
October 2021 Newsletter

Mrs. Barnett, Senior Counselor

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Good Afternoon,

We have almost made it through the first nine weeks which means half credit classes are ending and whole credit classes are half way done. Report cards will be sent home in a few weeks so be on the lookout for these. I have truly enjoyed getting to know your students as they drop by my office each day. I hope you find this newsletter helpful this year as it is packed full of lots of information. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns regarding your student.

Go Panthers!

Senior News

Schoology

Schoology is finally up and running for everyone. This year, I have a Schoology Counseling Page where I will begin to post updates. Please encourage your student to check this daily. Also, if your student is absent they may check Schoology to see what they missed in the classroom.

Power School

The Power School Parent portal is up and a letter was mailed home last week with your login information. You must create an account and verify that account through the email you listed (be sure to check your junk folder for the email). The students have also been given their login information. If you did not get your login instructions by mail you can contact the main office to get this information.

Graduation Dress Code:

All seniors participating in the Graduation Ceremony are required to follow the dress code below. Please let Mrs. Barnett know if you have any trouble securing these items.

- ❖ Females: Dress (no longer than the length of the Graduation Gown), Black Dress Shoes
- ❖ Males: White Button-up Shirt, Dark Colored Tie, Black Dress Pants, Black Belt, Black Dress Shoe



Upcoming Events

October 6

-Work Keys Test at BHS

October 7

-1st & 2nd Period Exams

October 8

-3rd & 4th Period Exams

-End of 1st nine weeks

October 11-12

-No School for Students

October 13

-JSU Admissions Recruiter on campus during lunch

October 14

-Advisory lesson on Writing Resumes

October 15

-Advisory lesson on Writing Resumes

-Report cards mailed home

October 18-22

-College Application Week (Mrs. Barnett will be available in the Library all week)

October 20

-Shelton State Admission Recruiter in Library during 2nd period

-UWA Admission Recruiter on campus during lunch

October 21

-Advisory lesson on college options

October 22

-“Stomp out Bullying” Wear blue for bullying awareness

October 25

-Under Age Under Arrest Program @ 1:25

October 27

-UAB Admissions Recruiter on campus during lunch

October 28

-Balfour Senior Meeting about Graduation Supplies @ 9:00

Go Panthers!

Balfour Graduation Supplies

Graduation will be here before you know it so we must get prepared by ordering all the necessary supplies. A representative from Balfour will be on campus on Wednesday, October 28th to meet with all seniors. He will discuss the senior fee which includes the students' cap, gown, white stole, diploma, and diploma cover. This is a requirement to participate in the graduation ceremony. He will also give them the order form for the other graduation supplies, such as invitations, clothes, etc. These things are not required to be purchased from Balfour and are offered as optional purchases.

Work Keys Test

All seniors will take the Work Keys test on Wednesday, October 6th at BHS. They will report to the downstairs History and English class area when the bell rings at 7:40. Students will receive a letter with their classroom assignment for testing as well as some reminders on Monday, October 4th. All students should bring their ID and a calculator. They can also bring a snack and drink to be eaten during their break. Please encourage your student to do his/her best on this assessment and be at school on October 6th.

October 6th is an E-Learning Day for our 9th and 11th grade students while our 10th and 12th grade students report to BHS for testing. All 9th and 11th grade students will complete an assignment given to them by their teacher either on their Schoology page or in class earlier in the week. The buses will run as normal on this day to pick up any 10th or 12th grader coming to school; however, students will be able to check-out after completing the Work Keys test with an approved parent check-out note. These notes were distributed in Advisory on Thursday, September 30th. Students must return these notes to the Office by 3rd period Monday, October 4th to be approved. Students will not be allowed to check-out by phone call, email or fax this day. The Counselors will give students specific dismissal instructions once testing has been completed. All students will be given a sack lunch prior to dismissal.

Work Keys Curriculum Practice

Do you want to see what the Work Keys test is like? Would you like a way to practice for this test? Work Keys Curriculum is your answer. This is a website used to give you practice tests and potential scores. All seniors received login instructions a couple of weeks ago from Mrs. Moore, BHS Career Technical Counselor.

Study Tips:

- ✓ **KHAN ACADEMY:** www.khanacademy.org is a wonderful resource to assist with all levels of Math (Kindergarten through Calculus), Science (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics), Social Studies (World History, US History, and Economics). You can access this website for thousands of teaching videos and review problems and it is FREE!
- ✓ **STUDY STACK:** www.studystack.com is another tool your student can use as a study tool. This site requires you to create an account which will give you access to lots of flashcards and games created by students across the country about topics in every subject area.

College Application Week

We will spend time the week of October 18-22 making sure our students understand the college application process and have applied to their college. I will also be available to assist with completing the FAFSA. Remember, you don't have to know exactly which college you plan to attend right now. This is the time that you apply to all of the colleges you are interested in and see which college gives you the best offer. You can always decline scholarship packages in the spring. Just because you apply does not mean you are committed to attending that college. A perk of applying to colleges this week is that many colleges in the state of Alabama waive their application fees.

We will have several colleges on campus during this week so students can speak with the Admissions Recruiter directly. Mrs. Barnett will also be available in the Library every day this week except Tuesday to help with college admissions, financial aid and scholarships or just answer college questions. Please encourage your student to take part in this week!

Overwhelmed About College Options?

Several students have reached out to me because they are not sure where to start with the college process. They are feeling the pressure of making all of these important decisions at once. The following website is a great tool to help your student find the right college to attend:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-to-find-your-college-fit/college-search-step-by-step>

Visit a College

Don't forget you have 3 days this school year to visit a college of your choice and the absence be counted as a school activity. The forms for documentation are available in the Counseling Office or you may print them off from the BHS website. Sometimes visiting a college is all you need to make your final decision about whether that school is right for you. Please take advantage of this opportunity. Due to the pandemic, many colleges are creating virtual visits and tours. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit a college from your living room.

Mercedes Mechatronics Program

The Mechatronics Program is a wonderful opportunity for your student to go to Shelton and potentially earn a full-time job at Mercedes. The deadline to apply for the Mechatronics Program is April 29, 2022. Students can visit www.mbusi.com/employment to apply.

ACT Fee Waivers

Your student may be eligible to take the ACT test at no charge if they meet one of the following guidelines:

- They participate in the free lunch program
- They participate in a state or federal program for low income families
- They live in public housing
- They live in a foster home
- They are a ward of the state or an orphan
- Their family meets income requirements – see www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines

See Mrs. Barnett if your student qualifies and she will give the fee waiver to your student. Students may only use one per school year.

ACT Prep Classes

Does your student want to increase their ACT test score? Remember, sometimes increasing your score by just 1 point can equal thousands of dollars more in scholarships.

Faye Nichols ACT Prep Class is offered throughout the year. You can get more information by going to <http://www.fayenicholsact.com>.

Top Level Test Prep offers classes also. Check out their information by going to WhitneyBono@TopLevelTestPrep.com

ACT vs. SAT:

WHICH TEST SHOULD YOU TAKE?

Instead of spending several hours randomly studying for either the ACT or the SAT and hoping for the best, try a more calculated way to maximize your scores and possible scholarship earnings.

ACT TEST DATES:

act.org

June 12, 2021
July 17, 2021
September 11, 2021
October 23, 2021
December 11, 2021
February 12, 2022
April 2, 2022
June 11, 2022
July 16, 2022

SAT TEST DATES:

collegeboard.org

May 8, 2021
June 5, 2021
August 28, 2021
October 2, 2021
November 6, 2021
December 4, 2021
March 12, 2022
May 7, 2022
June 4, 2022

Due to the pandemic, testing dates may be cancelled or rescheduled. Check with websites for updated testing information.

We've highlighted the key differences between the ACT and SAT below:

	STRUCTURE	MATH	CONTENT VOCAB/READING	SCIENCE	
SAT	Multiple choice The difficulty level remains the same throughout the entire test	Math (Geometry and some basic Trigonometry)	English and Reading Emphasis on language skills	Science (Physical Science, Chemistry, Biology, Earth Science, and Physics)	
ACT	Multiple choice and some written answers Difficulty level gradually increases throughout the test	Math (Algebra, Statistics, Geometry, Trigonometry) Focuses on problem solving & data analysis, the heart of Algebra, and passport to advanced math	Evidence-based reading and writing Emphasis on vocabulary based on an extended context	No science	
	LENGTH & TIME	WRITING & ESSAY	GUESSING	DESIGNED TO:	SCORING
ACT	215 questions, 2 hrs. 55 mins.	Optional, 30 mins. Emphasis on punctuation and rhetorical strategies. Students will be prompted to take a stand on a potentially controversial topic.	There is no penalty for guessing. Students are encouraged to mark an answer for every question.	Test achievement and measure student knowledge	Each section is scored out of 36 points.
SAT	154 questions, 3 hrs.	Optional 50 mins. Scored separately on a 2-8 scale.	There is no penalty for wrong answers. Tip: Pick one letter for guessing and stick with it.	Test aptitude and reasoning skills to predict college learning capability	Each section is scored on a 200-800 point range and is weighted. Total score 400-1600



MATH & SCIENCE TIPS

MATH

This section will contain algebra, geometry, and trigonometry questions that test not only your math skills but also your ability to answer the question.

DURATION:

60 minutes for 60 multiple-choice questions that increase in difficulty

STRATEGY #1:

Use your calculator to multiply decimals and large number calculations.

STRATEGY #2:

Save time and mental energy by filling in the answer sheet bubbles all at once—just mark your booklet as you work.

STRATEGY #3:

Underline the actual question you need to answer—easy problems can be missed if you solve for x instead of $x+y$ (tricky stuff!).

STRATEGY #4:

Know your math formulas—slope, triangle formulas, order of operations (PEMDAS), etc. Understand math terms like irrational, difference, prime, quotient, etc.

STRATEGY #5:

Solve by plugging in the answers when (1) answers are in ascending or descending order, AND (2) the question asks for a specific number answer.

SCIENCE

This section is not testing science facts but rather how well you synthesize information from tables, graphs, illustrations, and passages.

DURATION:

40 questions, 35 minutes
7 passages include: 3 charts & graphs, 3 experiments, and 1 conflicting viewpoint passage

STRATEGY #1:

Look at each passage, and if you know the subject (for example, biology), tackle it first. The more familiar you are with the subject, the less time it should take.

STRATEGY #2:

The passages are not in order of difficulty, so you should tackle the easiest ones first.

STRATEGY #3:

For the charts or experiment passages, answer using the figures—if you can't, then read the passage to seek the answer.

STRATEGY #4:

This is the most time-sensitive test, and since it is the last section you are probably pretty drained by this point. If you are spending too much time on a question, guess and move on.

STRATEGY #5:

In the conflicting viewpoints section, read the questions first so you know what to look for in the passage. It will ask you to compare and contrast, so underline each scientist's main point. $\frac{1}{2}$

Scholarship Opportunities

Need Help with Scholarships?

This free website will inform students of all scholarships available both nationally and locally. www.achievealabama.org

The following website can also be used to help locate potential scholarships. <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>

Student-View Scholarship Program

Amount: Varies

Deadline: April 30, 2022

www.studentinsights.com

University of Montevallo Outdoor Scholars Program

Amount: From \$2000-\$3500 per year

<http://outdoorscholars.montevallo.edu/>

Smith Scholarship

Amount: Varies

Deadline: January 12, 2022

www.smithscholarships.com

Alabama Association of Federal Education Program

Administrators

Leo Brown Scholarship (students pursuing degree in education)

Joan Buckley Scholarship (students pursuing degree in any area of their interest)

Amount: Varies

Deadline: October 15, 2021

See Mrs. Barnett for application



College Visiting Days

University of Montevallo

Preview Days:

October 11 @ 6:00 pm (Virtual)

October 16 @ 8:30 am (in-person)

www.montevallo.edu/previewday

You Belong Days:

October 6 @ 9:30 am

November 17 @ 9:30 am

www.montevallo.edu/events

Lawson State Community College

Fall 2021 Open House:

November 2nd and 4th from 5:00-8:00 pm

RSVP @

https://lawsonstate.formstack.com/forms/fall_open_house_2021

Manufacturing Day:

October 12th from 9:00-1:00

www.lawsonstate.edu

Troy University Saturday Tours

October 9 (Trojan Day)

November 6

November 20

www.troy.edu/tours

University of West Alabama

Fall Preview Day:

October 16th

Saturday Tours:

November 13th

www.uwa.edu



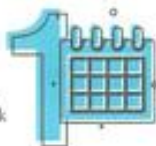
10 WAYS TO FIND SCHOLARSHIPS



1 START BEFORE SENIOR YEAR.

Getting an early start on the scholarship search increases the number of options you have and prepares you for applying. Many scholarships are specifically for seniors, however there are some that are available for younger students.

Scholarships often have a minimum GPA requirement, so getting an early start gives you an opportunity to work toward a higher GPA if necessary.



2 GET SOME ADVICE!

Talking to your high school guidance counselor can be a quick way to get informed about what scholarships are available to you. And local businesses usually tell local high schools first about any scholarships they may be offering.

3 CHECK COLLEGE WEBSITES.

Most colleges have a page on their website listing scholarship opportunities. Since most of these are college specific, make sure it's somewhere you've applied to and are considering attending. However, some colleges also list outside scholarships that are typically offered by a local business.



4 VISIT THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE.

If you know which college you're attending, go to the financial aid office to look for applications for local scholarships or scholarships sponsored by the school.

5 ASK ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES.

Businesses and organizations related to your field often offer scholarships to students who'll be majoring in a field that could be useful to them in the future.



6 CHECK WITH LOCAL FOUNDATIONS.

It never hurts to ask. See if charitable foundations or groups in your area offer scholarships. Many foundations do, and since they are typically only awarded locally there is less competition.

7 SEARCH THE WEB!

An internet search for scholarships will yield many diverse options. There are several scholarship-specific search engines that make finding them that much quicker. Just keep in mind that there will be more competition.



8 BE SPECIFIC!

When searching the web, it is important to look for scholarships that apply directly to you. Try searching for scholarships based on your field of study, your area, your state, your gender, etc.

9 DON'T FORGET NON-ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS.

If your grades aren't perfect, there's no need to worry. Non-academic scholarships are available to a wide variety of people. They can be based on community service, leadership, extracurricular activities, and many other things.



10 DON'T GIVE UP.

Finding scholarships can be a long, time-consuming process, but it is worth it. To win a lot of scholarships, you have to apply for a lot of scholarships. Many scholarships even require the same material, so keeping materials from each application can be a huge time-saver.



Freshman Merit Scholarships 2021

Take a glance at these charts to scope out full-ride and full-tuition merit scholarships offered by various Alabama colleges to students based on their academic performance.

Community Colleges				
Institution	Full Tuition		Minimum Award	
	ACT	GPA	ACT	GPA
Bishop State	27	3.0	Varies	3.0
Central Alabama	Varies	3.0	Varies	2.5
Coastal Alabama	25	3.5	21	3.0
Enterprise State		Varies		Varies
Gadsden State	Varies	3.0	Varies	Varies
Jefferson State	Varies	3.0	22	3.0
Lawson State	Varies	3.75	Varies	3.0
Northeast Alabama		3.5		3.5
Shelton State	Varies	3.0	Varies	2.5
Southern Union	Varies	3.5	Varies	3.0
Trenholm State		3.5	Varies	2.5
Wallace - Dothan		3.0		Varies

*Numerous merit-based scholarships available. ACT/GPA requirements vary. Visit www.wallacestate.edu/financial-aid for information.

Colleges & Universities							
Institution	Full-ride			Full Tuition		Minimum Award	
	Award	ACT	GPA	ACT	GPA	ACT	GPA
Auburn University				33	3.5	26	3.5
Auburn University at Montgomery				30	3.0	18	2.5
Troy University	Varies	33-36	3.7	30-32	3.7	20	3.0
Tuskegee University	Full tuition, room/board, fees, and \$800 books	28-32+	3.7	25-27	3.5	20-21	2.8
University of Alabama	Tuition, room for a year, and \$500 for books	36	4.0	30-36	3.5	21	3.5
University of Mobile	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
University of South Alabama				32-36	3.5	21	3.0
University of West Alabama	Varies	33-36	3.0	31-32	3.0	21	3.0

Financial Aid Updates:

The new FAFSA is now available for completion; it opened on October 1st. The FAFSA is not hard to complete; however, you must be sure to enter your information accurately so it is processed quickly and without any extra documentation being required.

It is very important to complete this as soon as possible to secure the most money for your student. **EVERY STUDENT who plans on attending college must complete the FAFSA regardless of your income bracket. This is now a requirement for graduation by the State of Alabama.** The only exception is for students who are not going to college.

Many colleges require the FAFSA be completed to receive scholarships. You are not obligated to take any of the funding offered to you, just simply complete the process. You will use your 2020 income tax returns to complete the FAFSA. There is a button that you can click which connects your FAFSA to the IRS and imports all of the information for you. I highly recommend this step to ensure that there are no errors.

Please see the short video included at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNv7vRmczF4> or visit www.fafsa.ed.gov for more information or contact me at kpbarnett@tcss.net to set up a time to do this together.

3 Types of Federal Student Aid

1	2	3
Free money.	Borrowed money.	Earned money.
Grants are usually based on financial need and don't have to be repaid.	Loans are an investment in your future. But remember, they must be repaid with interest.	A work-study job lets you earn money while you're in school.

Federal Student Aid
An OFFICE of the U.S. DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

PROUD SPONSOR of
the AMERICAN MIND®

Learn more at StudentAid.gov/types. Apply at www.fafsa.gov.



A Step-by-Step Guide to the FAFSA

There's always one major thing weighing on everyone's mind when applying to college: money. More specifically, how to find as much money as possible to fund your education. According to the office of Federal Student Aid, **\$120 billion** in federal grants, loans, and work-study funds are awarded annually to more than 13 million students. Want to be part of that 13 million? The single most important step is filling out the FAFSA, or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

All high school seniors are eligible to fill out the FAFSA starting on October 1. You'll want to file as early as possible—financial aid is often awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Even if you don't think you'll qualify for aid, file your FAFSA! Seriously. Many schools require it for admissions and scholarships.

FAFSA FAQs

Q: When will I get my results?

A: After your FAFSA is filed, your Student Aid Report (SAR) should arrive within a few weeks. At this point, if you've already been admitted to a school (or a few schools), you should start receiving financial aid award letters.

Q: Which year's tax information do I submit?

A: You'll need the numbers from your prior-year federal income tax return. For example, for the 2020-21 academic year FAFSA, you would use your 2018 income tax return.

Q: Do I really have to file it?

A: Technically, no. But yes! There is no income cutoff to apply, and it won't just affect federal aid; your college may offer you other financial awards if you have a completed FAFSA on file.

Q: Do I have to file it more than once?

A: Yes, you'll have to file a new FAFSA every year you're in college.

Q: What if I'm not a senior?

A: If you want to know how much federal student aid you might be eligible for once you do start applying to colleges, the FAFSA4Cast[®] is what you need. Just fill out some basic information, and it will estimate your eligibility for federal student aid. Check it out at www.fafsa.ed.gov!

According to nerdwallet.com, students missed out on

\$2.6 billion
in aid in 2018,

because about 661,000 of the nation's graduates who were eligible for a Pell Grant didn't complete their federal financial aid application.

37%

Over a third of 2018 high school graduates didn't complete the FAFSA.

How Financial Aid is Calculated:

[Cost of tuition, fees, room & board, and books]

- [Your EFC]

= Financial Need

Colleges will award financial aid packages to help meet the financial need determined by the equation above.

Take a deep breath...and begin.

If this is your first time filling out the application, you'll have to wait for 30 minutes after creating an account before you can login and start filling out your FAFSA—be patient!

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

STEP 01

Here's exactly what you'll need to submit:

- Legal name
- Social Security Number
- Birthdate
- Permanent home address
- Email address
(Don't use your school email address! Use one you'll still have access to after you graduate.)
- Driver's License number
- Citizenship status
- Gender
(Males will automatically be registered for Selective Service, the system used to draft young men into the armed service in times of need. Young men are required by law to register with the Selective Service when they reach the age of 18.)

- Consideration for work study program
- Parents' level of education
(If a parent attended college but did not graduate, mark high school graduate—this may qualify you for more aid!)
- Prior drug convictions
Select "No" to this question if:
 - You have never been convicted for possessing or selling illegal drugs.
 - The conviction was not a state or Federal offense.
 - The conviction occurred before you were 18 years of age and you were not tried as an adult.
 - The conviction was removed from your record.

STEP 02

SCHOOL SELECTION

You can select up to six schools you want to send your FAFSA report. In this section, you'll have to fill out:

- Name and city of your high school
- Current grade level
- Degree/certification you're pursuing
- Whether you will be staying on campus or not

Choose the schools you want, and enter their six-digit federal school code to make sure they receive your report.

STEP 03

DEPENDENCY STATUS

Most high school students are considered dependent, but there are exceptions.

You are only considered an independent student if you meet any of the following criteria:

- At least 24 years old
- Married
- Graduate or professional student
- Veteran
- Member of the armed forces
- Orphan or ward of the court
- Have legal dependents other than a spouse
- Emancipated minor, or
- Homeless or at risk of becoming homeless



STEP 04

PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS

If you have a legal guardian, you are not obligated to report their financial information, but you need to report any financial support provided to you in the "Student Untaxed Income" section.

If your biological parents are divorced, you only need to report the financial information of the parent who has legal custody of you.

Here's what you'll need for this section:

- Parent marital status and marriage date
- Parents' SSN and birthdates
- Parent email address
- Size of household
- Number of students attending college
- Number of dependents or relatives your parent(s) pay 50% or more of their financial support

STEP 05

PARENT FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Parents will need to submit their income tax return information.

TIP: Link to the FAFSA's IRS retrieval tool—it automatically fills in most fields.

Investments to exclude:

- The home in which your parents live
- Cash, savings, and checking accounts
- Value of life insurance and retirement plans
- Pension funds
- Annuities
- Non-education IRAs

STEP 06

STUDENT FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Here's the financial info you will need to report:

- Filing status (single, head of household, etc)
- Income earnings
- Cash, savings, and checking accounts

- Additional earnings like child support, investments, combat pay, etc.

TIP: Link to the IRS retrieval tool to make things easier.

STEP 07

SIGN AND SUBMIT

Both you and your parents must sign in to confirm signature.

STEP 08


CONFIRMATION

You should receive a confirmation email from FAFSA. You will receive a report that tells you your estimated EFC (expected family contribution) based on the answers you provided. Then, your college should send you a financial aid package in the spring!

WHAT IS A DISLOCATED WORKER?

Your parent/parents are considered dislocated workers if they:

- Have been laid off.
- Receive unemployment benefits as a result of being laid off.
- Are a stay-at-home parent who had to relocate due to factors beyond their control.

- Owned their own business and lost it due to factors out of their control.
- Are a spouse of an active duty member of the military, and have been unsuccessful in finding a job as a result of having to relocate. 

This is a wonderful Career Planning opportunity for students to take part in during this semester.

CAREER PREP SEMINARS

WHEN: SUNDAYS

2:15 PM - 2:45 PM

WHERE: CHURCH OF THE HIGHLANDS - TUSCALOOSA

OCTOBER

10 Engineering Panel

Q&A Panel with local students, professionals, and faculty in Tuscaloosa's Engineering Field

17 Health Care Panel

Q&A Panel with professionals and faculty in Tuscaloosa's Healthcare Fields

24 Business Panel

Q&A Panel with local entrepreneurs, finance, legal, and tech professionals in Tuscaloosa's Business Fields

NOVEMBER

7 UAB Admissions

Hear from James Barlow about UAB, the new "holistic application" approach & how to receive scholarships without ACT scores

14 Interview Prep & Practice

Presentation from a recruiter from one of Birmingham's top Tech Companies on best interview tips - then immediately practice those with local (currently hiring) Tuscaloosa business owners!

Click the below link or use the link in the attached email to register:

<https://forms.gle/Vp7ec3ZYNRsmbkhh6>