



June 30, 2021

Dear Friends:

With the worst of the pandemic challenge hopefully behind us, the Reach High Scholars Program is adjusting to its future. The environment will be different from the pre-Covid era, with some of the changes driven by factors that were developing earlier in the last decade.

The Post-Pandemic Glide Path

Covid deprived students of the daily face-to-face interchange with teachers and fellow-students that is an essential element of learning. Much of their education was delivered remotely, which had lasting effects on progress. They are coming out of it shell-shocked and Zoomed-out. The glide path to a new normal will be slow and requires a strong mindset to see beyond the residual trauma.

Colleges with small endowments were challenged financially by the extra expenses to adapt their campuses to Covid protocols and on-line classes. They had lower revenues from full-pay (particularly foreign) students and profitable services like room and board. The reduced ability of students to pay after they return to on-campus classes in the fall presents a further hurdle. Some colleges have been forced to close and others are perilously close to doing so.

The Highly Resourced Colleges (“HRCs”) emphasized by RHSP have survived Covid with relatively little adverse impact, due primarily to their strong endowments. They continue to offer excellent educations at affordable cost for low and middle-income families.

Change Is Creating Great Opportunities

The pandemic created needs for abrupt changes in the ways that we lived, communicated, worked, traveled, and dealt with the need for life-saving medical remedies. Technology rose to the occasion, with the invention and delivery of vaccines to control the virus, groceries and other essentials arriving daily to our doorsteps and Zoom replacing the need to travel long distances for short meetings.

Much of the credit for these changes is due to scientists and engineers and there are expanding job opportunities for college graduates in those areas. The implementation of these new technologies also requires critical thinking, problem-solving, originality and strategizing – skills that are developed by challenging college educations, regardless of the major. And they lead to top salaries.

RHSP’s Mission and Adapting to Change

RHSP’s stated mission is “to encourage, support and mentor motivated students as they reach high for their educational goals, by connecting them to a broad range of educational initiatives and preparing them to attend colleges that will help them thrive in a rapidly changing world.” Our mission is essential to the current environment.

There is an ongoing decline in the number of high school students in New Hampshire that predates Covid. For example, at Raymond High School, where RHSP has conducted most of its activities, the graduating class of 2011 had 111 students, several of whom took advantage of our initiatives, inspired each other and went to highly resourced colleges (“HRCs”).

This year’s graduating class had 66 students, a decline of 40% over ten years. It has led to eliminating challenging Honors and Advanced Placement courses due to budgetary constraints and a lack of enough students qualified to take them. It also means fewer motivated participants in RHSP.

RHSP is addressing this by expanding to include students from several neighboring towns. In the past two years, we have had 25 students from eight towns, in addition to Raymond, in our Reach High Roundtables and PSAT and SAT Boot Camps. We are in discussions with one school district to incorporate their students into all RHSP’s activities and intend to expand that model further. We will be using a mix of on-premises and virtual activities. The latter were developed during the pandemic and can be used to communicate across nearby, but greater, geographic distances.

Program Directors

With our expanded activities, we have an increasing amount of work. Sarah Nelson, our Program Director, has done a wonderful job, despite Covid protocols that prevented her entering the schools until the last few weeks of the school year. But there is a need for more help.

We are delighted to announce that Shanyn Grenier will be joining us on August 1st. Shanyn graduated from UNH (A.B., psychology major, *summa cum laude*, in 1997), Boston University (M.Ed., Higher Education Administration, in 2000) and UNH (M.Ed., Counseling, in 2003).

Shanyn is recognized as the best high school college counselor in New Hampshire. She has had 17 years of experience, ten of which were at Portsmouth High School. Based on available data, during her years at PHS, Hanover (home of Dartmouth College) was the only NH high school with a higher percentage of graduates who went to one of the 110 highly resourced colleges emphasized by RHSP. Raymond ranks third in that comparison, due primarily to the efforts of RHSP. Shanyn will be our primary college counselor in the schools where we currently operate, and she will play a leading role in expanding RHSP to other high schools.

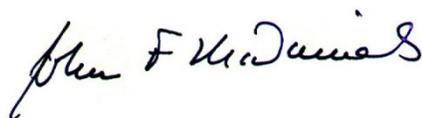
Sarah Nelson will participate with Shanyn in counseling high school students and will be primarily responsible for RHSP’s relationships with the colleges and other organizations that provide summer academic enrichment programs, PSAT and SAT test prep and other valuable services to RHSP.

Recent Outcomes

This year, three of our graduating members have gone to HRCs with need-based grants that, over four years, will total \$523,000. Four others will be attending UNH where they benefit from the concessionary pricing for in-state students.

The \$7.6 million of grants received by our 56 scholars attending HRCs is 16.9X the \$451,000 of cash contributed to date to RHSP and its summer partners; **a wonderful return for our donors.**

Warmest regards,



John F. McDaniels
Chairman Reach High Scholars Program