidly prepared for college. 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 academic performance in high school. If you have pushed yourself, colleges will note that. If you have perfect standardized test scores, but have earned Cs, 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/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 any front by being crushed by an AP or an Honors course.

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 may need to take four years of math through Calculus, Physics (Honors, if recommended), and sit for 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, or geographic 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 about your choices?

When an admissions committee opens your folder to consider you for admission, they will review the following components of your application:

**Your official transcript**
Your official transcript from BB&N will list all your BB&N Upper School courses, and the final letter grades, but not a grade point average (GPA). Many schools follow this practice as it put the focus on individual grades and courses. **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. Improvement in the senior year is helpful, but it will not erase a poor record in the first three years. If you entered BB&N after grade 9, colleges will evaluate your earlier coursework presented on the transcript from your previous high school, which will be sent along with your BB&N transcript.

**Completed application and essay**
The application will include personal information, extracurricular and athletic activities, jobs you have held, and the like. Colleges look closely at your part of the application, particularly the quality of the essay. 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 one aspect of this process that you completely control; take advantage of the opportunity to help yourself. Start early and remember that spelling and grammar 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**
Most colleges require two letters of recommendation. One approach is to consider someone who can speak to your ability to express yourself in writing, which usually means an English or history teacher and ask someone else who can evaluate your capacity to think in abstract, analytical, and logical terms, often a science or math teacher. However, there is no rule that dictates who should write your recommendations, unless specifically noted by a college. Most of all, you should select teachers from your junior or senior years who can present your “greatest academic hits” as colleges want to hear from the people who have taught you most
recently, even if they are both from similar disciplines. Your counselor will also assist you in choosing which teachers to ask.

**School Statement/Secondary School Report**
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 colleges view your request for an interview as a sign of interest, and this interest can benefit you in their appraisal of your application. 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 – or may not – become part of your application file. Make sure you research the policies of the colleges to which you apply – it is your responsibility to keep track of deadlines and requirements.

**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 college counselor. Some 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 preparation 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 ACT/SAT scores, number of National Merit scholars, a junior year grade distribution chart, general requirements, and other information that helps colleges put your transcript in context. A current copy is available on the BB&N website.

**Test Scores**
Your file will contain an official report of all of your ACT, SAT, and/or SAT Subject Test that you arrange to send. **Note that you must have these reports sent directly from the testing agencies.** The College Office cannot and will not send your scores. 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. Please see the BB&N policy for reporting disciplinary action as stated in the Upper School Handbook.

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MANAGE THE MAYHEM WITH BALANCE

Remember, the best defense against the anxiety that can be produced in the process is to have a balanced list from the beginning. Here is a reminder of the definitions of the four major categories colleges fall into introduced in Chapter 3:

**Likely:** BB&N students with comparable test scores and grades are usually offered admission and an offer of admission is at least 70% certain. However, it is important to apply to several “likely” colleges as the admission picture changes annually.

**Possible:** BB&N students with similar grades and test scores are sometimes admitted, sometimes waitlisted, and occasionally denied. Chance of admission is roughly 50%.

**Unlikely:** Labeled “Reach” in Naviance, BB&N students with similar grades and test scores are less likely to be admitted, except in cases where extenuating circumstances, such as strong coach support or active alumni connections, impact the decision. There is usually a 10% - 20% chance of being admitted.

**Highly Unlikely:** Labeled “Far Reach” in Naviance, BB&N students with similar grades and test scores have almost never been admitted in the past.

By the time you arrive at your final list of colleges we recommend that you have at least two colleges in the Likely category, no more than three colleges in the Unlikely category, and the bulk of the list falling in the possible category. Use the worksheet on the next page to begin to organize your choices across the categories.
Use this chart to group your PRELIMINARY college list by likelihood of acceptance based on your academic profile (grades, rigor, and standardized testing). This list is a starting point and will guide further research and help you to plan summer visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGHLY UNLIKELY (0-2)</th>
<th>UNLIKELY (2-3)</th>
<th>POSSIBLE (3-4)</th>
<th>LIKELY (2-3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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