



# RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

100 School Lane, Blairsville, PA 15717

Mr. Michael Leasure, Principal



September 12, 2023

Dear Senior:

It has finally arrived... your senior year of high school! Your senior year is a very important year for postsecondary planning. We understand that although this is an exciting year, it may also be a year filled with questions and uncertainties about the future and what that looks like for you. It is our goal to assist you in making this year as smooth and successful as possible. We are asking that you please thoroughly read this letter keep it in a location where you can easily refer to it. This will ensure that you are taking the necessary steps toward post-secondary planning. We have included important dates and times regarding a variety of district services such as field trips and evening workshops.

**\*\*Please review the list of categories/items that may apply to your future plans\*\***

**Students who are unsure of their future career goals or are entering the workforce directly out of high school:**

**Interest Inventory:** All students must take the SmartFutures<sup>(R)</sup> Interest Inventory in their Transition 11 class as well as your Senior Government class. We use an online career interest inventory called **SmartFutures** <https://www.smartfutures.org>. It can be accessed from any computer that has internet capabilities. The results will provide you with a RIASEC code to help identify your individual strengths, interests and values.

If interested, the STEAM Academy offers the following programs:

- BioMedical Technology      -Cybersecurity      -Electrical Occupations/Powerline
- Pathways to Health Professions      -Welding Technology      -Esports
- Sports Medicine and Rehabilitative Therapy      -Teacher Preparation

**Military Services:**

**Federal Service Academies:** Students interested in applying to a Federal Service Academy should see Miss Buffone immediately as the application process is rigorous. The colleges operated by the U.S. Federal Government are referred to as the Federal Service Academies are:

- United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado
- United States Coast Guard Academy, New London, Connecticut
- United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, New York
- United States Military Academy, West Point, New York
- United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland

**\*For enlistment in the US Armed Forces:** Please see Miss Buffone to set up a meeting with a recruiter.

**For students planning to attend college or pursue further postsecondary education:**

**Campus Visits & Job Shadowing:**

You may receive 5 excused absences from school to make postsecondary campus visits. Most campus visits can be set up online through individual school websites. To set up visits online find your postsecondary institution of choice and click on the link to admissions. If possible, we encourage parents/guardians to go along on these campus visits. At times, a

campus visit may be impossible (for students planning to go out of state). In this instance, we recommend that the student do a thorough search of the school's website, and set up a phone interview through the admissions department.

### **Meetings with College Representatives:**

Many admissions representatives from different colleges and universities will visit River Valley throughout the school year. Students can gain a wealth of information regarding those colleges, their specific scholarship opportunities, admissions requirements and much more through attending these meetings. Students should listen to announcements and sign up to meet with admissions reps in the Middle School Guidance Office.

### **Scholarships:**

Please see Mrs. Faulk for questions regarding scholarships. Many local and national scholarships are advertised directly through the Guidance Office. This year you will be responsible for obtaining and completing scholarship applications. We will give reminders to you to be diligent about checking the scholarship files weekly. In addition, scholarships will be updated on a weekly basis on the River Valley Guidance Office website at: [School Counseling - River Valley High School \(rivervalleyhsd.org\)](https://www.rivervalleyhighschool.org/school-counseling). We post all scholarships that come through the Guidance Office online and through the school announcements. Although we advertise many scholarships through the Guidance Office, it is impossible for us to have knowledge of specific scholarships that are offered through individual colleges and universities. Please visit the website of your prospective postsecondary institution for more information regarding scholarships. Additionally, there are thousands of other scholarships available on the web. It's a good idea to do a scholarship search online to access some of these additional scholarship opportunities. **A scholarship is like a job... you can't get one unless you apply. Please don't let free money go to waste!**

### **Financial Aid:**

Students who are planning to attend a postsecondary institution should plan to attend the scheduled Financial Aid Night & FAFSA Completion Workshop. The FAFSA is the form that drives any financial aid that may be granted to you by the government. **Financial Aid Night is scheduled for Wednesday, October 25, 2023 from 6:00-7:15 p.m. in the High School Auditorium. The FAFSA Completion Workshop is scheduled for March 26, 2024 from 6:00-8:00p.m. in the computer lab.**

### **SAT & ACT:**

Students who plan to attend a 4-year college or university after high school should take the SAT or ACT. If you have not already done so, please schedule the SAT/ACT right away. You may sign up for SAT test dates offered at different locations on several Saturdays throughout the school year. Please visit [www.collegeboard.com](https://www.collegeboard.com) for SAT test dates and registration deadlines, or [www.act.org](https://www.act.org) for ACT test dates and registration deadlines. Fee waivers will be available in the Guidance Office for students who receive free or reduced lunches. Eligible students can use two fee waivers per year to take the ACT or SAT.

### **Collegiate Athletics:**

**Any student who thinks there is even a slight possibility that they will play a Division I or II varsity sport while in college needs to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center online at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.com](https://www.ncaaclearinghouse.com). There is a fee to register.** PLEASE NOTE: NCAA legislation requires that students who wish to enroll in a Division I or II college and play collegiate level sports must send their ACT or SAT scores directly from the testing institution (such as the College Board) to the NCAA Clearinghouse. College Entrance Exam scores will not be accepted from the high school transcript.

### **Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship:**

Students at the STEAM Academy will have the opportunity, provided the student demonstrates the required tactile skills and cognitive aptitude, to participate in either a Capstone Program (Cooperative Education), OJT paid internships, and/or a pre-apprenticeship that is linked to an approved apprenticeship.

Students who do not attend the STEAM Academy and according to their CFIEP, as well as have completed their course requirements for graduation, may be granted the opportunity to participate in a OJT, school-to-work program designed to aid in career exploration and decision making.

### **Applications:**

Before Thanksgiving, you should complete applications for future schooling (this includes applying to colleges, universities, technical schools, trade schools, or talking with a military recruiter). Please pay attention to application deadlines for each postsecondary institution to which you plan to apply. We know this can be overwhelming, but it's so important to take the initiative and plan ahead. As always, the guidance staff wishes you a successful year! If you have any questions please feel free to reach out.

### **\*Important Dates\***

**\*Financial Aid Night- October 25, 2023 from 6:00-7:15 p.m. in the Auditorium.** A representative from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) will go over many important topics for securing Financial Aid for college.

**\*The FAFSA Completion Workshop is scheduled for March 26, 2024 from 6:00-8:00p.m. in the Computer Lab.**

**\*River Valley Career and College Expo (CaCRE) - November 1, 2023.** This will be held at the STEAM Academy gymnasium with approximately 35 employers and post-secondary institutions being invited. Students will have a personalized schedule developed based on their results from the interest inventory and their RIASEC code(s).

### **Counselor Notes & Assigned Duties:**

In our welcome letter sent home in August, we noted there have been some big changes in the Middle School and High School Counseling Department. We both will serve as the school counselors for grades 6th through 12th. We will not be splitting students by grade or alphabetical order. This enables the students to connect with either counselor or the first available counselor. Although we are not splitting student caseload, we will be dividing duties.

**Please contact the below named counselor for questions regarding these specific topics:**

**Miss Buffone:** Junior and Senior Letters, Financial Aid Night, FAFSA Completion Workshop, ASVAB Testing and Interpretation, NCAA Eligibility Center, attending Special Education meetings, The Challenge Program, Military Services

**Mrs. Faulk:** PSAT, Dual Enrollment/College in the Classroom, AP Testing, attending Gifted IEP Meetings, PA Smart Futures, Scholarships, IUP Career Fair

Also, please be aware that Ms. Buffone has not officially started the school year at River Valley School District. Her predicted arrival date will be on September 25, 2023.

**Final Note:** \*The transition from High School to College can be a very challenging and emotional time. There is a trend being studied at higher education institutions about student resiliency to this change in life. Numbers of students with diagnosed mental health illness (such as anxiety and depression) is on the increase. Please remember that colleges and universities offer free counseling services to all students. If you begin to experience issues with life after high school it is important to seek professional guidance. Additionally, if you would like counseling services at any time during your senior year we offer a school-based counseling service through the Community Guidance Center. More information is available in the Guidance Office.

We are looking forward to a great school year! Please email with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

*Tammy Buffone*

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*Bethany Faulk*

Mrs. Bethany Faulk  
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