

# RUSTON HIGH SCHOOL



Dan Gressett  
*Principal*

Mike Milstead  
*Superintendent*  
*Lincoln Parish*

## FALL NEWSLETTER

September 2018

Dear Senior Parent/Guardian:

As the parent or guardian of a Ruston High School senior, you are keenly aware of what a busy time this is in your child's life. In an effort to keep you informed about upcoming events and important dates, I will periodically contact you through newsletters. While I hope these letters will be helpful, please feel free to contact me at 255-0807 or [kwhite2@lincolnschools.org](mailto:kwhite2@lincolnschools.org) if you need additional information or have questions. **Graduation is scheduled for May 21, 2019 at the Louisiana Tech Thomas Assembly Center.** Please mark your calendars. It will be here before we know it!

### Graduation Requirements

This year, our seniors are pursuing one of only two types of diplomas: **TOPS University** or **JumpStart**. **TOPS University** students must complete **24 credits**. **JumpStart** students must complete **23 credits** as well as **earn at least three credentials in their chosen pathway**. All students must pass the state-required End-of-Course tests.

### College Applications and Scholarships

**The first semester of a student's senior year is the time to begin filling out applications for college admission and university scholarships.** Most postsecondary schools now prefer that you use online applications. **In most cases, the online application for admissions is also used for scholarship consideration.** Deadlines vary from school to school; however, **November 1<sup>st</sup>** is a good target date. If your child has a question about a deadline, please advise him/her to see me. We are all happy to help with the application process. **As far as scholarships are concerned, if funding continues, TOPS is the scholarship that pays the most for the longest period of time. If a student is TOPS eligible upon graduation (at least a 2.5 core gpa AND a 20 composite on the ACT), that student will receive TOPS for four years as long as he/she stays in school and meets the TOPS gpa requirement. University scholarships are usually awarded for four years as long as the student maintains the eligibility criteria. Criteria vary from university to university. Most university scholarships require at least a 23 composite on the ACT and a 3.0 cumulative gpa. Privately funded scholarships are a great supplement to TOPS and university scholarships. Most of those will be sent to my office after Christmas. Scholarship information is announced as it is received and is posted on the guidance bulletin board. Online scholarship searches are a great way to find information on additional scholarships. Mrs. Humphries talked with the juniors last year about national scholarships. Those scholarships are very competitive and require much work. Students interested in those scholarships should have already begun working on them. A great tool for researching scholarships, financial aid, and student loans is [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). Encourage your child to apply for multiple scholarships. The competition is fierce! Again, the first semester of a student's senior year is designed to apply to colleges and universities and their scholarships. The second semester of a student's senior year is the time to complete the scholarship applications that are mailed to the school.**

### College Visit Days

Seniors are allowed two college visits during the year. Students are allowed up to two days for visiting colleges. Any senior wishing to be excused from class to visit a college or university must: 1) **Complete a "College Visit Day Form"** (available in guidance) and submit to counselor **at least two days prior to the absence**; and 2) Have college official verify his/her attendance and submit to the office upon returning to RHS.

## Senior Graduation Information and Orders

On **Tuesday, October 2, 2018**, Mr. Cody Young of Graduate Sales will be at RHS during 3<sup>rd</sup> hour which begins at 9:43 to present information on ordering caps, gowns, diploma covers, and other graduation supplies. Students will receive order forms and brochures at that time. **To participate in graduation, a student must have a cap, gown, diploma cover, and tassel.** The other items (sweatshirts, t-shirts, mugs, etc.) are purely optional. On **Thursday, October 11, 2018**, Mr. Young will return to take orders. He will be in the RHS auditorium all day. Senior English teachers will take their classes to the auditorium throughout the day. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend both dates. To submit an order, students must complete an order form and pay at least the required deposit. For your best value, it is best to order graduation supplies during Mr. Young's visit in October. If you choose to wait until later in the year, the price of the items will increase. **Since the style and color of the caps and gowns changed last year, only a cap and gown from 2018 with a Balfour tag in the back may be borrowed for this year's graduation. If your child plans to use a cap and gown from 2018, he/she must bring the cap and gown to Mrs. Moss in room 203 for approval. The borrowed cap and gown must have the Balfour tag in the back to even be considered.** A diploma cover and tassel must still be purchased if a student borrows a cap and gown.

**Columbus Day Holiday & Staff Development – Monday, Oct. 8, 2018 – Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2018**

### Financial Aid/TOPS

**All Louisiana high school seniors are REQUIRED to complete the FAFSA.** If your student hopes to be eligible for TOPS or scholarships, student grants, work study or loans, you must complete a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA). The FAFSA will be available online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) beginning October 1, 2018. **You will need your 2017 tax return information to complete the application. FILLING OUT AND SUBMITTING THE FAFSA ONLINE IS FREE!!! IF YOU ARE ASKED TO PAY FOR THE SERVICE, YOU ARE NOT USING THE CORRECT WEBSITE.** Paper copies are no longer mailed to the school. (The government prefers the online application, and it is easier to use for reapplication each year.) There are separate sections on the form for parents and students to complete. Financial records from the **2017** tax year are needed to complete the FAFSA. Completing the application by spring break is a very realistic goal, but it would be better to complete the FAFSA as soon as possible. Colleges and universities, in addition to the state of Louisiana, require that the FAFSA be completed before a student can be considered for any type of financial aid, including TOPS.

**If your child hopes to be eligible for the Louisiana TOPS scholarship, then the FAFSA must be completed. The FAFSA must also be renewed each year a student is in college. To qualify for TOPS, a student must meet BOTH the TOPS core GPA and ACT requirements. To qualify for the first level of TOPS, a student must have a composite score of 20 on the ACT AND at least a 2.5 core grade point average (gpa). Students must meet BOTH the gpa and ACT requirements to receive TOPS. Also, TOPS must receive official ACT scores.** When registering for the ACT, use code 1595 and the scores will automatically be sent to TOPS. (See attached TOPS information.) A student who is trying to get the necessary ACT score for TOPS may take the ACT each time it is given during the senior year. A student may also take the test in June after he/she graduates; however, there will be a penalty of one semester (or two quarters) if the student does not score the mandatory 20 until the June test date.

### Senior Pictures/Yearbooks

**September 14-** Back to School Yearbook Pre-order sale ended and price went up to \$55.00 until Jan 11<sup>th</sup>.

**January 15 and 16-** Cap & Gown pictures will be taken at school for a \$10.00 sitting fee and for an additional \$10.00 Portraits Plus will take a senior outdoor picture (one outfit). All pictures will be available for purchase through Portraits Plus. Each senior must turn in, to the yearbook, one picture with the cap on and one picture with the cap off. These will be used for the yearbook and the newspaper.

**February 8-** Senior Ads are due to the yearbook

**February 16-** All senior pictures (two cap & gown pictures and one outdoor picture) and senior stats are due to the yearbook. If cap and gown pictures are taken by Portraits Plus, the number of your choice must be submitted to Mrs. Becky White. All pictures and information should be emailed to [rustonhighyearbook@gmail.com](mailto:rustonhighyearbook@gmail.com)

**End of First Nine-Weeks Grading Period – October 19, 2018**

The first nine-weeks grading period ends on October 19, 2018. **Report cards will be issued on THURSDAY, October 25, 2018.**

## ACT/SAT

The next two ACT tests dates are October 27, 2018 and December 8, 2018. ACT test dates are included in this mailing. They also appear in the RHS Student Handbook and were distributed at Prep Day. If your senior plans to attend a four-year college or university next year but has not yet taken the ACT, he or she should plan to take the ACT by the December test date. The deadline to register for the October 27<sup>th</sup> test date is Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, and the deadline to register for the December 8, 2018 test date is November 2, 2018. Registration for the ACT should be done online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). When registering for the ACT, a student should use **192595** as **Ruston High School's code**. As Mrs. Humphries told you last year, ACT scores must be sent to **TOPS** by using **code 1595** when registering. If your child plans to play a collegiate sport, ACT scores must also be sent to the NCAA Eligibility Center. To send ACT scores to the **NCAA**, use the **code 9999**. The cost of the ACT test is \$50.50. The cost to test with the writing component is \$67. Information about which schools require the writing component can be obtained from a college/university website. **If a student plans to attend a two-year community or technical college, the ACT is not necessary.**

## ASVAB

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) will be administered to interested students on Wednesday, **October 24, 2018**. The ASVAB is an aptitude/career test for any students interested in exploring different occupations. The scores are used for military recruitment purposes; however, one does not need to plan on a military career to take the test. Moreover, a student will not be enlisted in the military if he/she chooses to take the test. Encourage your child to take this test as a means of career exploration.

**Thanksgiving Holidays – Monday, November 19, 2018 - Friday, November 23, 2018**

### End-Of-Course Test Retakes

In addition to successfully completing required Carnegie units, **all high school students must pass end-of-course tests in Algebra I or Geometry, English II or English III, and Biology I or U.S. History**. The end-of-course test retakes will be administered November 28<sup>th</sup> through December 14<sup>th</sup>. For those who are testing, attendance is **MANDATORY** on these test dates. The re-tests will be given again in April.

**Christmas Holidays – Thursday, December 20, 2018 - Friday, January 4, 2019**

### End of Second Nine-Weeks Grading Period and First Semester

The end of the second nine-weeks grading period and the first semester is Friday, January 11, 2019. **Report cards will be issued on Friday, January 18, 2019.**

Last year, Mrs. Humphries met with students constantly to discuss grades, grade point averages, test scores, and future plans. She does a great job of preparing students and their parents for a busy senior year. Hopefully, we are well on our way to a wonderful experience! I encourage you to allow this school year to be one in which your senior begins the transition from a high school student who relies on a parent to do everything for him/her to a young adult who willingly takes care of his/her business.

Again, please contact me at 255-0807 or [kwhite2@lincolnschools.org](mailto:kwhite2@lincolnschools.org) if you have questions or concerns about your senior or the information included in this newsletter. This information covers the first semester of this year. In February, I will send a spring newsletter that will take us through the remainder of the year. The school website is updated on a regular basis, and additional events and information will be posted there. This is a busy time in your family's life. I truly believe we must keep the lines of communication open in order for us all to have a successful year.

Sincerely,

Kay White  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor