RHS Counseling Department

Senior Year Priorities: What to Focus on in 12th Grade

Throughout the Year

- **Plan your time. There is a lot to balance this year.**
- **Stay on top** of your college applications, trade school applications, or military enlistment.
- **Keep track of any standardized test requirements** for the colleges you're applying to.
  Some do not require any test scores for admission this year, however, your scores may be required for merit scholarships. Register if you feel taking one will help. Find a testing date and location for the SAT with College Board. SAT II tests are not required by any Michigan college, and not by most others as well.
- **Keep in touch with your overall well-being.**
  Check in with your counselor whenever needed: bit.ly/rhscounselingappt.

In the Fall

- **Attend your counselor's Senior Class Meeting** to review post-high school planning and the college application process. Individual meetings with your counselor will occur for follow-up.
- **Apply to colleges.**
  Note the dates of their application windows and complete a thorough application. The next page has additional information.
- **Sign up to attend college representative visits**.
  This is a great opportunity to ask about housing, scholarships, and other questions. Furthermore, the representative visiting RHS is most often the same person who'll read your application!
- **Attend the RCS College Fair** held in October.
  Check the counseling web site for details.
- **Fill out the FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
  This is a government program of the Office of Federal Student Aid, U.S. Dept. of Education. The FAFSA is available to submit typically starting on October 1st for students who plan to attend college the following academic year.
- **Register to take the AP test** for any AP courses you're currently enrolled in.
  - Your AP teacher can help you register with College Board, paying for the test, and informing the counseling office of the test(s) you will be taking.

In the Winter

- **Meet with your counselor** for follow-up on college applications or graduation credits.
- **Send your 7th semester transcript** (your transcript which includes semester 1 of senior year) to any colleges requesting it.

In the Spring

- **Consider the colleges that have accepted your admission.**
  Weigh their pros and cons to determine which is right for you, reflecting on your own goals and family circumstances.
- **Turn in your enrollment deposit** to your selected college before May 1st.
- **Take any AP tests** in May that you registered for back in the fall.
- **Pass** all of your classes.
- **Celebrate your accomplishments** and relax!

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Senior Year: Completing College Applications

Begin applying to colleges as soon as possible. Consider applying to at least 3-4 colleges.

The College Application Process

Applying to a college will include the following three steps:

1. **Completing an Application:**
   - Find one on the college's website or on Common App. Be sure to hit "Submit" on the application and turn in all required documents by the deadline.
2. **Submitting your High School Transcripts:**
   - Transcripts are sent online using Parchment. Login to your Parchment account and request one be sent to Common App or the colleges you have applied to. Complete your orders by mid-October to ensure they get to colleges by November 1st.
   - Be sure to send your final transcript after graduation to the college you will be attending.
3. **Submitting your Standardized Test Scores:**
   - Scores may be required for either college admission or merit scholarships. Keep track of each college's requirements.
   - Place an order for your scores to be sent to colleges at least 30 days prior to the college's deadline. When ordering your SAT score from College Board, you can choose to send it to up to four colleges for free.

Additional Steps in the Application Process

Consider completing the following:

- **The FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid:
  - FAFSA is a program of the Office of Federal Student Aid, U.S. Dept. of Education.
  - Complete this application to be considered for any need-based financial aid or federal student loans. College financial aid offices may also look at this application for scholarship consideration.
  - The FAFSA application is available around October 1st for students who plan to attend college the following academic year. It is best to submit this form as soon as possible.
- **Letters of Recommendation**:
  - If the college you're applying to requires you to submit a letter of recommendation, ask one of your teachers who know you well, and **ask well in advance** to allow them enough time.
  - Add that teacher and your counselor to the "recommender" section on the application.
  - Very few colleges require you to submit a letter of recommendation. If a college does not require one, there's no need to send one.

Participation in College Athletics. If you plan to play a sport while attending college, begin the eligibility process:

- With the NCAA Eligibility Center at www.ncaa.org/sports/2014/10/24/how-to-register.aspx.
- With the NAIA Eligibility Center at www.naia.org/findyourpath/highschool/index.