



December 12, 2018

Dear Friends:

As another busy year in the Reach High Scholars Program comes to a close; we want to update you on important developments.

### **A Quick Look at Our First Decade**

RHSP was launched over ten years ago, at a time when Raymond High School had about 500 students, and, in 2012, we became a New Hampshire non-profit corporation.

RHS now has 375 students, a decline of 25% during our existence, which is a trend in much of rural New Hampshire that is projected to continue over the next several years. This presents challenges for some of our initiatives, like Raymond Roundtables, our academic enrichment program for 7th, 8th and 9th graders, and the PSAT and SAT Boot Camps, which function best (both financially and pedagogically) with a minimum critical mass of students. To adapt to this change, we have launched an outreach effort to nearby communities and were encouraged by having five students from the neighboring town of Epping in Roundtables last summer.

Recently, we welcomed 22 new members into the program at a well-attended induction ceremony. Thirteen of the inductees are 8<sup>th</sup> graders, which adds a new cohort of students and parents who will be benefiting from RHSP's initiatives throughout their secondary-school years.

### **Criteria for Continued Eligibility**

RHSP has clear criteria for selection and standards for continuing membership. Members earn eligibility points for their academic achievements and their involvement in initiatives of RHSP. A minimum number of points is required at the beginning of each year to remain a member.

Rising seniors are recognized as Members, Honors Members and Highest Honors Members based on accumulated points and they include their membership status on their college applications. Our seniors are in the process of submitting about 65 applications to over 35 highly competitive colleges.

### **College Debt and Our College Graduation Rate**

College attendance has increased significantly in the past 25 years, fueled by studies showing that, over a lifetime, graduates from four-year colleges will earn about \$1 million more than those with just a high school degree. Graduating with a degree, at a reasonable cost and with modest debt, is a good thing.

There are about 3,300 four-year colleges in the U.S. The average graduation rate in four years from all those colleges is just 40%. At over 90% of them, students from low- or modest-income families can graduate with debt of \$100,000 or more. Even worse than having a degree and \$100,000 of debt, is to drop out after two years with no degree and, say, \$50,000 of debt.

RHSP has had 26 students attend highly competitive colleges in classes that graduated through 2018. Twenty-four of them (92%) graduated in four years. Most of them are from low- or middle-income families that have paid not more than \$15-20,000 per year and the students, on average, have less than \$30,000 of debt.

## Highly Competitive Colleges

RHSP maintains contact with over 90 highly competitive colleges that have excellent academics, significant need-based grants, supportive cultures and high four-year graduation rates. They have been furnished information on RHSP to give them an appreciation of its value. Several of them have added Raymond to the limited number of New Hampshire high schools that they visit.

Colleges attended by RHSP members in the past ten years include: Bard (2), Boston College, Brown, Carleton, Connecticut College, Dartmouth (3), Hamilton (3), Hobart & William Smith (5), Holy Cross (4), Lafayette, Mount Holyoke, Northeastern (2), Rensselaer Polytechnic (3), St. Lawrence (3), Skidmore (3), Trinity (2), UNH (13), University of Rochester, Union (2), Wheaton (3) and Worcester Polytechnic (6).

## Fast Facts about the Reach High Scholars Program

- In 2018, we had ten students in our 13-week winter SAT Boot Camp and 16 in the shorter fall PSAT and SAT courses. In the summer, we had 22 students in Roundtables and 22 in boarding programs at Brown, Dartmouth, Phillips Exeter and St. Paul's.
- In the past ten years, 48 RHSP members have gone to highly competitive colleges (compared to 18 in the prior 90-year history of RHS).
- Most of them have financial aid with small amounts of debt and need-based grants of up to \$62,000 per year that, over four years, will have a total value of about \$6 million.
- During 2011-2018, 6.8% of RHSP members went to highly competitive colleges; based on available information, only two NH high schools have done better.
- We have had contributions from charitable institutions and individuals of about \$350,000, of which about \$130,000 was used by RHSP and \$220,000 went to our four summer enrichment partners.
- RHSP students have received financial aid from the summer partners totaling over \$817,000 (27% of which was reimbursed by RHSP and supporters).
- Hence, cash contributed to RHSP and its summer partners has led, in the form of scholarships and grants from colleges, to a **17.1X multiplier effect**.

## RSHP Resources

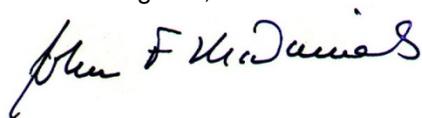
RHSP's philosophy is that money should not be a roadblock to a great education. Top colleges have plenty of financial aid. We use our resources to help RHS students get through the starting gates.

The operating expenses of RHSP are covered by contributions from its Board of Directors. Gifts from other donors support specific initiatives, like Raymond Roundtables, the Boot Camps and college visits, which have meaningful shortfalls due to our low "sticker prices" and generous need-based aid. Some of our donors also contribute directly to the summer partners to support their aid to our students.

In the spirit of the holiday season, we welcome help in this pioneering education effort through gifts to our tax-exempt charitable organization. They truly are gifts that keep on giving. Donations can be made by (i) a check sent to: P.O. 982, Raymond, NH 03077, (ii) bank wire transfer (by emailing me for RHSP's account details) or (iii) or via PayPal or a credit card by clicking [here](#).

We hope this will give some sense of the overall effort in which many of you have participated and generously supported. We look forward to keeping you posted and maintaining your enthusiasm for helping Raymond students control their academic destiny and reach higher in pursuit of education.

Warmest regards,



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