



# American Hebrew Academy College Counseling Newsletter

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## For Seniors & Juniors: Your College Apps

The process of applying to colleges has two parts. The first is YOUR part (the student) and the second is MY part (the College Counselor). The part the student does is the actual application (this is mostly done and submitted on-line). Completing the application involves filling out autobiographical and family information, completing activity sheets, and often writing essays and short answer questions. An application fee must also be paid, although sometimes this is waived by the college. The student is also responsible for contacting the College Board and/or ACT to have the SAT or ACT scores sent to the college, if they require them (most do).

## Juniors – Monthly College Meetings to Begin in January

Juniors will meet one evening per month as a group, with Dr. Tarbox, to go over some of the basics of the college search and application process. In January, the first task will be registering for the SAT. Because AHA students take the SAT on a Sunday, the first registration must be done by paper, and must be accompanied by a letter from Rabbi Gisser (provided by AHA). Students will need to have a check for \$43.00 made payable to the College Board, or to have access to a credit/debit card. Subsequent SAT registrations can be done on line instead of using paper. How-

The College Counselor’s part is to gather together and send all the other information the college needs. This includes the AHA transcript, the Alexander Muss High School transcript, a copy of any other high school transcript (if you attended another high school before AHA), the College Counselor Letter of Recommendation, copies of Teacher Recommendations, and the AHA Profile. First trimester grade reports are ALSO sent to your colleges at the end of the first trimester.

**IMPORTANT NOTE** – It often takes several weeks for all your application materials to

**Junior Class  
College Meetings  
TCB Seminar Room, 7 pm**

- Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup>
- Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>
- Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>
- Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup>

ever students should be sure to enter the SAME information in their on-line registration, so that the College Board does not create two separate accounts.

Other monthly topics will include:

Introducing students to NAVIANCE - the College Counseling software used at AHA

(see article)

How to search for colleges on line and put together an initial college list

How to create an Activity Sheet

How to ask teachers for letters of recommendation (and what to give them)

The Common Application – what is it and how to use it?

Students will also need to begin one-on-one meetings with Dr. Tarbox later in the spring, to go over test scores, GPAs, the college list, and summer plans.

get logged into the college’s system.

When an application is sent on line, it arrives instantly. The paper materials that follow must be opened, logged in, sometimes scanned, and filed with the student application.

Students may get email notifications once they have submitted their application, that the college has not received the transcripts. Many students and parents worry when they get these notifications. Please be assured that 99.99% of the time, it is because the other materials have not been opened and processed by the admissions

office. They literally have boxes and boxes of paper to open and it takes time. Students may, if they wish, send an email to the admissions office, letting them know the other materials have been sent. Students should then check back in two-three weeks to see if their file is now “complete.” Once everything is logged in, the file is complete and can then be reviewed by the Admissions staff.



## What Should Sophomores Be Doing?

While visions of going to Israel may be foremost in the minds of many sophomores, it is not too early to be doing some college planning. Here are some tips and suggestions:

Continue to work hard in your classes to raise your GPA as high as possible. The FIRST thing any college is going to examine is your high school transcript. Strong grades now will help you have a strong GPA by the end of your junior year,

and will keep more college options open to you.

Contemplate what classes to take your junior year. Talk to your advisor about this. Colleges look at how you have challenged yourself academically, in light of the courses offered at your high school.

Have you completed Algebra II by the end of your sophomore year and done very well? World History? Are you fluent in Spanish? You MAY want to consider regis-

tering for an SAT Subject Test (called the SAT II) at the end of your sophomore year. Some colleges require SAT IIs, although not the majority. But if you are a whiz at one of these subjects, taking the SAT II while the subject matter is fresh in your mind, rather than your senior year when a couple of years have gone by, may be a good idea. Talk to your subject teacher about this. See Dr. Tarbox for an SAT II preparation booklet to review some sample questions

and see if you are ready.

Summer Plans – While you may have plans to kick back and relax, also consider the benefit of using some of your summer weeks to do any of the following: volunteer work in your community, an academic program at a college or university, employment (even part time). All of these things will add to your college application. ALL colleges ask about activities, employment and volunteer work.

## NAVIANCE – The College Counseling Software

In the winter of 2007, AHA introduced NAVIANCE, a college counseling web-based software product. Each student (and each parent if they wish) has a Naviance Account.

Within Naviance, students and parents can search for colleges, make a prospective college list, access each college's web site, find data on average GPA and SAT scores for students accepted at those colleges, and listen to podcasts on such topics as doing a college interview and writing a college essay. Important financial aid information (FAFSA, Profile, Scholarship Searches and a handy financial aid Guide written by Dr. Tarbox) can be found in Naviance, as well as forms used by the College Counseling Office. Journal notes from meetings with

## Winter Trimester Events and Deadlines

### November 19th - 21st, 2007

Dr. Tarbox Visits

George Washington Univ.

American University

University of Maryland –  
Baltimore County

Goucher College

University of Maryland –  
College Park

### December 2, 2007

SATs or SAT IIs at Grimsley  
High School

### December 15-20th

Seniors with January or early  
February college deadlines  
should get their applications  
in to colleges before the

### Winter Break

Transcripts for those col-  
leges will be sent out by the  
College Counseling office, no  
later than 12/20/07.

### December 16, 2007

6:00 – 8:00

Israel Prog. Night—Beit Am

Megan Schiff from MASA  
Israel, Lymore Hauptman  
from Young Judea and Sarah  
Kramer representing Nativ,  
will be here to talk about  
post high school Israel pro-  
grams, funding for Study  
Abroad, Community Service  
and Internships in Israel.

### December 2007

PSAT results will be returned  
from the College Board for  
Freshmen, Sophomores and  
Juniors. Dr. Tarbox will send  
the Student Copy (with ex-  
planations of scores) to par-  
ents as soon as they are re-  
ceived from the College  
Board.

### December 2007

If you have not done so al-

ready, families planning on  
applying for aid should dou-  
ble check deadlines for the  
FAFSA (all colleges) and for  
the College Board PROFILE  
form (some colleges)

### January 2008

Junior Group Meetings (one  
per month) will begin with  
Dr. Tarbox – TCB Seminar  
Room. (See article on Page 1  
for more detail.)

### Feb. 7th, 2008

7:30 PM - TCB Seminar  
Room

Mr. Josh Blumenthal, Execu-  
tive Director of North Caro-  
lina Hillel will be at AHA to  
speak with Juniors and Sen-  
iors about Jewish Life at Col-  
lege/Being Jewish at Col-  
lege/What to Look for in a  
College to find one that is  
right for you

Dr. Tarbox can be entered in  
Naviance (and shared with  
parents). News Bulletins are  
added to the home page in

Naviance so families and  
students can keep current.  
In Naviance, students and  
parents can look at graphs

that provide “at a glance”  
data on where previous AHA  
students have applied and  
been accepted

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## Recap of Fall Activities

August:

College counseling began early with Dr. Tarbox introducing FRESHMEN and new AHA SOPHOMORES to NAVIGANCE, then conducting a "Learning Styles Inventory" with the students. The Learning Styles Interpretive Reports were shared with each student's advisor. The Report is based on student responses to questions about the kind of environment and methods the student prefers when learning new or difficult material. Research shows that people often have different learning styles. Once the student's preferences are identified, the student can be more productive and learn more easily and successfully.

Several students accompanied Dr. Tarbox to Raleigh, to attend the Colleges That Change Lives College Fair. Representatives from thirty-eight liberal arts colleges across the country were at the fair. Families considering a good liberal arts college are encouraged to read the book of the same name – Colleges That Change Lives by Loren Pope.

September:

Intensive one-on-one counseling was begun with SENIORS who were working on college essays, making final college lists, beginning applications, getting teacher recommendation folders ready, and registering for fall SATs and SAT IIs.

College representatives be-

gan visiting AHA in September. Representatives from Clark, Vanderbilt, Beloit, University of Maryland, George Washington, University of Georgia, UNC Chapel Hill, Tufts, Guilford, Duke, College of Charleston, Emory, and University of Rochester visited AHA during the fall. Interested students met with these college representatives and learned about the admissions process. AHA students came well-prepared with good questions. The admissions representatives noticed this



and often made remarks about how attentive and enthusiastic the students were. Meeting with a number of college representatives in the fall during their visits to AHA is strongly encouraged. Students begin to learn the general criteria colleges are seeking in candidates, and get to practice "interview" questions.

Dr. Tarbox visited four colleges in the "Fingerlakes" region of New York – Ithaca College, University of Roch-

ester, Syracuse and Hobart and William Smith. Photos from this visit can be seen on line in the AHA Classroom Websites/College Counseling/Pictures

October:

Seniors took their first fall SAT on October 7th. When the results of these tests came back, students were reminded by Dr. Tarbox that they must contact the College Board to have SAT scores sent to their respective colleges.

Freshmen, Sophomores AND

the test would be conducted, how it is scored, what to bring, and to field any questions the students had. Students who will be rising juniors next summer, who want to do some review of the types of questions that appear on the PSAT, can view practice questions on the College Board's PSAT website at: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html> Twenty-one seniors opted to take the ACT examination on the AHA campus on Sunday, October 28th. Dr. Tarbox proctored this examination. The ACT is another standardized test that is accepted in lieu of, or in addition to, the SAT scores. Until recently, the ACT was required by colleges in the Midwest, while the SAT was the test of choice for schools in the Northeast and on both coasts. Most schools now accept both. In general, the ACT is a content-based test, whereas the SAT tests critical thinking and problem solving skills.

The ACT is similar to a series of SAT IIs (Subject Tests). Depending on your particular strengths and weaknesses, it is possible to perform better on one test than the other. While many students generally do about the same on the ACT as they do on the SAT, other students score much higher on the ACT examination.

Two "mini workshops" were offered on campus. The first, with Dr. Richard Smith, was on writing the College Essay.

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## Financial Aid – For Those Families Planning on Applying for Financial Assistance to Pay for College

It is the beginning of the financial aid season. Some students (those applying to a college Early Decision) may have already begun this process by completing the College Board PROFILE form. Others may just now be getting ready to file the FAFSA. Students should be checking with their individual colleges to see when the FAFSA (and the PROFILE if necessary) are due. The FAFSA is the federal form that all colleges use to determine your “EFC” – expected family contribu-

tion. This is the amount the government calculates a family can contribute toward the cost of education. The EFC is subtracted from the cost of education at the college, and the remainder is the student’s “need” for aid. The FAFSA is used to determine eligibility for FEDERAL AID (and for some STATE aid as well). The PROFILE is a form used by a number of selective colleges and universities. It too determines the family’s “EFC” but asks for more information than

the FAFSA. For instance, the PROFILE will ask about Home Equity whereas the FAFSA does not. Colleges use the PROFILE to award their own institutional aid. The FAFSA cannot be filed until after January 1, 2008. ([www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)). You can register for the PROFILE at the College Board website ([www.profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp](http://www.profileonline.collegeboard.com/index.jsp))

ALL families who would like more detailed information about how the process of

determining eligibility and awarding aid works, should contact Dr. Tarbox ([starbox@aha-net.org](mailto:starbox@aha-net.org)) and ask for a copy of the Step by Step Guide to Financial Aid, written by Dr. Tarbox in 1999, and updated annually. It explains the financial aid process in clear, easy to understand, language, and can be emailed to you. For those of you who have your Naviance Account active, the guide can be located in the DOCUMENT LIBRARY - INFORMATION.

## Important Information for International Students and Their Families

International students interested in attending a U.S. college or university should be aware of some of the differences in the application process. A little early planning and preparation in the junior year of high school, will make the process go smoothly when students become seniors. The key differences are outlined below:

1) ALL international applicants are required to submit a “Certification of Finances” form to any U.S. college to which they are applying, While most colleges are “need

blind” for U.S. citizens (that is, they do not consider the family’s ability to PAY for college when making an Admission Decision), for International students, the college DOES consider the family’s income and assets. Therefore, parents should obtain the Certification of Finances form from the College Counseling office the summer before the student’s senior year, complete the form (this sometimes requires a bank signature) and return it to Dr. Tarbox either in the sum-

mer or early in the fall.  
2) ALL international students should register for and take the TOEFL (Test of English as a foreign language). Most colleges require TOEFL scores, and even if they don’t, a strong TOEFL score makes the admission application stronger. Ideally, the TOEFL should be taken BEFORE the start of the senior year, preferably in the summer.  
3) The College Application - After a student has made his or her final college list, the student

should check each college’s web site to see if there is a different application that is used for INTERNATIONAL students. This is often the case.  
4) Applying for financial assistance – international students who will need to find scholarships and grants to attend a U.S. college, should work very closely with Dr. Tarbox, and start early. Juniors should meet with Dr. Tarbox regularly during the winter and spring of the junior year.

## NAVIANCE continued from page 2

(or not accepted). Each student’s individual GPA, PSAT, SAT and ACT scores are kept in Naviance, as well as information on the number of AP courses taken, and AP test

scores. Juniors will be instructed how to access their Naviance Account in a January meeting with Dr. Tarbox.

ALL parents interested in having their Naviance Account activated, should email Dr. Tarbox at: [starbox@aha-net.org](mailto:starbox@aha-net.org) and she will send you an email with

an initial login password (which can be changed) and with instructions about accessing Naviance.

## SAT Preparation

Many families and students are interested in doing some SAT preparation. How much preparation you want to do is an individual choice. At AHA, we like to give information on the wide variety of options that are available, and let the student and family decide. If you have activated your Naviance Account, this list is also available there. From your Naviance Home Page, go to - From Your School/Document Library/Forms and Information.

### On Your Own:

“The College Board’s Official SAT Study Guide”

(Practice Tests) – Study on your own is often very effective! This is available through Amazon or Barnes and Noble or from the College Board.

### On- Line Prep:

- [http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep\\_one/prep\\_one.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/prep_one/prep_one.html)
- [www.eprep.com](http://www.eprep.com)
- <http://www.number2.com/>

### Classes:

*GUILFORD COLLEGE SAT PREP CLASS*

[www.guilford.edu/satprep](http://www.guilford.edu/satprep)

### *PRINCETON REVIEW SAT PREP CLASS AND PRIVATE TUTORS*

Information on classes and tutors in this area (Greensboro/Winston-Salem) can be found at:

<http://testprep.princetonreview.com/CourseSearch/Search.aspx?productType=C&itemCode=23&Zip=27410&rid=1&image>

Princeton Review offers a test center at Temple Emanuel – just across the street from AHA.

### *KAPLAN SAT PREP CLASSES AND PRIVATE TUTORS*

<http://www.kaptest.com/repository/templates/Lev3InitDroplet.jhtml?lev3Parent=/www/KapTest/docs/repository/content/College/SAT>

### SYLVAN TEST PREPARATION

<http://tutoring.sylvanlearning.com/test-preparation/index.cfm>

### LOCAL TUTOR:

MARY NANCE  
Academic Development Services  
2311 W. Cone Blvd.  
Suite 223  
Greensboro, NC 27408  
336-288-3098

## Recap of Fall continued from page 3

The second was hosted by Alina Spaulding and Sandra Tarbox on How to Do a College Interview.

November:

One-on-one meetings with Dr. Tarbox continued this month, as many seniors put finishing touches on college applications and essays.

The AHA Profile (sent to all

colleges) was finalized. The Profile describes the Academy for the colleges, giving detail on our academic program, the calendar, how we grade, ranges of GPA and SAT scores for the senior class, graduation requirements, a list of colleges where previous seniors chose to enroll, and provides more detailed descriptions

of the Jewish Studies courses at the Academy.

The college application season began in earnest this month. Through mid-November, 19 of 32 seniors (59.3% of the class) submitted a total of 43 college applications through the Early Decision, Early Action or Priority Application Process. More applications are

scheduled to go out between December 1<sup>st</sup> and December 15<sup>th</sup>. All seniors are strongly encouraged to get their college applications completed and sent before January.

Dr. Tarbox visited colleges in the DC/Baltimore area Thanksgiving week.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me:

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