

*Preparing for the next chapter God has prepared for you*



**bayarea**  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

# COLLEGE GUIDANCE HANDBOOK

**CEEB School Code: 444 088**

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# Message from the Principal

Dear BACS Students and Families,

Welcome to the Bay Area Christian School College Guidance Handbook.

The high school years are an important season of preparation, not only for college, but for life and the calling God has placed before each student. At BACS, we believe education is more than the accumulation of knowledge. Our mission is to provide quality Kingdom education that empowers students to make disciples of Jesus at home, in society, and through the church.



Our goal is not simply to help students gain admission to a good college. We want to help students become faithful followers of Jesus Christ who are prepared to live with wisdom, purpose, excellence, and conviction wherever God leads them.

As you consider colleges and future opportunities, we encourage you to look beyond acceptance rates and academic programs. Ask: *Where can I grow? Where can I develop the gifts God has given me? Where can I serve? Where can I prepare for the work God may be calling me to do?*

At BACS, academic excellence matters. Through rigorous coursework, leadership, athletics, the arts, service, and other opportunities, our High School program seeks to develop students who think critically, communicate effectively, lead courageously, and engage the world through a biblical worldview.

As you navigate the college process, prepare diligently, seek wise counsel, pray faithfully, and trust God with the outcome. Your identity is not found in a test score, transcript, or acceptance letter. Your identity is found in Christ.

Wherever God leads you next, GO ALL IN, following Christ, pursuing excellence, and living for His Kingdom.

Pro Christo et Regno Eius,

**Blaine Spencer**

High School Principal

## Message from the Academic Counselors



What an exciting time it is for seniors! We know the college application process can be exhilarating while also bringing uncertainty. At times, it may feel overwhelming or even scary, but don't let those feelings keep you from moving forward toward where God is calling you. God already knows where you will be next year, in five years, and in five million years. He holds you in the palm of His hand, and He will guide you toward the places where you can thrive and fulfill the purpose He has for your life. As Scripture reminds us, "The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way" (Psalm 37:23).

This practical guide is designed to help you explore the next steps in your journey toward your next chapter—and how to pay for it. As you prayerfully explore colleges and universities, remember that there are roughly 4,000 colleges and universities in the United States alone. With so many options, there is a school that can be a great fit for you!

We encourage you to take ownership of the post-secondary education process and be proactive in pursuing your goals. At the same time, please remember that your Academic Counselors are here to support and guide you every step of the way. Together, we bring more than 40 years of experience helping students pursue their future goals, and we know a thing or two about navigating the college process!

We genuinely enjoy helping students pursue their goals—whether that means finding the right college or university, completing financial aid forms, applying for scholarships, or simply having someone walk alongside them through the process. Please do not hesitate to reach out whenever you need assistance.

We are excited to assist you throughout this journey, and we look forward to celebrating your college acceptances, scholarships, and all that God has in store for your future!

In Christ,

**Nancy Gadd and Mark Hobson**  
Academic Counselors

# Who Does What?

**Students** need to take ownership of the college application process.

- Research colleges and build a thoughtful list of schools.
- Complete applications carefully and meet every deadline.
- Keep an organized record of usernames, passwords, deadlines, fees, and required materials.
- Request transcripts, recommendations, and other documents early.
- Write thank-you notes to teachers and other adults who provide recommendations.
- Check application portals and email regularly.
- Communicate promptly with BACS Academic Counselors when a school requires supporting documents.
- Ask for help when needed—but do the work of applying yourself.

**Academic Counselors** will...

- Help students understand the college search and application process.
- Provide information about colleges, standardized testing, scholarships, and financial aid.
- Help students develop an appropriate college list.
- Review application materials, essays, and résumés.
- Submit school documents requested by the student according to BACS procedures.
- Help students understand admission and financial aid terminology.
- Encourage students to consider how their gifts, interests, goals, and faith fit with each college.

**Parents** should...

- Be supportive and encouraging.
- Help students visit and research colleges.
- Discuss realistic financial parameters.
- Encourage a balanced college list.
- Help students stay organized without taking over the process.
- Allow the student to own the application and communication process.

# The First Steps

Before beginning applications, complete these steps:

## **Know yourself.**

Identify your interests, strengths, values, goals, and preferred learning environment.

## **Research colleges.**

Use official college websites, virtual tours, college search tools, and conversations with current students.

## **Build a balanced list.**

Consider academic fit, personal fit, financial fit, and faith/community fit.

## **Know your deadlines.**

Record admission, scholarship, housing, financial aid, honors program, and portfolio deadlines.

## **Create an organization system.**

Keep a spreadsheet or checklist with:

- College
- Application platform
- Application deadline
- Scholarship deadline
- Essay requirements
- Recommendation requirements
- Transcript requirements
- Test-score policy
- Financial-aid requirements
- Application status

Meet with BACS Academic Counselors individually if you need assistance. Bring questions and your current list. The earlier you communicate, the more effectively we can help.

# Exploring Colleges

Begin with self-discovery. Before focusing on rankings or name recognition, consider who you are, how God has gifted you, what you hope to study, and what kind of environment will help you grow.

Questions to consider:

- What subjects and activities energize me?
- What careers or fields interest me?
- What type of campus feels comfortable—large, medium, or small?
- Do I want an urban, suburban, or rural setting?
- How far from home am I willing to attend?
- What majors or programs are important to me?
- What are my academic, financial, athletic, artistic, and spiritual priorities?
- What kind of Christian community, if any, am I seeking?
- What support services would help me thrive?
- What can my family realistically afford?

Build a balanced list. Include schools where your academic profile is highly competitive, schools where you are a solid match, and schools where admission is more likely. A good list is based on fit—not simply prestige.

To learn more about your colleges' admission information, academics, costs, and campus life, you can visit:

[bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

> Plan for College

> College Search

# How Do Colleges Decide on Me?

Every college establishes its own admission criteria, but most evaluate a combination of academic and personal factors.

Academic components may include:

- High school course selections and rigor
- Grades and GPA
- Class rank, when reported\*
- SAT and/or ACT scores when required or considered
- AP, dual-credit, or other advanced coursework
- Academic trends and preparation for the intended major

Personal components may include:

- Extracurricular involvement
- Leadership
- Employment
- Community service
- Athletics
- Fine arts
- Special talents and interests
- Essays
- Recommendations
- Demonstrated interest, when considered

Remember: admission decisions are made in the context of each college's mission and applicant pool. Your application should tell a consistent story about your preparation, character, interests, contributions, and goals.

\* Bay Area Christian School does not rank past the top 10%

# The Campus Visit

A campus visit can reveal things that a website cannot. Whenever possible, visit colleges while classes are in session.

Before you go to a college campus:

- Register for an official tour and information session.
- Review the college website and know basic facts about the school.
- Take an unofficial transcript and résumé if appropriate.
- Prepare thoughtful questions.
- Pay attention to your appearance, punctuality, and conduct.
- Keep notes so you can compare schools later.

While on campus:

- Tour academic buildings, residence halls, dining facilities, libraries, athletic and fine arts spaces, and student centers.
- Attend a class if permitted.
- Talk with current students.
- Meet with an admissions representative.
- Ask about academic advising and faculty accessibility.
- Explore student organizations and campus ministries.
- Ask about housing, safety, transportation, and campus policies.
- Eat on campus if possible.
- Take photos and detailed notes.

After the visit, record your impressions while they are fresh.

# Sample Questions for a Campus Visit

## Academics

- What is the average class size?
- Who typically teaches introductory courses?
- How accessible are professors outside class?
- How are academic advisors assigned?
- What tutoring and academic support services are available?
- How easy is it to change majors?
- What internships, research, or experiential learning opportunities are available?
- What percentage of students graduate in four years?

## Campus Life

- What do students do for fun?
- What clubs, organizations, and leadership opportunities are available?
- What is the campus culture like?
- What Christian organizations or ministries are active?
- How do students describe the relationship between students and faculty?

## Housing and Safety

- Are freshmen required to live on campus?
- How are roommates assigned?
- What housing options are available?
- What security measures are in place?
- What transportation is available?

## Career and Outcomes

- What career services are available?
- How are internships found?
- What are the employment or graduate school outcomes for students in my intended major?

## Financial

- What merit scholarships are available?
- What is the deadline for scholarship consideration?
- Are scholarships renewable, and what GPA is required?
- How does the college handle outside scholarships?
- What is the average net price after grants and scholarships?

# College Comparison Worksheet

Complete the chart using a scale of 1-5 (1 = lowest 5= highest)

| SCHOOL NAME                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Location                     |   |   |   |   |
| Size                         |   |   |   |   |
| Public/Private               |   |   |   |   |
| Cost                         |   |   |   |   |
| Scholarships                 |   |   |   |   |
| SAT/ACT (with writing)       |   |   |   |   |
| SAT Subject Tests            |   |   |   |   |
| AP/CLEP                      |   |   |   |   |
| <b>STUDENT BODY</b>          |   |   |   |   |
| Appearance                   |   |   |   |   |
| Friendliness                 |   |   |   |   |
| Enthusiasm                   |   |   |   |   |
| Diversity                    |   |   |   |   |
| <b>ACADEMICS</b>             |   |   |   |   |
| Student/Faculty Ratio        |   |   |   |   |
| Commitment                   |   |   |   |   |
| Research Opportunities       |   |   |   |   |
| Curriculum                   |   |   |   |   |
| Faculty                      |   |   |   |   |
| Workload                     |   |   |   |   |
| Majors                       |   |   |   |   |
| <b>HOUSING</b>               |   |   |   |   |
| Residence Life               |   |   |   |   |
| Dining Halls                 |   |   |   |   |
| Safety                       |   |   |   |   |
| Roommate Procedures          |   |   |   |   |
| Room Options                 |   |   |   |   |
| <b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>      |   |   |   |   |
| Libraries                    |   |   |   |   |
| Special Services (Tutorials) |   |   |   |   |
| Labs (Science)               |   |   |   |   |
| Fine Arts                    |   |   |   |   |
| Computer/Technology labs     |   |   |   |   |

| <b>SCHOOL NAME</b>          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Recreational Facilities     |   |   |   |   |
| Student Center              |   |   |   |   |
| <b>MORE...</b>              |   |   |   |   |
| Study Abroad/Cultural Opps. |   |   |   |   |
| Support/Health Services     |   |   |   |   |
| Weather                     |   |   |   |   |

What I liked most:

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Questions or concerns:

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does this college fit my academic, personal, financial, and spiritual goals?

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Applying to Colleges

College applications are easier when you begin early and work steadily. Do not wait until a deadline is approaching to discover that a recommendation, transcript, test score, portfolio, or scholarship form is missing.

General application principles:

- Create a dedicated college email address if appropriate. Try not to use your BACS email address because you will no longer have access to it after you graduate.
- Use a password manager or secure record of application credentials.
- Maintain one master deadline calendar.
- Read every application question carefully.
- Answer every required question accurately.
- Proofread before submitting.
- Save copies of important essays and application confirmations.
- Monitor each college's applicant portal after applying.
- Verify that the college has received all required materials.
- Never assume that submitting the application means the process is complete.

# College Application Calendar

## JUNIOR YEAR — FALL

- Begin self-assessment and college exploration.
- Meet with an academic counselor.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT when offered.
- Research majors and career interests.
- Begin building a preliminary college list.

## JUNIOR YEAR — SPRING

- Visit colleges when possible.
- Take practice SAT/ACT assessments and determine whether additional preparation is needed.
- Develop a résumé.
- Begin brainstorming college essay topics.
- Identify teachers who know you well and may be strong recommenders.
- Research scholarships and special programs.
- Consider summer opportunities, internships, camps, or service experiences.

## SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

- Narrow the college list.
- Create application accounts as appropriate.
- Draft and revise the personal essay.
- Complete résumé and activities information.
- Review admission and scholarship deadlines.
- Organize testing and score-reporting plans.

## SENIOR YEAR — AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

- Finalize the initial college list.
- Begin submitting applications according to each school's deadlines.
- Complete required essays and supplements.

- Request transcripts and recommendations according to BACS procedures.
- Monitor college portals and email.

#### OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

- Complete early-action/early-decision applications by their published deadlines.
- Submit scholarship applications.
- Complete financial aid forms when available and appropriate. FAFSA opens October 1.
- Continue monitoring portals.

#### DECEMBER–FEBRUARY

- Complete remaining applications and scholarship forms.
- Send any required mid-year materials through BACS procedures.
- Respond to requests from colleges promptly.

#### MARCH–APRIL

- Review admission decisions and financial aid offers.
- Compare total costs and net prices.
- Visit finalist schools if possible.
- Discuss the decision with family, counselors, mentors, and trusted adults.

#### MAY

- Confirm the college you will attend by the college's deadline.
- Submit required enrollment and housing deposits.
- Send final documents as required.
- Celebrate graduation and the next chapter God has prepared for you!

## College Application Printable Timeline

[Click here](#) for a college application timeline chart for easy reference.

## Which Application?

The correct application depends on the college. Never assume that every school uses the same platform.

Common options include:

- Common Application — [commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org)
- ApplyTexas — [applytexas.org](https://applytexas.org)
- Coalition Application — [coalitionforcollegeaccess.org](https://coalitionforcollegeaccess.org)
- Direct institutional application — the college's own website
- Other application platforms designated by a particular institution

Before starting an application, check the college's official admissions website and confirm:

- Which application is accepted
- Whether the application is free
- Required essays and supplements
- Testing policy
- Recommendation requirements
- Transcript requirements
- Scholarship deadlines

BACS Academic Counselors are available whenever you are unsure which application or document process applies.

# Requesting BACS Documents

Students are responsible for initiating requests for transcripts, recommendations, and other school documents according to BACS procedures.

Transcript requests:

- Submit requests through [Parchment.com](https://Parchment.com). See an Academic Counselor if you need help logging in.
- Allow adequate processing time.
- Verify the college's deadline before making the request.
- Check your applicant portal to confirm receipt when possible.
- Some colleges may use self-reported academic records such as Self-reported Transcript and Academic Record System (STARS); follow the college's instructions exactly.

Recommendations:

- Ask the teacher, counselor, coach, or other recommender personally and respectfully.
- Give recommenders several weeks whenever possible.
- Provide the recommender with useful information about your goals and accomplishments.
- Follow the college's required number and type of recommendations.
- Send a genuine thank-you note to the recommender.

Test scores:

- Follow the college's current policy for self-reporting or official score reports.
- Send official scores directly from the testing agency when required.
- Official SAT and AP scores can be found at [collegeboard.org](https://collegeboard.org)

**Important:** College policies change. Always follow the current instructions published by the college.

# Completing the Common Application

The Common Application allows students to apply to many participating colleges through one platform. For more information and instructions, you can watch this video:

<https://youtu.be/rM2x2j03haU>

General process:

- Create an account at [commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org) as a **First Year Student** (even if you have credits from College of the Mainland or LeTourneau).
- Complete your Profile and Family sections accurately.
- Complete the Education section using your official BACS records.
- Complete Testing information accurately.
- Enter Activities, honors, employment, and other accomplishments.
- Write and revise the personal essay.
- Add colleges to your list.
- Review each college's specific requirements.
- Complete each college's supplemental questions.
- Review FERPA and recommendation settings carefully.
- Submit applications only after proofreading every section.
- When you see confetti, you have successfully submitted an application.
- Save confirmation emails and monitor each applicant portal.

Never guess at GPA, rank, course level, dates, or other school-specific information. Ask BACS Academic Counselors if you are unsure how a field should be completed.

## Military Academy Applications

Students considering a U.S. service academy should begin early. Academy admission involves more than a traditional college application.

Major areas include:

- Academic preparation
- Standardized testing, according to current academy requirements
- Leadership
- Athletics/physical fitness
- Medical qualification
- Congressional or other required nomination processes
- Academy-specific application components

Potential candidates should:

- Research each academy.
- Contact the academy admissions office.
- Open a candidate file early.
- Research nomination requirements and deadlines.
- Build a strong academic, leadership, and service record.
- Complete all medical and physical requirements.
- Communicate regularly with academy representatives.
- Work closely with BACS Academic Counselors to coordinate school documents.

Requirements and deadlines vary by academy and can change. Always use the official academy websites for current instructions.

## Prospective College Athletes — NCAA Eligibility Center

Students who hope to compete in NCAA athletics should begin the eligibility process early.

Recommended steps:

- Discuss your athletic goals with your coach.
- Create a realistic college athletic list.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center when appropriate.
- Review NCAA academic eligibility requirements.
- Make sure your high school coursework meets the requirements for your intended division.
- Maintain strong academic performance.
- Keep records of athletic participation and accomplishments.
- Communicate with college coaches professionally.
- Follow each college's recruiting rules and timelines.
- Request transcripts and test scores according to NCAA and college instructions.

Official resource: [ncaa.org](https://ncaa.org)

NCAA rules and eligibility requirements can change. Students should verify current requirements directly with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

# The SAT and ACT

SAT and ACT policies vary by college and change frequently. Students should research the testing policy of every college on their list.

Testing strategy:

- Take the PSAT/NMSQT when offered.
- Use practice tests to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Consider taking an official SAT and/or ACT during junior year if appropriate.
- Compare your results and determine which test best represents your strengths.
- Retake when additional testing is likely to improve your college options or scholarship opportunities.
- Check whether a college is test-optional, test-preferred, test-required, or test-blind.
- Review superscoring policies.
- Send scores only when required or strategically beneficial.

Preparation resources:

- College Board — [collegeboard.org](https://collegeboard.org)
- ACT — [act.org](https://act.org)
- Khan Academy Official SAT Prep — [khanacademy.org](https://khanacademy.org)

Do not assume that a test-optional policy means scores never matter. Review each college's current policy and scholarship requirements. Many merit-based scholarships require an SAT or ACT score.

Bay Area Christian School's CEEB Code is **444 088**.

# Résumé Sample

## FIRST AND LAST NAME

Address | Email | Phone

## EDUCATION

8/2023 to 5/2027 Bay Area Christian School, League City, TX

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (include activities in and out of school)

|       |                                                                                             |               |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 9-12  | BACS Orchestra                                                                              | 15 hours/week |
|       | Section Leader (12 <sup>th</sup> )                                                          |               |
| 10-12 | National Honor Society                                                                      | 1 hour/week   |
|       | The BACS chapter of NHS focuses on academic excellence, leadership, service, and character. |               |
|       | Member (10 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> ), President (12 <sup>th</sup> )                 |               |
| 9-12  | BACS Basketball Team                                                                        | 14 hours/week |
|       | JV (9 <sup>th</sup> ), V (10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )                              | 18 weeks/year |
|       | Played center; captain (12 <sup>th</sup> )                                                  |               |

## COMMUNITY SERVICE (include volunteer and service activities)

|       |                                                 |                |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 9     | Youth Against Cancer                            | 30 hours total |
|       | Description of event or project                 |                |
| 10-12 | Bay Area Church Vacation Bible School Volunteer | 45 hours total |
|       | Designed T-shirt for event                      |                |

## HONORS and AWARDS

|       |                                                                   |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12    | National Merit Commended                                          |
| 11    | Girl Scout Gold Award                                             |
| 12    | TAPPS State Basketball Champion                                   |
| 11-12 | National Honor Society                                            |
| 10    | TAPPS Spelling Contest - 3rd place in district meet, 5th in state |
| 9     | Gold Medal in English - school-wide subject award                 |

## **WORK EXPERIENCE/INTERNSHIPS**

Summer 2024, 2025 Chick-Fil-A, Friendswood, TX

15 hours/week in summers

Took and fulfilled customer orders

## **SKILLS, TALENTS and ACHIEVEMENTS**

Played violin since fifth grade

Published writer, Children's Highlight

Write short stories for children's magazine

---

Résumé reminders:

- Focus on substance, not decoration.
- Use action verbs.
- Quantify accomplishments when helpful.
- Include activities in and outside of school.
- Keep the document concise and easy to scan.
- Be accurate and honest.

## Tips for Writing the College Essay

The college essay gives an admissions reader an opportunity to know you beyond grades and test scores. Your goal is not to impress the reader with sophisticated vocabulary. Your goal is to communicate something true, specific, and memorable about yourself.

Strong essays often:

- Tell a story.
- Include concrete details and examples.
- Sound like the student who wrote them.
- Show reflection and self-awareness.
- Reveal values, growth, curiosity, resilience, or purpose.
- Connect experiences to who you are today.

Avoid:

- Writing what you think the admissions committee wants to hear.
- Listing accomplishments without reflection.
- Overusing statistics.
- Choosing a topic simply because it sounds impressive.
- Using a thesaurus to make your writing sound unnatural.
- Letting adults rewrite the essay in their voice.

A useful test: after reading your essay, could an admissions counselor explain something meaningful about you that was not obvious elsewhere in the application?

Revision checklist:

- I answered the prompt.
- The essay sounds like me.

- I used specific details.
- I showed rather than merely told.
- I removed unnecessary repetition.
- The conclusion adds insight rather than simply repeating the introduction.
- I proofread grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

# Financing Your College Education

Think about college costs before admission decisions are made.

The total cost of attendance can include:

- Tuition and fees
- Housing
- Food
- Books and supplies
- Transportation
- Personal expenses
- Health insurance or other required expenses

Financial aid can include:

- Grants
- Scholarships
- Federal or institutional work-study
- Federal loans
- State aid
- Institutional aid
- Outside scholarships

Learn the difference between sticker price and net price. A college with a higher published cost may offer more institutional aid and have a lower net price for a particular family.

Use each college's Net Price Calculator as an early planning tool. Compare financial aid offers carefully, including renewal requirements, grants versus loans, and any work expectations.

# Financial Aid Terms

**Cost of Attendance (COA):** The college's estimated annual cost of attendance, including tuition, fees, housing, food, books, transportation, and other expenses.

**Net Price:** The amount a student and family are expected to pay after grants and scholarships are deducted.

**Grant:** Financial aid that generally does not have to be repaid, usually based on financial need.

**Scholarship:** Money awarded based on criteria such as academic achievement, talent, leadership, athletics, service, identity, or other qualifications. Some scholarships can also be random drawings.

**Work-Study:** A program that provides eligible students an opportunity to earn money through approved employment.

**Federal Student Loan:** A loan offered through the federal student aid system that must be repaid with applicable interest.

**Subsidized Loan:** a loan in which the federal government pays the interest charged during periods of at least half-time enrollment as well as during the 6 months after the student ceases to be enrolled at least half time (graduation, withdrawal).

**Unsubsidized Loan:** a loan in which interest is due and payable as soon as the first disbursement of loan funds is made by the lender.

**Institutional Aid:** Financial assistance provided directly by a college or university.

**Outside Scholarship:** Scholarship money awarded by an organization other than the college.

**FAFSA:** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid, used to determine eligibility for federal and other participating forms of aid.

**College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile:** A financial-aid application used by some colleges to award institutional aid.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):** Standards students must meet to remain eligible for certain types of financial aid.

## Frequently Asked Questions About Financial Aid

**Q:** Should we complete the FAFSA if we think we will not qualify?

**A:** Families should review the requirements and deadlines for each college. Some forms of aid and some colleges require FAFSA information even when families do not expect need-based assistance.

**Q:** What is the most important number when comparing colleges?

**A:** Compare net price and the actual cost your family expects to pay—not simply published tuition.

**Q:** Are scholarships always renewable?

**A:** No. Read the renewal conditions carefully. A scholarship may require a specific GPA, credit load, major, housing arrangement, or other conditions.

**Q:** Should I borrow the maximum amount offered?

**A:** Not necessarily. Borrow only what is needed and understand the total repayment obligation.

**Q:** Do colleges require the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile?

**A:** Some do, and some do not. Check every college's financial aid website.

**Q:** Can outside scholarships affect my financial aid package?

**A:** They can. Ask each college how outside scholarships interact with institutional and need-based aid.

**Q:** What should we do if our financial circumstances change?

**A:** Contact the college's financial aid office and explain the situation. The college can tell you what documentation or appeal process is available.

## Scholarship Scam Warning Signs

Be cautious when a scholarship opportunity:

- Guarantees that you will receive money.
- Requires a large upfront fee.
- Requests unusual financial information.
- Uses high-pressure language or demands immediate payment.
- Promises a scholarship without an application or selection process.
- Requires you to pay for a list of scholarships that is supposedly secret.
- Uses an email address or website that cannot be verified.
- Has unclear eligibility requirements, award amounts, or deadlines.
- Cannot provide verifiable information about the sponsoring organization.
- Requests payment to increase your odds of winning.

Remember: **Never** provide a Social Security number, bank account information, or other sensitive data simply because a scholarship website asks for it. Verify the organization independently before submitting information or money.

# Texas Financial Aid Resources

Texas students should research state-specific programs and deadlines through official sources.

Helpful resources include:

- College for All Texans — [collegeforalltexans.com](http://collegeforalltexans.com)
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board — [hhe.texas.gov](http://hhe.texas.gov)
- Federal Student Aid — [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov)
- FAFSA — [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov)
- College Board — [collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org)
- Texas Comptroller –  
<https://comptroller.texas.gov/programs/education/msp/funding/aid/state-programs/txttp.php>

Programs and eligibility requirements can change. Always verify current information on official government or college websites.

Students should also ask each Texas college about:

- Institutional merit scholarships
- Need-based grants
- Honors-program scholarships
- Departmental awards
- Competitive scholarships
- Tuition guarantees or special aid programs
- Deadline-specific awards

# Completing the FAFSA

The FAFSA is completed online through the official Federal Student Aid website. The application usually opens in October for the year for which you are applying. Be sure you are completing the FAFSA for the right year.

For example: seniors graduating in May 2027 will need to complete the FAFSA for the 2027-2028 school year.

[fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov)

Before beginning:

- Create or confirm your StudentAid.gov account.
- Gather the information requested by the FAFSA.
- Make sure required contributors understand their role.
- Use official websites rather than links from unsolicited emails.

General process:

- Go to [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) and access the FAFSA.
- Complete the student information.
- Invite required contributors as directed.
- Provide financial information through the FAFSA process.
- List the colleges that should receive your FAFSA information.
- Review all information carefully.
- Submit the FAFSA.
- Review the FAFSA Submission Summary when available.
- Respond promptly if a college requests additional documentation.
- Monitor each college's financial aid portal.

**Important:** FAFSA procedures and deadlines can change from year to year. Use the current FAFSA instructions and BACS counselor recommendations for the student's graduation year.

# Additional Resources

## Career Exploration

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics — [bls.gov/ooh/](https://bls.gov/ooh/)
- BigFuture — [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

## College Search

- College Board BigFuture
- U.S. Department of Education College Navigator — [nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/](https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/)
- Individual college admissions websites
- Official virtual tours and campus visit programs

## Testing

- College Board — [collegeboard.org](https://collegeboard.org)
- ACT — [act.org](https://act.org)
- Khan Academy — [khanacademy.org](https://khanacademy.org)

## Financial Aid

- Federal Student Aid — [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)
- FAFSA — [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov)
- College Board CSS Profile — [cssprofile.collegeboard.org](https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org)
- College Net Price Calculators – <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/get-started/net-price-calculator>

## **Athletics**

- NCAA Eligibility Center — [ncaa.org](http://ncaa.org)

## **Military Academies**

- West Point — [westpoint.edu](http://westpoint.edu)
- U.S. Naval Academy — [usna.edu](http://usna.edu)
- U.S. Air Force Academy — [academyadmissions.com](http://academyadmissions.com)
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy — [uscga.edu](http://uscga.edu)
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy — [usmma.edu](http://usmma.edu)

# College Admission Glossary

**Applicant:** A student who has submitted or is submitting an application.

**Common Application:** A centralized application platform used by many colleges.

**Deferred:** An early applicant whose application is moved into the regular admission pool.

**Early Action:** An application plan that usually provides an earlier admission decision without requiring the student to commit.

**Early Decision:** A binding application plan. Students should fully understand the commitment before applying.

**Holistic Admission:** A process that considers multiple aspects of an applicant rather than relying on one academic measure.

**Match:** A college where the student's academic profile is reasonably aligned with typical admitted students.

**Need-Based Aid:** Financial aid based substantially on demonstrated financial need.

**Net Price:** Estimated cost after grants and scholarships.

**Regular Decision:** A standard admission plan with a published application deadline and decision timeline.

**Rolling Admission:** Applications are reviewed as they are received, often until a school reaches capacity.

**Superscore:** A testing policy that combines the highest section scores from multiple test dates, when a college permits it.

**Test-Optional:** A policy allowing applicants to decide whether to submit test scores, subject to the college's current rules.

**Transcript:** The official academic record of a student's coursework and grades.

**Waitlist:** A list of applicants who may be offered admission later if space becomes available.

# BACS Academic Counselors Contact Information

Bay Area Christian School  
4800 W. Main Street  
League City, Texas 77573  
High School Office: 281-332-4814  
Main Office: 281-332-4814  
Website: [www.bacschool.org](http://www.bacschool.org)

## High School College Guidance Team

Nancy Gadd — Academic Counselor ([nancy.gadd@bacschool.org](mailto:nancy.gadd@bacschool.org))  
Mark Hobson — Assistant Academic Counselor ([mark.hobson@bacschool.org](mailto:mark.hobson@bacschool.org))

For current email addresses, document-request procedures, counseling appointments, and school-specific deadlines, students should use the current BACS communication channels and Academic Counselor instructions.

## OUR MISSION

Bay Area Christian School exists to provide quality, Kingdom education to the next generation, empowering them to make disciples of Jesus at home, in society, and through the church.