



Winter Quarterly Update

For 2019-2020 Freshmen

Making School Count

- **Choose your courses for 2020-2021!** Counselors will be making presentations about next year's courses in classrooms next month, and registration forms will be due back to your counselor at the end of February. The [RSD curriculum planning website](#) offers links to the [RSD High School Course Catalog](#), with descriptions of all high school classes, and the district's **4-Year Planning Tool**, which provides curriculum guidelines based on your college and career track (you'll need a user login to use the 4-Year Planning Tool). Remember that colleges look for students who have taken advantage of some of the most academically challenging courses their high schools offer.
- **Do's and Don'ts of choosing classes.** Your grades and the strength of your curriculum matter when it comes to college admissions. Find out why course selection is important and learn [how to create a rigorous but balanced schedule](#).
- **Consider AP courses.** Advanced Placement classes offer an important opportunity for students to challenge themselves, improve college admissions chances, earn college credits, win scholarships, and arrive at college better prepared. Learn more about [why students should take an AP class](#) and check out this [complete list of AP courses and tests](#), including data on their popularity and passing rates (Note: not all of these AP courses may be available at your high school). Read this blog for guidance on [how to choose your AP courses](#).
- **Take control of homework (so it doesn't control you).** Here is a great list of [tips to help you deal with homework](#) more efficiently and effectively.
- **Start a study group.** Tackling projects and homework with others can be a great way to learn. If you study best in a group, search out students who are on a similar track as you and set aside a regular time to meet and work together. If you study best alone, take time to create a comfortable and practical working space dedicated to homework and study; parents can help by maintaining a background environment conducive to studying.
- **Focus your extracurricular activity.** Last quarter, this newsletter highlighted the importance of quality over quantity when it comes to extracurricular activities for college admissions. Now is a good time to begin zeroing in on the few activities you will develop and that will help you develop over the next three years. Read here for inspiration on [how to select your best extracurricular activities](#).

Looking Ahead to College

- **Learn the lingo.** Conversations about college and college prep involve specialized vocabulary, including many expressions that may be unfamiliar (e.g., ACT, SAT, EFC, Common App). Don't let the language get in your way! Here's a [college prep glossary](#), with links that provide more information about each term.
- **Learn about types of college.** Colleges come in different shapes and sizes. Is a college the same thing as a university? What does the term "liberal arts" mean? Why are some colleges called public and others private? Here are [the basics on types of colleges](#).

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- **Review your PSAT results.** If you took the PSAT in October 2019, your scores provide valuable information to help you understand if you are on track for the SAT. Here's a [good video to help interpret your PSAT results](#).

Careers & Majors

- **Match your interests with career opportunities.** List your hobbies and talents, and then match up your list with different careers. Here's a good way to [start your career interest list](#).
- **Interview two people about their careers.** Talk to people who work in professions that interest you, and ask how they got started and how they feel about their work. What were the paths they took – both the academic path and the personal path – to get where they are now? Don't know anyone in the career you're interested in? Contact the HHS Career Center for help.

Finding Colleges for You

- **Name 2 or 3 colleges you've heard of.** Start your college list with a few colleges you'd like to learn more about. This list will grow and change over time, and that's expected. You can add or subtract colleges from your list as you figure out what you're looking for in a college. Here's a [quick guide for starting your college search](#).

Paying for College

- **Find out why college may cost less than you think.** Most students don't pay the full tuition price a college publishes. With financial aid, the actual cost (or net price) is usually less. Learn about [net price vs. sticker price](#).
- **Maximize your financial aid.** Learn what you can do in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades to [maximize your financial aid for college](#).

Mark Your Calendar!

- **February 20, 2020 – Parent-Teacher Conferences.** Meet individually with your student's teachers. Conferences begin at 4pm and close at 7pm, and take place in the HHS gyms.
- **February 21, 2020, 8am-11:15am – HHS Career Pathways Fair, HHS Commons.** Career Technical Education classes will offer information and activities on optional career paths open to high school students; students may attend with one of their morning classes.
- **February 26, 2020, 6pm – Running Start information meeting.** Meet in the HHS auditorium.
- **February 28, 2020 – 2020-21 School Year Registration.** Sign up with your counselor for 2020-2021 school year classes.
- **March 18, 2020, 9am-12pm – Washington Council College Planning Day at WSU Tri-Cities.** This event gives high school students the chance to [explore college options](#). The event will include presentations and opportunity for Q&A with representatives from a great list of Washington state public and private colleges.
- **May 4 – May 15, 2020 – AP testing.** [The national 2020 AP testing schedule is available here](#).



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