

College Counseling JUNIOR ORIENTATION

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- We hope you will explore the contents of the folder we plan to give you at College Night for Juniors on September 15, 2011. In addition, please explore the RCHS college counseling website for scholarship and financial aid information, testing information, and college website links.
- Become familiar with the Naviance program. Remember you can access Naviance from the College Counseling homepage and click on the "Family Connection/Naviance" link. One of the student's favorite features of Naviance is the scattergrams. The scattergrams help you and your parents view your chances of admission to a college based on only two of the many factors that colleges use: your own RCHS SAT and GPA data. This data does not include other important information in addition to test scores and grades which colleges also consider in making their decisions such as **course difficulty, leadership, school and community involvement, diversity, level of motivation, letters of recommendation, and personal statement/essay.**
- For privacy reasons if there have been fewer than five applications to a college, you will not be able to view RCHS data for that school.
- Contact your college counselor in the SPRING SEMESTER starting IN FEBRUARY/MARCH to schedule a conference to begin your college search process. You must complete your student and parent questionnaires prior to this meeting.
- Come to the conference with your counselor in the spring prepared to discuss your:
 - list of colleges you're considering
 - updated resume (bring a copy with you) *and*

· any questions about the admissions, scholarships and financial aid processes.

1. Remember last year we discussed how important junior year grades are going to be in your college planning? Now that you are only 1 year away from applying to colleges, the data that will appear on your transcript will be your final year-end grades for grades 9 - 11 and your course selections for next year; senior year. Senior-year performance is critical as well since most colleges request mid-year grades after midterm exams and may rescind an offer of admission if your senior year grades decline.

Speak with the admissions representatives or visit the college website to determine admission requirements. To improve chances of admission to highly competitive colleges, it is best to exceed their minimum requirements to make your application more competitive, e.g., if their minimum requirement is 2 years of foreign language—you may improve your chances by taking more than 2 years of the same foreign language or by taking AP level courses if you are ready for the demands of these difficult courses...it will mean more time spent on homework as well as more in-depth reading and writing—all good things to better prepare you for the demands of college.

2. Beginning in September college representatives from over 60 colleges will visit with our students in the College Counseling conference room. Listen for the morning announcements, visit the RCHS website and Naviance to keep abreast of events.

3. Read the College Visit notebook in the College Counseling hallway for information about upcoming college visits/events, workshops and other pertinent information. While attending the representative visits, please be courteous and polite and do not monopolize the session with questions pertaining to your own particular situation. Remember you can always schedule a one-on-one visit or talk with the representative after the session. Also consider attending the college fair at **North Carolina State's McKimmon Center on Sunday, September 18, 2011 (2:00-4:30 pm)**. There are colleges already scheduled to visit RCHS this year. Be sure to check the College Counseling flatscreen TV and College Visit notebook for college visits and other important information.

4. Talk to your counselors! The better we know you, the better we can help you choose the best fit college for you from your list and the better our letter of recommendation will be which we write on your behalf. If you've never sat

down to talk with your counselor, what will we have to write about in our letter?

5. At least three weeks before a recommendation is needed, ask the teachers you want to write for you. When you ask the teacher for a letter, provide a current resume of your honors, awards, and activities at the time you ask the teacher. There's no need to provide a pre-paid envelope as RCHS will cover the cost of mailing your documents to colleges.

If a teacher or counselor recommendation form is part of the application, be sure you have completed your part, signed the waiver or your right to see the recommendation, and make sure you have **signed** the form where indicated **before** giving to the teacher or your counselor.

6. At least three weeks before an application is due, complete an application request form, include any required materials, and give to your counselor. Indicate if you have applied on line and who you have asked for recommendations as well as the due date of the application. If you are applying to a state school, you must establish an account with CFNC (www.cfnc.org) and discuss with your counselor how to transmit your own transcript on-line from the CFNC website using the TRANSCRIPT MANAGER FEATURE.

WE WILL NO LONGER MAIL TRANSCRIPTS TO IN-STATE SCHOOLS! IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SEND YOUR own TRANSCRIPT ELECTRONICALLY TO ANY COLLEGE(S) IN North Carolina to which you're applying BY USING YOUR COLLEGE FOUNDATION ACCOUNT and selecting "TRANSCRIPT MANAGER." Ask your counselor if you need help with this.

7. Pay attention to the morning announcements, the College Visit notebook on the College Counseling hallway table and the college counseling page of the RCHS website as well as the Naviance website for information about college visits, workshops and scholarship information. The scholarship bulletin is published monthly in the fall and is posted to the website. If you find a scholarship of interest, please talk with your counselor if you are considering completing an application.

8. Keep your counselor informed of your application status. If you hear from a college that you have been admitted, waitlisted, or denied admission or that materials may be missing from your application, inform your counselor so we can send another copy.

9. Visit college campuses. Fall Break and teacher workdays are good times to visit colleges. Schedule official visits whenever possible, usually by calling the college admissions office or visitor's center. See the college counseling website "**College Connections**" link for your copy of a *Campus Visit Information Package* with detailed instructions of what to see and do during your college campus visit.

10. Visit the college counseling resource bookshelves in the College Counseling hallway. There you'll find college information including view books, catalogs and DVDs/videos, SAT/ACT/AP test preparation tips and registration materials, scholarships and financial-aid resource books and college guidebooks to help you compile your list of colleges and find a good match. (Volunteers are needed periodically to organize these incoming resource materials. Please check with us if you can volunteer your time.)

11. Schedule your testing date and register for SAT or ACT testing *online*. College Counselors recommend that you take the SAT and/or the ACT at least twice: May or June of your junior year and again in October of your senior year.

If you have not taken SAT-II subject tests and they are required for the college(s) you are applying to, register now. College websites will provide their specific testing requirements. You may access college websites via links from Naviance or the college counseling websites.

You must create an account in order to register for these tests, receive/print your admission ticket to a testing site, take practice tests, get test study tips and view and send your own SAT and/or ACT scores to college(s) of your choice.

You are urged to send your scores to up to four colleges at the time you take the test. Sending scores to the first four colleges is free. If you send scores *after* testing, there is a \$10 fee per college. Colleges will receive your entire score history anyway and will search for your highest-ever ACT composite or SAT critical reading, math and writing scores from all tests taken. PSAT scores are NOT used by the colleges as part of their consideration of your admissibility.

Again, you must send your own test scores to colleges through your College Board account (this includes AP scores if you so desire though these are not generally required for college applications).

To register, you will need the RCHS School Code: **343230**.

SAT-I and SAT-II	Test Dates	Register By
	October	September
	November	October
	December	November

Register and see specific test dates online at: www.collegeboard.com

ACT	Test Dates	Register By
	September	August
	October	September
	December	November

Register and see specific test dates online: www.actstudent.org

REGISTER FOR THE PSAT BY early OCTOBER. THE PSAT WILL BE GIVEN AT RCHS usually ON the second WEDNESDAY in OCTOBER. PAY MRS. WALL IN THE MAIN OFFICE \$13.00 TO REGISTER! That's it! You're registered once you pay your fee. No forms to complete!