

September 2007

Dear Senior Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Student:

We are corresponding with you to provide valuable information about upcoming activities taking place during your students' senior year. These activities are designed to help seniors make the transition from high school to the world of work or to post-secondary education. We make every effort to inform and prepare our IHS seniors for this transition, but in order for our efforts to be the most effective, we need your assistance.

It is the responsibility of each senior (and their parent(s)/guardian(s)) to be sure that they meet deadlines and dates regarding ACT/SAT testing registrations, scholarship applications, financial aid forms, etc. This information is available on the USD 446 website, which is www.indyschools.com. (Click on "High School" and then on "Counseling Office.") Announcements, upcoming deadlines, testing dates, and scholarship information are available on this site. Students and/or parents are urged to review this website and read newsletters and other postings.

D.O.G. (Developing Outstanding Graduates) Time presentations, designed especially for seniors, occur monthly and deal with current topics that are relevant to seniors. Our first presentation will address the senior timeline and issues such as paying attention to important deadlines and application dates and the ACT and SAT testing calendar. Future presentations will deal with comparing post-secondary institutions, choosing the institution or college that is the right fit, planning a campus visit, and presenting financial aid information.

The IHS counseling office is hosting "Senior Parent Night" on September 24, 2007 at 7:00 PM. At this meeting we will provide information about college selection, vocational and technical schools, and military opportunities.

Listed below are some important items for seniors who are planning to attend a post-secondary college, junior college, or trade/technical school. Seniors will be given this information in a classroom presentation (but we thought you might like to be provided with the information as well).

1. ACT/SAT test dates for the 2007-08 school year have been made available to all seniors and are posted throughout the school. Registration packets and online registration information is always available in the counseling office, as are test preparation materials, sample tests, etc. **Independence's school code is 171-445.** *It is very important that students include this high school code on their testing registration. If they do not, we do not receive their ACT scores and cannot post them to the student's permanent record/transcript.* If postmarked by the registration deadline, the cost for the ACT is \$30 (no writing) and the ACT plus writing is \$44.50; the cost jumps to \$49 for the ACT (no writing) for late registration. Registration can still be done by completing and mailing the paper packet, however, the preferred method is via the internet at www.act.org. One time fee waivers are available for low-income students and will be handled in a confidential manner. The SAT Reasoning Test is \$43; late fee registration costs \$65.
2. All seniors will be given a copy of the IHS Scholarship Booklet on Senior Parent Night held on September 24, 2007 at 7:00 PM. The scholarship booklet lists most of the scholarship opportunities that come through the IHS counseling office. As new scholarship information is gathered it will be added to our scholarship list and/or newsletter. The scholarship booklet also includes information about financial aid, career planning, and provides a list of useful websites. It is then each senior's responsibility to review this publication regularly, pick up scholarship applications (if applicable), secure the necessary documentation required (transcripts, letters of recommendations, etc.) and submit or mail the application prior to the deadline.

3. Scholarships come in many forms, and recipients are determined by a variety of criteria. There are basically three different categories of scholarships:
 - a. *Academic based scholarships*—applicants are judged on their grade point average, ACT scores, class rank, honors and awards, etc.
 - b. *Need based scholarships*—the family income of the student is the main criteria.
 - c. *Talent/skill based scholarships*—students who demonstrate the greatest skill in a designated area (drama, vocal/instrumental music, athletics, etc.).

4. Every college has its own scholarship awards that are available only to those students who have applied and been admitted to their institutions. These scholarships do not come through the IHS counseling office. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each student to request scholarship information from the school(s) to which they are applying. For this type of scholarship, students apply directly to the college or university, not through the high school counseling office. There are links to a number of college websites on our Counseling Office website. Students seeking admission to a college or university’s “Honor’s College” should be aware that these application deadlines are much earlier than regular admissions deadlines.

5. Federal Financial Aid Forms (the FAFSA) will be available in January 2008. This is a FREE form—there is no cost to file it. In order for these forms to be completed and filed, the family’s income taxes for 2007 must be figured. (Please not that this is figured, not filed). You must complete and file a FAFSA in order to qualify for federal, state, and local college aide (in the forms of grants, loans, and college work study). These forms can be completed in a hard copy form, but the preferred and quicker method is via the internet at www.fafsa.ed.gov. We will host a financial aid workshop in January or February of 2008 for interested parents. You and/or

your student will receive a flyer announcing this event. A financial aid expert will make this presentation and be available to answer individual questions.

6. Representatives from area post-secondary institutions and military branches make frequent planned visits to Independence High School throughout the school year during advisory. All interested students are encouraged to attend these meetings. This is a great opportunity for students to meet with admissions representatives from area colleges, technical schools, and junior colleges, as well as military recruiters.

7. Any student who plans to play any type of sport on the collegiate level MUST be cleared through the NCAA Clearinghouse. Failure to do so may cause a student to be declared ineligible. NCAA Clearinghouse requirements will be presented to all students. Students can register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net *(there is a fee involved)*.

For students that plan to enter the workforce or join the military after graduation, the following information may be helpful:

1. Military recruiters visit the high school counseling office from time to time. Students are welcome to visit with recruiters during advisory time.

Seniors will develop a resume and complete job applications in their Senior Advisory class. Job interviewing skills and appropriate employee attitudes and behaviors are also discussed.

Students that are undecided about their future are welcome to take a look at our extensive resources available through the library, some of the computer labs, and the Counseling Office. Seniors have been informed of these resources for exploring interests, abilities, and careers and have been encouraged to use them.

It is our sincere hope that your student's senior year will be both an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Again, we will make every effort to keep the seniors informed of pertinent information here at school and we would appreciate your cooperation and involvement at home. We encourage you to hold your son/daughter accountable for keeping up with upcoming events and opportunities, becoming familiar with ACT/SAT test dates and scholarship deadlines, and the admission requirements and deadlines to their chosen colleges or institutions. Hopefully, this will help teach our seniors responsibility—a characteristic that will become even more important as they pursue higher education and/or the career of their choice. If you have any questions or concerns throughout this school year, please feel free to call us at the high school at (620) 332-1815. We look forward to working with both you and your senior!

Sincerely,

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