

**Little Rock Christian Academy**

**Academic**

**Handbook**

**High School 2016-2017**

***Christian•Independent•Collegiate***

### **The Mission**

To serve families, the church, and the community by providing a K4-12<sup>th</sup> grade education characterized by excellence in the pursuit of truth from a Christ-centered worldview.

#### **We seek to:**

Be a pre-eminent K4-12 academic institution that offers an excellent college-preparatory curriculum while serving the greatest portion of the body of Christ reasonably possible within our community.

Above all else, uncompromisingly teach and model the truth of the Person of Christ.

### **Academic Excellence**

Excellence in the pursuit of truth from a Christian worldview drives the academic program at Little Rock Christian. Classroom work is at the heart of the LRCA experience. Passion for learning drives each student as he or she pursues truth, excellence, and new personal levels of accomplishment. Students will emerge from each course with a deep understanding of the subject matter, the ability to think critically and creatively, and the confidence to take on greater challenges.

Our academic program focuses on the whole person and desires to help students develop their God-given gifts and talents. Students develop a solid academic foundation in the core areas of literacy, writing, mathematics, history, and science. Engaging classes and opportunities in music, art, drama, foreign language, physical education, computer technology, clubs, service, and athletics provide avenues for the full participation of each child.

Examples of excellence abound. LRCA students become National Merit Scholars and National Achievement Award winners. Challenging Advanced Placement classes in fourteen subject areas and four concurrent enrollment courses allow students to excel as they prepare to enter the colleges of their choice.

One of our strengths can be found in our enthusiastic, dedicated, and highly qualified faculty, staff, and administrators. Our teachers are lifelong learners who share a zeal for knowledge, wisdom, and, most importantly, a passion for Jesus Christ. Talented in their fields of expertise, they are committed educators who offer individualized attention and support to students in and out of the classroom. Our teachers do more than instruct: they also encourage, guide, mentor, and inspire their students to be the very best that God created them to be.

### **Academic Handbook 2016-2017**

This handbook is designed to provide important information to parents and students regarding curriculum, course offerings, graduation requirements, learner services, testing, college and career counseling, and school policies pertaining to these subjects. As such, it is handy resource for use in selecting courses for the upcoming school year. Although every attempt has been made to be as accurate as possible, sometimes it is necessary to make a change in order to best meet student needs. Updates or changes can be found online at [www.littlerockchristian.com](http://www.littlerockchristian.com). We encourage all parents and students to become familiar with this handbook in order to make the most informed choices regarding course selection.

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# Graduation Requirements

**Beginning with the Class of 2017, students must accumulate 28 units of credit between grades 9-12.**

**The following credits are required:**

Math	4 units (including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II)
Science	3 units (including a physical science, biology, and chemistry)
English	4 units
Social Studies	3 units (including .5 Civics, .5 Economics, 1 World, & 1 U.S.)
Foreign Language	2 units (must be consecutive years in the same language taken 8-12)
Biblical Worldview	1 unit for each year enrolled
Fine Arts	.5 unit elective
Physical Education	.5 unit
Health & Safety	.5 unit
Oral Communication	.5 unit
J-Term	.25 unit for each year enrolled

**Number of Credits**

28 credit hours total (beginning with Class of 2017)

**Additional Requirements**

Minimum of 15 hours in Service Learning Project (Class of 2018 must complete by March 1, 2017)

Completion of ACT with scores submitted to LRCA is required for graduation.

## Grading Scale & GPA Equivalent

Grading Scale		GPA Equivalent	
<b>A+</b>	97-100	<b>A+</b>	4.3
<b>A</b>	93-96	<b>A</b>	4.15
<b>A-</b>	90-92	<b>A-</b>	4.0
<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>B+</b>	3.67
<b>B</b>	83-86	<b>B</b>	3.33
<b>B-</b>	80-82	<b>B-</b>	3.0
<b>C+</b>	77-79	<b>C+</b>	2.67
<b>C</b>	73-76	<b>C</b>	2.33
<b>C-</b>	70-72	<b>C-</b>	2.0
<b>D+</b>	67-69	<b>D+</b>	1.67
<b>D</b>	63-66	<b>D</b>	1.33
<b>D-</b>	60-62	<b>D-</b>	1.0
<b>F</b>	59 and below	<b>F</b>	0
<p>* Percentage grades will be rounded up or down to determine letter grades. Grade point averages on high school transcripts (and also for determination of graduation honors) will be calculated using the 4.0 scale.</p> <p>** Please see later notes about 5.0 scale</p>			

# Academic Policies & Information

## Honor Roll

LRCA offers 2 levels of honors: Honor Roll and President's List. Both awards can be earned on a semester as well as an all year basis. **Honor Roll:** Students must earn a cumulative quarterly average of 93% or higher, with no class grades lower than 70%. All Year recognition of this award requires these standards be maintained across the first three academic quarters of the year. **President's List:** Students must earn a cumulative quarterly average of 96% or higher, with no grades lower than 90% and no recorded conduct issues. All Year recognition of this award requires these standards be maintained across the first three academic quarters of the year.

## Honors Graduate Status

In order to qualify for Honors Graduate designation, students must earn a cumulative, 8 semester GPA of 4.0 or greater.

## Valedictorian & Salutatorian

LRCA does not report a class rank of transcripts. We do, however, determine a Valedictorian and Salutatorian for graduation honors. These designations are intended to connote clear academic leadership of the first and second rank among the graduating seniors. A student must in good standing to receive the honor. Transfer students must attend LRCA for six high school semesters. Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be calculated using overall, cumulative GPA.

## Class Rank

We do not rank (except to determine graduation honors of Valedictorian and Salutatorian). Class rank does not accurately communicate a student's ability in our selective, college preparatory program. Many quality colleges, universities, and scholarship programs under this and are used to having "no ranking" for students from strong, college preparatory programs and home school students. If some communication of a student's comparison to peers is absolutely necessary, the principal must give approval, and the minimal amount of information possible will be communicated to the organization (for example, saying the student falls in the top 20% is preferable if a comparison is essential).

## Repeating a Course on Campus

All courses taken will be reflected on student transcripts. Students are permitted to retake the same course if the grade is below 70%. Earning a better grade does not eliminate the first grade. In the case that a lower grade is earned when a course is repeated, it will also be reflected on the transcript.

## Failures

In the event that a student fails a course, it is the responsibility of the family to contact the Registrar to discuss arrangements to ensure adequate credits for graduation. Non-LRCA courses must have prior approval to make up credit. Any courses taken to recover credit for failures will be shown on the transcript. The failed course will not be removed from the transcript.

**Academic Probation**

A student with two or more D's (below 70%) or one F at interim, quarter, or semester's end will be placed on academic probation. Academic probation will include a closer scrutiny of toward student achievement. LRCA desires to partner with families of students struggling academically. If a student is placed on academic probation, it is expected that parental involvement along with Learner Services and faculty resources will be jointly used to help the struggling student achieve to the best of his/her ability. LRCA reserves the right to place a student on an individualized plan of action if deemed necessary to help ensure progress. Progress will be monitored, and if, at the conclusion of a semester, the student has not shown improvement, the administration will determine if dismissal will take place.

**Extracurricular Eligibility**

Students wishing to participate in the rich array of extracurricular opportunities offered at LRCA will maintain a priority for academic success as well. The privilege of participating in extracurricular activities may be suspended or revoked if a student is placed on academic probation. In such cases, sponsors and coaches will be in communication with the appropriate administration to monitor student progress and determine what steps are to be taken with students individually to help them maintain eligibility for particular programs.

**Graduating Early**

High School consists of four academic years, grades 9-12. Our expectation is that all LRCA students attend four years of high school. Deviation from this path requires extraordinary circumstances approved by the high school principal and the Head of School in consultation with the Board of Trust, to whom is entrusted the bestowing of all the rights and privileges of a high school diploma.

**Transfer Credits**

Approval must be granted for all coursework from other schools counted toward graduation. The Registrar reviews transcripts during the admissions process.

**Online or Off Campus Courses**

Unless prior approval has been given, non-LRCA courses will not be credited toward graduation. Contact the Registrar for more information.

**LRCA Students on Exchange**

LRCA appreciates the value of overseas exchange during the high school years. It is important for families considering a foreign exchange experience to plan early in order to best integrate the exchange into the student's required course of study. Because there are a variety of programs that offer cultural exchange, it is vital that a complete review of a student's transcript in conjunction with the exchange program's offerings be conducted with the Registrar to ensure that LRCA graduation requirements be met. LRCA requires that students complete regular coursework on campus during the senior year so that appropriate oversight in relation to academic requirements and college process can be given. Therefore, students desiring to participate in an overseas exchange should plan on completing the exchange prior to beginning the senior year.



### **Foreign Exchange Students Attending LRCA**

All foreign exchange students must provide a complete transcript translated into English prior to enrollment. The transcript should be submitted as part of the initial admissions process. Prior to admission, it will be determined if a student will be attending for credit or not for credit. A written agreement will be established on the part of the student and the Office of Admissions regarding the status of each student admitted for an exchange.

### **For Credit Exchange**

Exchange students enrolling for the purpose of gaining credits toward graduation must exhibit a level of English proficiency that will allow them to fully participate in all assignments in all courses in which they enroll. We reserve the right to require evidence of English proficiency by requesting scores be submitted from tests such as TOEFL. Adjustments may be made for accommodating non-native English speakers in classes where formal writing is a major component. However, because credits will accumulate toward graduation, it is imperative that exchange students be held to the same standards as other students. In order to help students adjust to academic writing, students determined to have need will be required to take the Basic English Composition and Literature course designed to help them with academic writing. This course would be counted as an English credit for graduation purposes. For credit exchange students should make known the length of their desired duration at LRCA.

### **Not for Credit Exchange**

Exchange students not attending for the purpose of accumulating credits toward graduation will receive a transcript that notes that coursework was modified. More flexibility is granted in terms of English proficiency as well as fulfilling requirements for specific courses. However, we expect all exchange students to participate fully in the life of our school including completion of coursework.

### **Transcript & Report Card Release**

Report cards and transcripts will not be released unless satisfactory arrangements have been made with the business office concerning financial obligations.

### **Requesting a Transcript**

All requests for transcripts must be made to the Registrar. It is recommended that requests be made one business week prior to the date the transcript is needed to allow for processing time. We cannot guarantee a transcript release with fewer than five days' notice.

### **Semester Exams**

Semester exams (or their equivalent) represent 20% of the semester grade. In some courses, alternative assessments such as projects may replace a semester exam. The schedule for high school exams is posted on our website about a month before the exams occur. However, the days devoted to exams are posted on the master calendar at the start of each school year. We expect all students to sit for exams at the established times. Only in extenuating circumstances (illness, for example) do we allow students to take exams at times other than as stated on the exam schedule. The Assistant Principal must grant approval in these cases.

### **Semester Exam Exemption for Seniors**

Seniors at LRCA may earn exemption from semester exams. In order for students to be exempt from a semester exam in a particular course, they must have a 90% or better average for the two quarters and not exceed the number of absences allowed for credit. **Teachers have the discretion to require exams if needed educationally. Typically, alternative assessments like projects are not exempt.**

### **January Term (J-Term)**

J-Term is modeled after the college January Term idea and is designed to increase learning opportunities for students. It allows us to offer classes not normally provided in regular semesters and gives students opportunities to grow through a variety of experiences as they develop their giftedness and consider where God may be leading them. The “block” or trip nature of the week also allows for deeper relationships with teachers and small groups of students as well as focused in-depth study. Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors may work in approved internships anywhere in the world. Students may also elect educational trips or mission trips.

J-Term is an interim “semester” between the fall and spring semesters and runs the first week of January after returning from Christmas break. The J-Term school day is divided into 2 sessions: morning and afternoon. One course is taken per session. Each morning and afternoon course receives a .125 credit, while trips, internships, and full day courses receive a .25 credit. Each student is required to earn the .25 J-Term credit for each year enrolled at LRCA. J-Term courses will not count toward fulfilling non J-Term graduation requirements. Some J-Term courses require a fee in order to provide needed materials or to pay for transportation and lodging costs. In addition, due to some courses being held off-campus, families may need to arrange for transportation to and from those courses.

### **J-Term Attendance Policy**

Because of the compact nature of J-Term, each day of the J-Term experience is vital for purposes of awarding credit. In the event that a student has an excused absence during J-Term, he or she will be required to complete work commensurate with what was missed during the absence. Due to the variety of course offerings and experiences, commensurate work can take many forms such as completing service or practice hours, creating an independent project, independent research and writing, etc. Approved make up work must be completed in a timely manner (typically by the end of January). Students who do not complete the approved work during this timeframe will lose credit.

# Scheduling

## Withdrawal from Class

Students wishing to drop/add a class during the first two weeks of a semester may do so without penalty, **but they must (1) attend classes until they have received an e-mail notification that their class change request has been processed and (2) complete a class change request form with appropriate signatures.** The only exception to this policy will be for those students who have been placed in the wrong level of class through the scheduling process (ex. student is registered in Algebra and should be in Honors Algebra).

Beginning the third week of classes each semester, through the date of the first progress report (approximately six weeks), students who drop a class will receive a “W” (withdrawal) on their transcript. From the date of the first progress report each semester (approximately six weeks), through to the end of the semester, students who drop a class will receive a “WF” (withdrawal failure) on their transcript, which will be calculated as a failing grade.

Students who wish to drop an AP class at the end of the first semester must (1) meet with their Academic and College Counselor, (2) complete a class change form with parent signature, (3) speak directly to their AP teacher, and receive a teacher initial on their class-change form, and (4) notify any colleges they have applied to of this change in their academic program.

Students dropping an AP class at the semester will not be eligible to take the AP exam.

## Appeal Process

Students who do not meet the prerequisites for a course may ask the department head of that course for an appeals form. This form does not guarantee that the appeal will be granted. The completion and return of the form initiates the review process and gives the department more information upon which to base the decision for adding a seat to the course or not.

## Schedule Change Requests

Students and parents should carefully consider courses selected for the upcoming school year. We strongly encourage reading course information in its entirety as well as speaking with teachers regarding which classes would be best. Students are allowed to request a schedule change for up to 1½ weeks after a course begins. After the drop/add date, students will not be allowed to change classes unless new and unforeseen factors develop that merit such a change, such as a family emergency or illness. Students who are allowed to drop because of these factors will receive WP (Withdraw Passing) or WF (Withdraw Failing) on their transcript indicating that a course was begun but not finished. It is very rare, and only for urgent needs, that a change is made after the first 1½ weeks. It is also unusual to change during the first 1.5 weeks, but factors other than illness and emergencies will be considered during that time.

## **Pre-AP and Honors Courses**

Prerequisites for students requesting entrance into Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) and Honors courses are indicated in individual course descriptions. These courses are not weighted in GPA calculations. In many cases, Pre-AP or Honors courses are prerequisite to entrance into AP courses and will assist students desiring to enter AP courses.

## **Selecting Courses**

LRCA offers a rich array of courses designed to prepare our students well for college and for life. We desire that students be good stewards of their academic gifts and try to achieve the best balance possible in regard to course load. Academically speaking, a student is most successful and most content when his or her academic load is a good fit with personality, ability, availability, and future goals. We encourage families to discuss and consider the following during the course selection process:

**Prerequisites:** Enrollment in some courses requires previous specified coursework and/or a particular grade, completion of student application or interview, a particular score on a PSAT or IOWA test, or teacher recommendation. In the event that a student does not meet the criteria for entrance and desires to petition that an exception be made, he or she may do so by appealing through the protocol established by the department in which the course is taught.

**Counsel of Teachers:** Often present and former teachers are the best resources for knowing a student as a learner. Their input can be invaluable.

**College and Career Goals:** Is the coursework in line with what is expected to achieve individual student goals related to college and career choices? Many colleges use “academic rigor” as a leading criteria for acceptance and scholarships. Consultation with LRCA’s College and Career Guidance personnel can be helpful in determining if the courses selected are optimal for reaching these goals.

**Interest and Enthusiasm:** Students who are enthusiastic about a particular course of study are often the best students. We strongly encourage students to explore areas of interest and passion. Planning well when selecting courses from year to year can optimize opportunities for learning, especially during the junior and senior years when students become eligible for Advanced Placement courses and a variety of upper-level electives.

**Time Management for Honors, Pre-AP, and AP coursework:** It is important to consider how much time a student is able to devote to coursework outside the classroom in choosing Honors, Pre-AP, and college level courses, especially if the student is involved in time-consuming after-school activities. It is recommended that students desiring to take more than two honors, college-level or Pre-AP classes consult with teachers regarding the workload and amount of time required for each course. It is also important to know that college-level courses require a heavier load of independent work, both inside and outside of class.

**Balance & Fit:** Do the courses chosen include an appropriate mix of challenge and interest for the student? Opportunities are maximized and students are helped most when the load, challenge, and fit with skills and interests are well-balanced.

**Number of Classes:** Each student is required to enroll in seven classes each semester. This allows for one period each semester to be used for a study hall. If a student is enrolled in multiple college-level courses, then the Registrar **may allow** an extra study hall.

# COLLEGE CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES AT LITTLE ROCK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Why take a college-level course during high school?

Earn college credit at a fraction of the cost and avoid high tuition for freshmen-level courses.

Free hours up to spend more time with subjects you enjoy in college. Enhance your high school resume with challenging courses. Use these courses to further explore a subject that interests and challenges you!

The following information explains four ways Little Rock Christian offers to achieve college credit: Advanced Placement, concurrent enrollment, CLEP testing, and college attendance.

Students should read the “Credit by Exam” or “Transfer Credit” webpages of the colleges or universities they hope to attend to make sure that credit will be granted, and if so, what type of credit. Each institution has the discretion to determine what type of credit will be accepted.

## **Advanced Placement and Concurrent Enrollment**

The most popular means of achieving college credit at Little Rock Christian involve two similar, but separate programs. While both programs offer the possibility of college credit, their end goals and some details are quite different. In order to help decide which is the best fit for you and your needs, the chart below offers a side-by-side comparison of some frequently asked questions.

<b>Advanced Placement (AP) vs. Concurrent Enrollment</b>	
<b>Advanced Placement</b>	<b>Concurrent Enrollment</b>
<b>What is its purpose?</b> Prepares students to pass a national, standardized exam through a year-long academically challenging course.	<b>What is its purpose?</b> Afford students the opportunity to earn transferable college credit through a sponsoring organization while simultaneously earning high school credit.
<b>Are there any extra costs?</b> Each AP exam costs \$90. The money is billed by LRCA and paid to College Board.	<b>Are there any extra costs?</b> Each credit hour costs approximately \$100. A standard three-hour course will cost approximately \$300. This rate is significantly cheaper than typical college rates. The money is billed by LRCA and paid to the sponsor institution.
<b>How am I eligible?</b> Individual courses have different requirements. However, GPA, PSAT scores, and teacher recommendations are all basic components of these criteria.	<b>How am I eligible?</b> Students are required to have the following prerequisites to be eligible for concurrent enrollment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Junior or Senior status</li> <li>• 3.0 unweighted cumulative GPA and minimum 20 ACT composite OR 950 SAT CR+M</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rising junior applicants may use a 20 PLAN composite OR 950 PSAT (EBRW+M) combined with a minimum 3.25 cumulative GPA</li> <li>Must have at least 1 recommendation or endorsement from a teacher in a related subject.</li> <li>Additional prerequisites may apply. See individual course descriptions.</li> </ul>
<b>How is credit earned?</b> Students earn credit by achieving a score between 3 – 5 on the AP exam at the end of the year. <i>Note: Not all colleges accept AP credit, and those that do offer varying amounts of credit based on scores and specific majors.</i>	<b>How is credit earned?</b> Students earn transferable college credit by passing the sponsor institutions required assessments with a C or above. <i>Note: Unless a student attends the sponsor institution, the credit transfers as Pass or Fail rather than a letter grade. Credit will transfer to Arkansas universities and some out of state universities. Students should check their desired schools before signing up.</i>
<b>Is it graded differently?</b> AP courses are weighted (e.g. an extra point is added on the transcript, so an A carries a weight of 5.0 points rather than 4.0)	<b>Is it graded differently?</b> Concurrent enrollment courses are weighted (e.g. an extra point is added on the transcript, so an A carries a weight of 5.0 points rather than 4.0)
<b>What courses are offered?</b> <b>Math &amp; Science</b> <b>Arts &amp; Humanities</b> Calculus AB        Literature & Comp Calculus BC        Language & Comp Statistics            United States History Biology              World History Chemistry           US Gov't & Politics Physics I             Psychology Music Theory Art History	<b>What courses are offered?</b> 1 Semester (3 hours each): EGL 1013 English I: Composition EGL 1023 English II: Literary Analysis & Research HST 2123: US History since 1865  2 Semesters (3 hours): MTH 1113: College Algebra  *Limit of 2 per semester
<b>Is this right for me?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AP courses meet rigorous specifications mandated by College Board. These courses are designed to be challenging and are geared to serious students.</li> </ul>	<b>Is this right for me?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concurrent enrollment courses are modified college courses, taught at LRCA by teachers with advanced degrees.</li> <li>Concurrent enrollment allows</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AP exams are egalitarian tests, which allow students to display their competence on a national, standardized exam.</li> <li>• AP courses make for competitive resumes, and high test scores provide a nationwide metric for universities to compare students within certain subjects.</li> </ul>	<p>students to earn credit in core classes and enter college with credit hours in required courses. This frees students up to take more courses that interest them or are required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concurrent enrollment allows students to earn college and high school credit at the same time, but it does not necessarily provide a more robust college application.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What's the bottom line?</b></p> <p>Both AP and concurrent enrollment courses are hard work, high reward programs. Both provide a collegiate crucible at the high school level. Generally, AP is better suited for students who wish to have the most competitive college application. Concurrent enrollment is better suited for students who wish to eliminate required courses before entering college and allow more time to take courses in a major or minor area.</p>	

### **College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)**

CLEP tests are administered through College Board and cover material from the first two years of college in 33 different subjects. Each test costs \$80 and primarily consists of multiple-choice questions. CLEP Tests can be taken in a variety of locations including locally at UALR and Strayer University. Students should contact one of the test centers directly to register and then complete the online registration form through [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

Numerous studies indicate that CLEP testing resulted in more hours taken, a quicker route to degree, and higher graduation rate. A passing score can earn between 3 to 12 hours of college credit, depending on the course and the institution.

While not provided through LRCA, CLEP testing is highly recommended as an alternate route to college credit. Any student can participate in CLEP tests, but AP students who did not earn a passing score on the exam or whose preferred institution does not recognize AP credit are strongly encouraged to participate in CLEP tests.

### **College Attendance**

It is possible for a junior or senior student to arrange his or her LRCA schedule in order to take a regular course at a local college or university. Admission is up to the university. While this option is sometimes difficult logistically, it has proven to meet the needs of some students. Students are required to consider only courses that meet in the afternoon or evening. Students must be on the LRCA campus for all community times (such as APP, chapel, class meetings, etc.) Community times typically happen in the morning and during lunch. We will do our best to help a student arrange his or her schedule to make this work, and while it usually can work, sometimes schedules do not allow this option.

Students who are approved to take a college class off-campus **may be provided** an additional study hall in order to help with scheduling. The college class can replace one class at LRCA and normally receives one full high school credit for a one semester, three credit hour college course. LRCA tuition is not reduced for this provision.

### **Grade Calculation for AP and Concurrent Enrollment Courses**

AP courses and concurrent enrollment courses are “weighted” on the student’s transcript: an additional one point is added to the GPA when the semester grade is posted to the student’s transcript (a “B-” 3.0 in an AP class would become an “A-” 4.0 on the student’s transcript when calculating the student’s grade point average). It is important to note that many of the better colleges and universities do not use our grade point average; they often recalculate and do not weight grades, but do consider difficulty of course work in other ways. The extra point is not added until the grade is posted at the end of the semester, so report cards and Renweb will show the lower score. Colleges receive the transcript with the additional point.



## COLLEGE & CAREER GUIDANCE

Our Department of College and Career Guidance helps students launch into the next phase of life after high school. As such, it oversees the various aspects of college planning, including college selection, testing, application, acceptance, and funding. Please contact our College Guidance Office if you have any questions or desire more information about any of the topics listed.

### FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Beginning freshman year, all students are encouraged to complete a Four-Year Plan (located in the back of this handbook). Although this plan is tentative and may change, it is crucial for freshmen to begin thinking about all four high school years as integral to their future academic goals.

### PSAT/NMSQT

Administered each October for all 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders, the PSAT measures reading, math reasoning, and writing skills. The test is sponsored by the College Board ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)) and allows students access to free college-planning materials, along with their scores, in January. The test also determines **National Merit Scholarship** participants for juniors. PSAT scores are also used to help determine student placement during our course selection process.

### ACT

The ACT test contains four curriculum-based, multiple-choice tests that measure academic achievement in the areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science, as well as an optional essay-based writing test. All students must take the ACT or SAT in order to apply for college entrance and as a graduation requirement from LRCA. Students are encouraged to take the test for the first time in their 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. For more information, see [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

### SAT

The SAT assesses how well students analyze and solve problems and consists of critical reading, mathematics, and an optional writing component. As results on the two assessments may vary, it is beneficial to take both the ACT and SAT exams. Some highly-selective schools also require the SAT II Subject Tests as part of the admission process. For more resources, see [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

### COLLEGE PROCESS

The College Guidance Office helps families navigate admission to college. Our desire is to connect you with the resources needed to make informed decisions in the college process and to help your students complete everything necessary for application and acceptance, as well as stay informed about deadlines and requirements.

### CAREER APTITUDE TESTING

Two times each year, we sponsor the Highlands Ability Battery, a series of work samples that measure and define your student's hard-wired and innate abilities and lead to a sound career assessment (instead of depending on self-inserted responses to an interest survey). This program

includes the online abilities assessment, a group feedback session with parents and students, and a one-hour privately scheduled visit.

### **STUDENT MEETINGS – 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>**

We schedule small group appointments with each freshman and individual meetings with sophomores to ensure each student is on track to achieve his/her college and career goals including a review of the student's four-year plan, ACT/SAT testing plan, resume development, and assessments geared to give insight into college major and career decisions.

### **FAMILY MEETINGS – 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>**

We plan appointments with each junior and senior and his/her parents to talk specifically about necessary actions prior to graduation including test preparation, needed coursework, college visits, resume building, college funding planning, and career planning.

### **COLLEGE FAIR**

In late September or early October, LRCA and the other independent schools of Little Rock host a College Fair, assembling admission representatives from over 120 colleges around the nation. All high school students and their parents are encouraged to attend. This fair is typically held at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock

### **COLLEGE REP VISITS**

Throughout the fall, LRCA hosts numerous college admission representatives during lunch and APP periods. These are unique opportunities for students to learn about colleges they might not have the opportunity to visit and to meet the individuals who often make the admission decisions. Information about these visits, as well as beneficial questions to ask the college representatives, are provided early in the school year to both parents and students.

### **CAMPUS VISITS**

The Department of College and Career Guidance helps families maximize important college visits by providing campus visit guidelines and suggestions for classroom visits in areas of interest, time with department heads, particular financial/merit aid questions, and checklists to assist in compiling the various comparative information gathered from college visits.

### **SUMMER COLLEGE BOOT CAMPS**

In the summer prior to senior year, students are encouraged to attend one of LRCA's Summer College Boot Camps (offered for a fee). In the 2.5 day camp, students can complete most aspects of their college applications, including their admission and scholarship essays, professional resume, recommendation letter requests, and requirement checklists. Students also attend a panel of college admission representatives and practice their interview skills in mock interviews with the reps.

### **COLLEGE SUMMER PROGRAMS**

Many colleges and service/military academies offer summer programs. Through the newsletter and the College Guidance bulletin board, we will keep students informed of these opportunities and assist in the application process.

**COLLEGE FUNDING PLANNING (SCHOLARSHIPS/FINANCIAL AID)**

The college search process involves both finding a college that is a good fit as well as developing a financial strategy to attend the school. The College Guidance Office hosts a seminar and provides tools to help parents (7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) plan and finance college. We are also a resource for connecting families with financial aid and scholarship opportunities. It is important for families to start applying for these opportunities early in the senior year in order to benefit from colleges' available resources, as funds are often dispensed by chronological request.

**COLLEGE GUIDANCE NEWSLETTERS**

A monthly newsletter is emailed to all high school students and families. Parents may find it helpful to store these documents in an electronic folder for future reference, as they contain information about upcoming college-related events and deadlines.

## **High School Learner Services**

As an independent, private, Christian, college-preparatory school, LRCA strives to meet the needs of whole families. Learner Services provides support for students in the regular classroom. We provide limited accommodations for qualifying students, but do not follow public school IEPs/504 plans. We generate our own accommodation plans based on what we feel we can reasonably provide at LRCA.

### **Admission to Learner Services**

Referral is made by parent, teacher or student and must be agreed upon by parent.

In grades 6 and above, students need to have current testing with a diagnosed learning disability on file in order to participate in Learner Services. Testing is considered current for 3 years.

### **What Learner Services provides**

Provide a small testing environment; provide a reduced distraction environment for work and tests; provide organizational tools and encouragement; teach and reinforce study skills; work as an educational team with families and classroom teachers; provide limited accommodations through accommodation plans based on the needs of individual students; equip students to take responsibility for their learning.

### **Accommodations for ACT, PSAT, SAT, and AP Exams**

Parents wishing to request standardized testing accommodations, such as extended time for their child on the ACT or College Board tests (PSAT, SAT, or AP ), must contact the school's special testing coordinator. ACT and College Board require specific documentation with a diagnostic reference number to be able to request testing accommodations. Testing documentation must be current (within three years) and an accommodation plan must have been in place for the past 3 years. Parents need to submit all the required documentation at least 8-10 weeks before the actual test date to the school's special testing coordinator. All testing accommodations requested will be approved or denied by ACT or College Board.