

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS from Seniors and Parents

In order to streamline some answers, I have created this FAQ list that I will continue to update as needed.

1. How do I get transcripts sent?

The county has partnered with **parchment.com** to send transcripts to colleges, employers, recruiters, etc. You must set up an account at parchment.com (do NOT use your ibaldwin address). If a student number is required, use 1234. Once you have created your account, you can send transcripts electronically to the colleges of your choice for a fee of \$2 per transcript.

When the local scholarships start being advertised, you will notice many of them are “old school” meaning they want everything on paper. In those instances, you will come to the counseling office, sign- up on the transcript sheet, pay \$1, and I will give you your official transcript (in a sealed envelope if you wish) ready to go off to scholarship land. All other transcript requests will be managed through parchment.com.

** For dual enrollment students needing your CACC transcript sent to a college for your COLLEGE credit (as in NOT high school credit), you will order that through your CACC account. We do not have access to your CACC transcript.

2. How do I get a recommendation letter from you?

In order to get in line for a rec letter, you must first complete and send me ([via email](mailto:via_email)) your parent questionnaire AND student brag sheet. Both documents MUST be typed. Once I have both of these completed documents, I will put you in line by order of date received to get the letter written. I need both documents at least *THREE weeks* in advance. You can get to the two forms through the Fairhope High School webpage, www.fairhopehs.com Go to--Academics } } } Counselor corner (scroll down the page and both forms are there)

3. How detailed do I need to be on my questionnaire/brag sheet?

The answer to this depends on how thorough a rec letter you want to receive. I don’t use a template which means that the focus of every letter is a mixture of my understanding of what “fund granters” want to see and who you are as an individual. The more details or little anecdotes I read about you, the better and more personal your letter will be. They already know your GPA and other “numbers” from your transcript, so they are looking for your character from me.

4. Do I really need a recommendation letter?

Probably NOT. Most *scholarship* applications require them while *college* applications (especially public schools like Auburn and Alabama) generally do not. **If you intend to apply through Common App or SENDEdu I need you to give me (at LEAST) your resume BEFORE I will upload your transcript and do my part.** There are several questions I must answer, and if I don’t know you well, I need your resume info. **My cut-off for rec letter requests is March 1, 2025.**

5. How do I find out about scholarships?

You are certainly free to do your own web searches; however, any opportunity that comes across my desk is placed on the website and I will send notices through REMIND. WEBSITE - www.fairhopehs.com - Academics - Counselor's Corner - Seniors - Local Scholarships

6. How much does it cost to participate in graduation?

The basic package from Herff Jones is roughly \$82.50 (I could be a couple \$'s off). This price includes the cap, gown, tassel, diploma, and diploma cover. You must order from Herff Jones to participate in graduation--even if you have a used cap & gown. The dye lots are altered each year plus the cheap material fades quite a bit. As graduation is meant to be a dignified ceremony, we want everyone to look sharp and unified. You can order all grad supplies right here at school on **September 10th**. They can even process credit cards while they are here.

7. When is Graduation? Awards night? The senior picnic?

Graduation is May 20, 2025 (other dates are TBD)

8. How do I apply for college?

All applications are online and pretty self-explanatory. I can help you troubleshoot or explain terms to you if you need help. All college applications are now electronic. The few schools who still accept paper applications typically charge more to process those. Free application week is October 7-11, 2024. This free week removes ALL excuses for not applying to college (including your back-up schools in case your top choice changes or falls through).

9. How long does it take a college to get my transcript?

Now that they are being digitally uploaded, a school should receive it 24 hours after you make your request as long as the registrar is here to get that done. We do document the day that each request is actually sent out and can check for you if it's been several weeks and the college still says they haven't received it. Those inquiries should be made to the school registrar, Mrs. Alexander, at jalexander@bcbe.org

10. Who do I contact about...

- Yearbook—www.yearbookordercenter.com. School code 1018, Mrs. Hobart, ahobart@bcbe.org
- Senior pictures—Jim Owen Studios 251.476.1596 or www.jimowenstudios.com
- Herff Jones (cap & gown, invites)—334.593.3700 wcmcdaniel@herffjones.com . Mail payments to 3198 Parliament Circle Suite 301, Montgomery, AL 36116 or pay online on their website.

11. Are my ACT scores on my transcripts?

No, we are not allowed to put your ACT scores on your transcript. Most colleges require you to send your ACT scores directly from ACT. If you reported the scores to the college you're applying to as one of your free score reports when you signed up to take the ACT, you don't have to send them again. Official score reports have to be ordered through MyACT.org. Your ACT ID was sent to you from ACT either through email or snail mail. If you need to give your ACT report to local folks, you will come to the counseling office, sign-up on the ACT sheet, pay \$1, and I will give you your official score report (in a sealed envelope if you wish) ready to go off to scholarship land.

12. Can I get a free waiver to take the ACT?

If you are on free or reduced lunch you qualify for **four** free ACT exams during your entire high school career (that does not count the school day ACT you took last year which is free for everyone). You can use those fee waivers starting junior year. These also get you free online test prep and options to send it to more schools for free. You only get four for your lifetime and once we give you a waiver, it counts as one of your freebies even if you end up not using it. You must see your counselor to get the waivers. In addition, many colleges will waive your application fee (and even enrollment fees) if you qualify for ACT fee waivers (but you have to ask them)!

13. How do I sign-up for the ACT?

You must do this online through www.act.org . We have flyers that explain this process just as you walk into guidance. You must register online as ACT no longer processes paper applications.

14. When is the ACT given?

This information is at www.act.org . Fairhope High School is a testing site for the Saturday tests, so it is convenient to take it here; however, we frequently are at max capacity, so sign-up as early as possible.

15. Should I take the SAT or the ACT?

Colleges accept both (a few Ivy league type schools only want SAT). It really comes down to how you test/what your strengths are. There are several factors to consider, so there is no easy answer. Some students swear one is easier than the other, but that is not empirically true. Here is a link that may help... <https://www.princetonreview.com/college/sat-act>

16. How do I sign-up for the SAT and where do I go to take it?

The only place in Baldwin County currently offering the test is Bayside Academy (unless that has recently changed). This one is also an online registration like ACT. The link is <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register> .

17. Are my SAT scores on my transcript?

No. You will have to have those sent to the schools to which you are applying.

18. Do I really have to complete the FAFSA?

The Alabama State Department of Education did decide to make FAFSA completion a GRADUATION REQUIREMENT. There is much about FAFSA that has changed over the years, and it is still evolving, so you may qualify for free money (grant) or at least a lower loan rate by completing FAFSA even if you don't think you will qualify. For that reason, I will have someone (or multiple folks) on campus to help families complete the FAFSA this year. Many colleges require or prefer that families complete the FAFSA. There are several committees that will require you to complete the FAFSA just to apply for some of the scholarships they offer. Some schools/scholarships require you have a FAFSA report to complete an application. So, it would be a great idea to complete the FAFSA as soon as it opens in ??October?? this year. Just FYI, keep up with your password and username as you will have to use them the entire time you are in college. Go to <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/>

*There is a waiver for those that would like to opt out of completing the FAFSA. As soon as the one for the class of 2025 is ready, I will get it to you to give to your parents.

19. Do we still get college visit days excused?

Yes, you can get up to two college visit days excused senior year. You will need to email the attendance secretary at spetrie@bcbe.org so she can seek Mr. Cardwell's approval and get it coded appropriately. You will need to bring back documentation from your official college visit/appointment upon your return to school. Turn that into Ms. Petrie in the front office. These two absences ARE included in your total number of days absent.

20. What happens if I keep being absent from school?

Mr. Cardwell has sent out emails regarding attendance and will address it again in your senior meeting the first week of school.

21. Who do I notify when I get a scholarship offer?

Your counselor!!!!!! If you are fortunate enough to receive scholarship offers, PLEASE bring those to your counselor. Bring the ones you will not be accepting. Bring the ones you will accept. Bring the ones you do not know how you got. Bring the ones you got just because you are awesome. Our school has to report the amount offered and the amount accepted (as in a school total) in May. Bring or send offers to your counselor as you get them, and she will file them away for later tallying. After the date for the county to "audit" us, we shred every page. This info is only given in general terms, so your personal info is not floating around. You can take a pic and email it to your counselor as an attachment or screen shot the offer and email to her if you don't want to handle paper.

22. What is senior awards night?

Senior awards will be conducted at night (6pm). Date and venue TBD. I will announce things for each student like total scholarship \$ offered, where you will attend, some special awards if applicable. Now look back at # 21. If for some reason you don't want money mentioned, if you let me know, I will only announce where you will be attending. I must have acceptance letters if you are claiming to enroll there! If you get into the honors college at your college of choice, I will need that letter or email if you

want me to announce that. Military recruiters will announce those enlisting, and I will happily announce full-time employment for those going directly into the workforce. Our first years doing this, it lasted for just under an hour and a half.

23. Do you have scholarships not listed on the website?

Every scholarship I hear about, I send out via Remind AND put online at www.fairhopehs.com. Occasionally, I get contacted by folks wanting to offer a scholarship to someone I think needs it and would put it to good use, but they do not want me to advertise. I will pull in the social worker and at least one admin and teacher to get a feeling of who would be a great selection. This is ONE reason why I need to get to know you, NOT your parent (in other words, don't get your parents to contact me for "things", YOU contact me).

24. How do I get on your senior REMIND?

Text your "group code" to 81010 to sign up.

Class Code list is by *last name*:

GROUP CODES:

Last names A - G: @fhsc025a-g

Last names H - O: @fhsc025h-o

Last names P - Z: @fhsc025p-z

*Make sure you include the @.