

Dear Eagle Ridge Academy Juniors and Parents of Juniors:

This is the November update from your counselor regarding college and career planning.

You are in the midst of a challenging and important academic year. Colleges will look carefully at your junior year performance, so continue to work with your teachers, put time and effort into your homework, and build a passion for learning. We hope that you have found subjects that particularly interest you and that you've begun to think about what you might study in college.

Consider planning a visit to colleges during school breaks: Days off in January, February, March and April are good opportunities to visit colleges. Students will be on campus, which can help you envision what it would feel like to attend. Start by visiting local campuses. We have large, small and medium size schools right in the Twin Cities. You can even plan to go to local schools with your friends. Visiting a college is the best way to see the school and consider whether it may be a fit for you.

- Schedule a visit using the online registration that colleges provide.
- Make sure you talk to an admissions officer and take a campus tour.
- Add a visit to an academic department or sit in on a class.
- Read about the college before you go! Use the website and college tools like www.collegeconfidential.com to prepare.
- Ask students at the college why they chose to attend.
- Take notes! Write down your impressions and take some pictures so you can remember what you learned.

Many of you will see extended family over the coming weeks and you're likely to get questions about high school and your plans for the future. This is a great opportunity for you to "turn the tables" and ask some questions of your adult family members. The best way to learn about various options for your future is to talk to adults who are out in the work world. Here are some conversation ideas:

- "I'm starting to think about college and careers. What kind of work do you do?"
- "How did you choose your career area?"
- "Where did you go to college?" "What kind of training did you get?"
- "If you could do it over again, what would you do differently?"
- "What do you like/hate about your job?"
- "What advice do you have for me?"

Minnesota High School Page Program for high school juniors: If you have an interest in politics, you may want to consider applying for the Page Program at the Minnesota State Legislature. Students must commit to a week in St. Paul and will have individual meetings with legislators, experience the legislative process, participate in a mock committee session, and meet with constitutional officers, members of the judiciary, lobbyists, and members of the media. The program is only open to juniors. Applications are due November 28th and can be found at: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/edprog/over2p.htm>.

College Admissions Tests – the ACT and SAT

You can take either the ACT or the SAT (all colleges will accept either). You can take tests more than one time, although preparing well for the test will ensure that you get your best score. Lots of retakes is not necessarily helpful and requires a great deal of time that may be better spend on your academic coursework.

Preparing for these tests – We recommend that you spend some time preparing for the ACT or SAT, whichever you choose to take. Attached is a preparation book from ACT with information about the test and practice questions. Kahn Academy is the official source for SAT preparation: <https://www.khanacademy.org/sat>. Princeton Review offers free practice tests in the area on many Saturday mornings. Here is a link to register for those practice tests: <http://www.princetonreview.com>.

Scholarships you can apply for!

- Due December 1 - **Fleet Reserve Association 7-12 Americanism Essay Contest**: Write a Write a 350 word essay on the theme “What Freedom of Speech Means to Me”.
<http://www.fra.org/essay>
- Due December 5 - **Stephen J Brady STOP Hunger 9-12 Scholarship** (Sodexo Foundation) <http://us.stop-hunger.org/home/news/content-col1-area/latest-news/sodexo-stop-hunger-foundation-ex.html>
- Due January 18th - **John F. Kennedy Profiles in 9-12 Courage Essay Contest**: Up to 1,000 word essay describing act of political courage by U.S. Jan 18 elected official during or after 1917.
<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Education/Profile-in-Courage-Essay-Contest.aspx>
- Due January 20th - **C-SPAN Student Cam Documentary Competition**: Teams of 1-3 students create a 5-7 minute video documentary expressing the following theme: "What does it mean to be American?" <http://www.studentcam.org>
- Due January 23rd - **Coolidge Scholars Program – FULL RIDE; OPEN TO JUNIORS**: The Coolidge may be used by recipients at any American university. Anyone of any background, pursuing any academic discipline of study, may apply to this non-partisan, need-blind, program. The three main criteria that distinguish Coolidge scholars are: (1) academic excellence, (2) keen interest in public policy and an appreciation for the values Coolidge championed, (3) humility and leadership. <http://coolidgescholars.org/>
- Due February 7th - **Optimist International Essay Contest**: Write 700-800 word essay on “Is there a fine line between Optimism and Reality?” <http://www.facebook.com/EPOptimists>

Remember that I am here to help you!

Best,
Wendy Klute
Academic Counselor
Eagle Ridge Academy