

The Renaissance Charter School
Public Meeting of The Board of Trustees
Wednesday, July 2, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

AGENDA

- 1) Chairperson's Message – Dr. Monte Joffe
- 2) Roll Call
- 3) Approval of the June, 2020 Minutes
- 4) College and Career Office Report – Ana Falla Riff, Coordinator of the College Bound Program
- 5) Public Speaking

The Renaissance

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Charter School

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(Medical Leave of Absence)

July 1, 2020

The Renaissance Charter School

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

(Held virtually under emergency provision for NYS Open Meetings Law for COVID -19)

HONORARY MEMBERS

Sandra Geyer, 1941-2019

Hazel DuBois, Ph.D. 1937-2013

Hon. Rudolph Greco, Esq.

Meryl Thompson

The meeting convened at 6:05 p.m.

1. Chairperson's Message – Dr. Joffe called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for an incredible and unbelievable year during these unprecedented and challenging times. He was
2. Roll Call – Attendance was taken by Everett Boyd, Secretary

Present: Monte Joffe, Everett Boyd, Stacey Gauthier, Rachel Mandel, Chester Hicks, Raymond Johnson, and Francine Smith

Also Present: Ana Falla-Riff, College and Career Office Coordinator

Absent: Conor McCoy, and Margaret Martinez –DeLuca

3. Approval of the Minutes from June 3, 2020 Board Meeting.
Minutes were approved by acclamation.
4. College and Career Office Report – Ana Falla Riff (This report was shared with all board members prior to the meeting)
The report focused on the Fall and Spring Semesters, which were very different in nature, due to remote learning conditions that the school operated under in response to Covid-19. In-person counseling and supports for students were provided, as well as parent meetings were conducted in the Fall semester. In the Spring semester the College and Career Office transitioned to a remote model to meet the needs of students and parents. The landscape of the college application process also has changed in the Spring semester, due to changes in graduation and admission requirements.

“Developing Leaders for the Renaissance of New York”

These changes were brought about when The NYS Board of Regents cancelled the Regents Exams for The Spring Semester, and when the College Board cancelled SAT and AP Exams, due to Covid-19 restrictions. This necessitated communication with colleges, students, and families using various remote platforms to ensure that information was shared thoroughly and efficiently.

Forty five of forty seven graduating seniors completed their college application process and were admitted to college. Two students opted to take a year off before entering college. Some students have changed their plans to attend colleges in certain locations due to various considerations for their health, proximity to family, and changes in financial circumstances.

5. New Business – Stacey

Graduation was very successful. It was a drive-in ceremony held on Tuesday, June 23 at a location in Whitestone, NY, made possible through the generous arrangements provided by Barone Management, the developers of the facility for TRCS 2. Students and families were very happy with this unique event, which was a fitting send-off for our graduates.

6. Public Speaking – None

7. Adjournment – 7:03 pm

College and Career Office
2019-2020 Report to the Board of Trustees

College and Career Office

State of College Admissions and Advocacy

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Percent by Type of College

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Senior Send-Off and Breakfast to Welcome Eighth Graders

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Leadership Program Enrollment 2018-2019

Leadership Program Enrollment 2017-2018

Leadership Program Results - Fall Semester

Leadership Program Results - Spring Semester

[Goals and Initiatives for Academic Year 2020-2021](#)

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[Class of 2020 \[Seniors\]](#)

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[Goals for 2020-2021](#)

College and Career Office Coordinator's Report

Prepared by Ana Falla Riff

College Adviser/High School Coordinator for College Bound

Supporting our students during the COVID-19 pandemic has been our office's primary concern in the last three and a half months. In addition to tending to their social and emotional needs, we continued to provide challenging work in the classroom, hands-on experience in academic and leadership programs, and extensive small group and individual counseling. We have used a variety of tools to communicate with students and their parents, including Zoom, Google classroom, telephone calls, text messages and emails. Most students have maintained regular communication with us. We have approached our work with compassion while maintaining high expectations of our students. Our school community has demonstrated resilience and our *esprit de corps* has sustained us.

State of College Admissions and Advocacy

College and Career Office staff vigorously advocate with colleges on behalf of our students. We are in regular contact with college admissions, testing, and financial aid offices. We help students understand requests for financial or academic documents and to gather and submit these documents. The College Advisory met with 45 of the 47 graduating seniors to discuss their college and financial aid options. Meetings were usually held via Zoom video conferencing.

Members of the class of 2020, more than previous classes, cited financial aid as the primary factor in choosing a college. Economic insecurity was a significant factor because many of their parents were laid-off or furloughed during the quarantine. In addition, there is great uncertainty about how and when colleges will reopen. Some schools have already informed our students that fall semester classes will be held online. This uncertainty makes it more difficult for students to transition to college. The College Adviser will be checking in with graduates throughout the summer to facilitate this transition.

About a quarter of our seniors' financial aid applications were chosen for verification (this is a random selection and not an indication of potential fraud). The verification process is lengthy and confusing. CUNY, SUNY, and private schools may request different documents from an individual student. Students were required to print and submit documents even when the college was informed that they did not have access to a printer. The process was particularly grueling for students applying to opportunity programs such as CUNY's SEEK or SUNY's Education Opportunity Program (EOP). These programs provide academic and financial support to students who would otherwise not have access to higher education. It is no wonder that many opportunity program seats remain unfilled. The College Adviser helped students and their families to assemble documents, to fill out and submit forms, and was an advocate for them.

Students were counseled to make informed decisions as they reviewed and compared their financial aid awards.

The College Advisor helped students to craft and submit appeals for additional financial aid on the grounds of changed financial circumstances due to COVID-19. Six appeals were submitted and four have been granted thus far. Notably, a private school granted an unusual waiver to a student who could not provide documentation of the noncustodial parent's income (the CSS NonCustodial form is usually required). The student will now be able to attend the college of her choice. This student was informed by other schools that an admissions decision could not be rendered without such documentation.

The college admissions landscape for the class of 2021 is the subject of much speculation. Many colleges and universities, including most Ivy League schools, have announced that they will be test-optional for this group of juniors. This means that students can choose to not submit their test scores. Some schools that have been test-optional for years. Studies comparing graduation outcomes for students who submitted test scores and those who did not were found that rates were statistically insignificant. As a result, there is an ever-growing test-optional movement. A substantial body of research supports the view that standardized test scores are not predictive of students' ability to successfully complete their first year of college and that high school courses and GPA are more predictive. However, to date, only one SUNY school has announced that it will be test-optional.

The City University of New York (CUNY) announced in the fall semester that it had changed the manner in which students were deemed proficient in reading, writing and mathematics and eligible to take credit-bearing courses. Previously, students who did not meet proficiency standards because of their SAT/ACT or Regents scores were required to take assessments and placement tests. If they failed to meet the standards, they were required to take courses that were not credit bearing for which they had to pay. Or, they would have to enroll in programs such as CUNY START that help students hone their reading/writing and/or math skills. Not meeting standards meant that students were not able to enter a senior college. They were required to take developmental courses in a junior college, unless they were admitted to a four year college through an opportunity program. Many students throughout the CUNY system were not able to meet the benchmarks even after taking remedial courses, especially in mathematics. Often, these students would drop out of college.

To address this problem, CUNY examined its placement practices and found that they did not accurately determine a student's ability to succeed in a credit-bearing course. The University decided to discontinue their admissions assessment process and shift to a proficiency index that incorporates high school grades, Regents and/or SAT scores. This will make it possible for some of our students who have good GPAs, but do not test well, to be admitted to four year institutions.

The movement away from reliance on standardized test scores in the college admissions process is gaining traction. While some colleges and universities have only announced being test optional for the class of 2021 or for the next couple of classes only, many others have decided to do so for the future. Other schools have announced that they will be test blind - they will not accept the test with applications.

To keep our students well informed, the College Advisor has maintained the senior and junior page of our blog (trccollegeoffice.blogspot.com). Information is posted when colleges move their commitment dates, make changes to how documents are submitted, or publish new admissions guides. And the latest information regarding test-optional announcements, virtual tours, college fairs, and meetings with college representatives is posted and updated regularly.

During the quarantine, the College Advisor has had many meetings with individual students to counsel them about completing their work for the semester. When necessary, the student is brought to the attention of the Response to Intervention team. The Adviser helps craft plans for these students and follow ups with them and their parents.

Outcomes

Forty five of our 47 graduating seniors have finalized their college applications. One of them will be taking a gap year and the other is working on completing their school work. When they are ready, they will receive help with their applications. Two of our students have been admitted but have yet to make a decision.

List of Colleges Students Will Be Attending

| CUNY | SUNY | PRIVATE |
|---|---|---|
| Sophie Davis Biomedical Program/CUNY School of Medicine Baruch City College Lehman NYC College of Technology Queens York Borough of Manhattan CC Guttman CC LaGuardia CC Queensborough CC | U. at Albany Geneseo Old Westbury Oswego Stony Brook University | Florida International University Fordham University George Washington U. Elliott School of International Affairs L.I.U. Brooklyn L.I.U. Post Honors Program St. John's University The American Musical and Dramatic Academy |

Percent by Type of College

This table includes only the 43 students that have made a decision.

| Class | CUNY Senior College | CUNY Junior College | SUNY Senior College | SUNY Junior College | Private |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 2020 | 44 | 23 | 12 | 0 | 21 |
| 2019 | 35.3 | 21.6 | 15.7 | 2.0 | 25.5 |
| 2018 | 38% | 30% | 12% | 2% | 14% |
| 2017 | 49% | 15% | 19% | 0% | 9% |

College Acceptances

| CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK | PUBLIC - IN STATE | PUBLIC - OUT OF STATE | PRIVATE |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--|
| Baruch Brooklyn City College College of Staten Island NYC College of Technology Hunter John Jay College of Criminal Justice Lehman Medgar Evers College Queens York Borough of Manhattan CC Guttman CC LaGuardia CC Queensborough CC | U. at Albany Honors Program U. at Albany Binghamton U. U. at Buffalo Geneseo New Paltz Oswego | U. of Connecticut | DePaw University Drexel Fordham U. @ Lincoln Center Hofstra U. LIU Brooklyn LIU Post Honors Program Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Monroe College NY Institute of Technology Pace U. Rochester Institute of Technology Sarah Lawrence Skidmore College Smith College St. Francis College St. John's U. Stevens Institute of Technology |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--------------|
| | | | Wheaton (MA) |
|--|--|--|--------------|

Scholarships

Posse Foundation

After a very competitive process, three of our students were chosen as Posse Foundation Scholarship finalists this year: for Connecticut College, DePaw University and Smith College. Unfortunately, although they were strong candidates, none were named as Posse Scholars. The new cycle of scholarship nominations has begun and the process will take place remotely for the most part.

College Now Program - City University of New York

Courses 2019-2020

TRCS students attend college-level courses through the City University of New York's College Now Program. By taking college courses, students demonstrate the willingness to meet high-level academic challenges. College courses help them prepare for the challenges of college and also raise their admissions profiles.

Fall of 2019

Queens College - Four students

- Fitness Through Diet, Exercise, and Weight Control
- Philosophy

Baruch College - One student

- Business Fundamentals: The Contemporary Business

Spring 2020

Queens College - Five students

- Psychology (CN Strategic Plan Initiative collaboratively with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions)
- Drama

Queens College - Pre-College Courses

- STEM Research Academy - Exploration of Aquatic Ecosystems - 2 students

Two of our students were accepted into the Model NYC Council Project, a collaboration between CUNY's College Now Program and the City Council. The program provides students with the unique opportunity to assume the role of a New York City Council member and to learn about governance and public administration. Unfortunately, the program could not go forward because of COVID-19.

Advanced Placement (AP) and Honors Courses

TRCS has increased the number of AP and Honors courses offered at our school. These courses prepare students for the rigors of college-level work and give them a chance to earn college credit. The College Adviser provided information and resources to students and teachers regarding the online administration of the AP exam. This administration of this year's AP exams was highly controversial and criticized on equity grounds: many low-income students did not have access to decent digital resources and had to take the exam in crowded and noisy spaces. Concerns about the abbreviated contents and shortened length of the exam were also raised.

The following AP classes were offered during the 2019-2020 school year:

- AP World History
- AP European History
- AP U.S. History
- AP Biology
- AP Environmental Science
- AP Computer Science Principles
- AP English Literature
- AP Spanish Language and Culture
- AP Spanish Literature and Culture
- Honors Calculus
- Honors Economics
- Honors Government

Parent Meetings

Parental engagement is one of the cornerstones of the College and Career Office. We believe that parents are stakeholders and have the right to information and the responsibility to be involved in their children's education. Specifically, parents need information regarding post-secondary options, financial aid, and how they can support their children's success in high school, college, and career.

This semester's parent meetings took place on Zoom on separate evenings for Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parents, to encourage full participation. Both evenings were well attended. Many parents expressed concerns about the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the application process and on standardized testing.

College and Career Office (CCO) staff also met individually with students and their parents/guardians to answer questions and address concerns. When the staff determined that there was a need for parent intervention, a meeting was called. During the meeting the CCO staff's concerns were shared with the parents, a strategy was developed to address the concerns, and a plan of communication was established between the CCO and the parents. These meetings were conducted by telephone.

The College Adviser also met with parents and students via Zoom to discuss students' academic performance and their progress toward meeting graduation requirements. She also met with parents to discuss individual student's college and financial aid options. Financial aid awards were explained and offers from different colleges were compared. The goal was to support families as they make decisions about the best college option for their children.

September 2019

- Financial Aid Workshop - Senior Parents. A representative from the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) led the presentation. Ana Falla Riff translated the presentation into Spanish and led the workshop in Spanish. Over 60 students and parents were in attendance.

- Junior Parent Meeting - High school graduation requirements, junior timelines, and college admissions criteria were discussed. Parents received their children's transcript and, with the student, filled out a Diploma Requirement Worksheet to determine if the student was on track to graduate. We also discussed letters of recommendation, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and our school's FERPA Rights to Access Letters of Recommendation. Over 60 students and parents were in attendance.

October 2019

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion Workshop - Senior Parents. A HESC representative assisted families in filling out their FAFSA and NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) applications. Over 40 students and parents were in attendance.

June 2020

- Rising Senior Parent Meeting - Senior year timeline, college admissions requirements, creating a realistic college list and the impact of COVID-19 on standardized testing and college admissions. Approximately 20 families attended the Zoom meeting in Spanish and approximately 22 attended the meeting in English.

The Opportunity Network

The Opportunity Network is a selective, six-year career development program for motivated, high-performing high school students. The Fellows Program begins with a mandatory three-week Summer Institute following sophomore year. In junior and senior year, students attend weekly workshops focused on career readiness and networking. Through the summer opportunities program, juniors and seniors participate in paid internships and local, national or international enrichment opportunities. During the quarantine program's weekly meetings were held remotely. Four sophomores were accepted to the OppNet Fellows program this spring.

OppNet helped one of our junior fellows land a Creative Digital Marketing Externship with Saje of Saje's through Paragon One. The latter is an online career accelerator that matches students with career coaches, career simulations and internships. Another fellow will be taking a Pre-Med and Health Professions course through Syracuse University's Summer College.

Last summer, one of our current seniors, an OppNet Fellow, traveled to the Netherlands, all expenses paid. She participated in the Experiment in International Living program's Peace, Politics, and Human Rights. She learned about the Netherlands' progressive approach to LGBTQ rights, gender issues, and sex education.

Questbridge College Prep Scholars

An eleventh grader was one of the 3,779 students out of an applicant pool of 12,600 students who were admitted to this highly selective program. The program will be held remotely. Prep Scholars is a program run by Questbridge, an organization whose goal is to increase the percent of low-income students attending top colleges. As a Prep Scholar the student will have the potential to be a strong candidate for the Questbridge National Match, a program for low-income students who have excelled in high school. If chosen, the student receives a full-four year scholarship (tuition, room and board, books, transportation) to a highly selective college or university.

Social Justice Day

The Junior class was eagerly preparing for Social Justice Day beginning in September. However, the quarantine

prevented them from moving forward with the event; we hope to schedule the day in the fall. The workshops will be: Issues in Energy Conservation, the Dangers of the Dark Web, Water Pollution, Wildlife Conservation, School-Related Stress, Sex Education, Immigration, and the Vaping Crisis.

Senior Send-Off and Breakfast to Welcome Eighth Graders

Rites of passages, like Social Justice Day, strengthen community bonds. Our seniors traditionally parade through the building and students, faculty, staff, and administrators salute them as they walk past their classrooms and offices. The elementary school students create signs congratulating the seniors. This year, Daniela Labella and Leah Shanahan, our Pre-K-5 Teaching and Learning Coordinators, asked their students to create cards for the twelfth graders. The kids submitted photos of themselves with the cards they had made. Daniella, who had taught many of the members of the class of 2020, created a heart-warming video, which was shared during graduation. Every year, seniors create a college bulletin board on which they post their photos and the colleges they will be attending. Every class strives to make one better than the previous one - it is a source of great pride. This semester the College Adviser created a wall in her home with the photos the students submitted. Some of the students will go Renaissance once the school opens to create their board. Our school participated in First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiative and in the New York City's Department of Education Decision Day.

College Presentations at TRCS/College Fair

On October 11, 2019, the CCO took the senior class to a SUNY College Fair at the Javits Center. Most of SUNY's 64 campuses were represented. During Rensizzle week, students in the Senior Week group visited CUNY's Brooklyn College.

College representatives enjoy visiting our school; they always offer praise for our students. They comment on our students' behavior--their politeness, attentiveness, and ability to network. Representatives also comment on our students' insightful and well-researched questions.

The following colleges visited TRCS this year to recruit our students:

- City University of New York - General Representative
- SUNY Geneseo
- SUNY Oswego

Spring visits were not possible due to the quarantine.

Standardized Tests

PSAT/NMSQT

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is co-sponsored by the College Board and the National Scholarship Program. It measures reading, mathematics, and writing skills. The NYC Department of Education deems this assessment to be so important that it pays for all 10th grade students in NYC public schools to take it in October. TRCS covered the costs for juniors who did not receive fee waivers from the College Board. Students take the PSAT/NMSQT to prepare for the SAT and, in the 11th grade, to qualify for a National Merit Scholarship. Furthermore CUNY colleges require 10th or 11th grade scores to determine if students are eligible to take free college-level courses on their campuses.

On October 16, 2019 the PSAT/NMSQT was administered to 57 sophomores and 55 juniors. The College Board and Khan Academy have a partnership to help students prepare for the SAT. By linking their College Board and Khan Academy accounts, students can create study plans based on their actual PSAT/NMSQT

results. In our Mathematics and Literacy Skills and College Prep classes students created and linked the accounts.

College Entrance Exams

Many colleges and universities consider students' standardized test scores when making admissions decisions. Fifty five juniors took the SAT at our school in the March 4, 2020 School Day administration. The NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) paid for all juniors in public schools to take the test. The students have been using the College Board and Khan Academy resources to prepare to retake the exam in the fall of 2020.

College Bound Classes

College Prep Section - 11th Grade

To help students begin to craft and finalize a postsecondary plan, eleventh graders used the U.S. Department of Labor's O*Net Interest Profiler and researched career options on The Department sponsored My Next Move website. Students explored careers that might be suitable for them depending on the level of education or preparation they are interested in pursuing.

Students learned about college admissions requirements and how to compare their admissions profile to the requirements of individual colleges. They were introduced to the factors they might want to consider as they make decisions (location, size, diversity of student body, etc.). Students began to research colleges. When we transitioned to remote learning, information regarding virtual college tours and college fairs, virtual meetings with college representatives, and other resources were shared with the students. The juniors discussed their concerns about the possibility of not being able to visit colleges in person before they applied to college.

Senior Seminar

College Prep Section

In the fall semester students examined the colleges on their lists and reflected on the factors that were of most importance to them as they decided where to apply to college. During the months of September and October, the focus was on financial aid literacy. Topics covered included financial aid myths, types and sources of financial aid, and the components of the cost of attending college.

Students completed their CUNY and SUNY applications and worked on their personal statements in class. They met with members of the CCO team during lunch and after school to finalize their personal statements and application supplements (additional essays or short-answer questions).

The spring semester was dedicated to easing students' transition to college. During February and March the financial aid application was the focus of class. Students learned to read and compare financial aid award letters. We transitioned to Zoom classes in late March. Students discussed concerns about transitioning to college in the fall semester because of the quarantine. Information and resources regarding commitment deadlines, registration, financial aid were presented.

Professional Development

To remain current on developments in the field during the COVID 19 quarantine, the College Bound Coordinator attended the followings webinars, presentations:

04/03/20 Presentation: School Counselors Leading the Way: College and Career Readiness for all

Students. (Received 0.1 CEU credit - certificate in appendix).

- 04/07/20 UAspire Summer Transition Webinar.
- 04/10/20 Scoir demo - Management system for counseling and college counseling.
- 04/17/20 NYS School Counselors Association. Q & A on Cancellation of Regents Examinations.
- 04/22/20 Graduate NYC. CUNY Enrollment and Matriculation Forum.
- 04/23/20 College Access Consortium of NY (CACNY). The SAT is Cancelled, Now What?
- 04/30/20 CACN. Best Practices: Planning Virtual Celebrations.
- 05/05/20 Regional Officers of Admissions Metro NYC. Coffee hour for counselors and advisors.
- 05/06/20 Graduate NYC - SUNY Matriculation and Enrollment Forum.
- 05/13/2020 College Access Action Network (CAAN). Per Scholas - Equity and Career Pathways.
- 05/27/2020 CAAN. CUNY Community College Update.

Presentation: School Counselors Leading the Way: College and Career Readiness for All Students (Ondemand Recording).

Goals and Areas of Growth

- Learn to interpret the data received from the National Student Clearinghouse.
- Streamline systems in the College and Career Office to more efficiently serve students.
- Increase networking relationships with individual CUNY, SUNY, and private colleges.
- Improve data collection.

Literacy Skills/College Bound and Senior Seminar

Prepared by Maura Malarcher

Math and Literacy Skills Classes - New Developments

NINTH GRADE

During September and October, ninth graders completed a self-evaluation to provide themselves with baseline information on their mindsets. Then in November, class instruction was based on the Student Course published on *youcubed.org*, which provides information about neuroplasticity and other brain research connected to learning. These lessons included videos explaining the importance of taking on challenges and making mistakes to stimulate brain growth and learning. Students completed activities published on *youcubed* that use patterns to introduce algebraic concepts, and they were encouraged to apply their understanding of patterns to other topics as well. Starting in December, the focus of the class shifted to language patterns, specifically grammar and parts of speech. This topic has continued for the rest of the year, including lessons taught online. For distance learning, ninth graders attend a weekly zoom class and complete a weekly assignment. They will have

completed reviewing all eight parts of speech, including their use in compound and complex sentences, by the end of the year.

TENTH GRADE

During fall semester, tenth graders first received preparation for the PSAT test administered in October. Then students spent the next three months investigating linear functions, using activities published on *youcubed.org* as part of the Mathematical Mindset Algebra course. Tenth graders began the spring semester with a unit on financial planning, which concluded in March when online instruction began. After the school transitioned to distance learning, tenth grade students received weekly Zoom classes and assignments. During the first five weeks, students explored careers using personality and interest assessment tools. Students also explored careers based on their passion to address a local or global problem after listening to a TED talk from the founder of the organization *80,000 Hours*. They then researched one career in depth using the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. Finally, students created resumes and cover letters, which will continue to be updated through senior year.

ELEVENTH GRADE

At the beginning of fall semester, eleventh grade Literacy Skills classes focused on preparation for the PSAT test administered in October. Then juniors spent the remainder of the fall semester completing activities published by *youcubed.org* in the course Mathematical Mindset Algebra. These activities help students develop a deeper understanding of linear and quadratic functions, which are emphasized on college entrance exams. During February, classes began preparation for the SAT exam in March, especially for the Reading and Writing sections. After classes moved online, the Literacy Skills curriculum for the eleventh grade had two objectives: (1) college exploration and (2) preparation for college application essays. Students first learned how to navigate college websites and use a school's freshman profile to identify Likely, Target, Reach, and Dream schools. They also were introduced to online tools for college research, including the College Niche and Students Review websites. Next, there were classes comparing and contrasting the CUNY, SUNY and Common Applications, as well the essay requirements required for different schools. Finally, juniors were given a summer assignment based on the essay questions typically required for applications, so they can prepare for the fall.

TWELFTH GRADE

The Career and College Office staff began working with rising seniors on their college applications during the summer before senior year began. Getting an early start was especially helpful because deadlines for CUNY applications, as well as scholarship programs like Posse, are already pending when students return in September. From September through December, the primary focus in Senior Seminar classes was college applications. One class requirement was to complete a personal essay that could be used on an application. In addition, students either focused on supplementary essays if required by the schools they chose, or completed an independent project related to their career interest. Options for the independent projects included: completing a Coursera class about a topic of interest, interviewing a person in a career of interest, or documenting completion of a 30-day challenge to strengthen one executive skill.

Seniors began spring semester with the aim to write ten-page research papers. However, this course objective was adjusted after the school moved to virtual instruction. Starting in mid-March, students attended weekly live zoom classes and received weekly assignments. Additional support was provided based on appointment. Instead of picking separate topics to research, students were assigned one research question as the focus for their paper: **How can we prevent infectious diseases like Covid-19 from happening again?** Students conducted preliminary research, reading assigned articles to understand the underlying causes of Covid-19 as a

zoonotic disease that appears to have been transmitted from bats to pangolins to humans due to deforestation. Students then were guided through the construction of a research paper using a series of steps to support formal academic writing. The overall goals of this project were for students to have a strong grasp of how to create an outline and how to construct well-organized paragraphs with correct citations.

Here are some comments by seniors about the online assignments:

- *These suggestions are helpful because I feel like my work is more organized. The notes are making the writing process more easier.*
- *Doing this process makes writing a paragraph much easier.*
- *I was dragging my paragraphs before this. It was actually kind of hard to write a paragraph at times due to not knowing how to introduce or feeling like I didn't have enough evidence. So, Yes these suggestions are very helpful because it made it easier to write a paragraph and it made the paragraph more eye catching. They are making the writing process somewhat easier.*

Digital Portfolios to Support “Big Picture” Understanding of High School

In an effort to help students understand the importance of high school starting from the ninth grade, we added digital portfolios to the class requirements in Math and Literacy Skills classes for grades 9-11. During several class periods this year, CCO staff assisted students in grades 9-11 to create these portfolios to chart their progress in school and reflect on their growth. Students began tracking their credits and grades online, and evaluated their progress toward graduation. Lessons were added to the curriculum that connected goal setting to brain research, and students in every grade drafted long-term and short-term goals.

The digital portfolio requirements were adapted to the areas of focus for each grade to include:

- Ninth grade - reflective writing about how positive behaviors and attitudes support success in classes.
- Tenth grade - exploratory writing and reflection with regard to career interests.
- Eleventh grade - reflective writing based on in-depth career and college research.
- Twelfth grade - reflective writing envisioning a future self.

Based on brain research, explanations of steps to conduct research were presented in a more interactive format, with examples and models used to illustrate principles. For example, Maura guided students through an example paper based on the claim that “The US government should ban nuclear weapons,” writing collaboratively with students in class to help them better understand data collection and paragraph construction. Students applied these research strategies to complete their own papers based on their selected claims.

The Leadership Program

Prepared by Inti Ossio, Leadership Program Coordinator

2019-2020 Process

This year, like every year, the Leadership Program Coordinator did extensive interviews with students to help place them in leadership programs aligned with their interests throughout the summer of 2019.

By November 2019, the Leadership Program Coordinator met with all students in ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades and supported their placement of a leadership program based on their preferences and its correlation with career and or subjects the student was interested in exploring. The one-on-one questionnaire

asked about academic and personal interests, careers they're interested in exploring, skills and goals the students would like to develop and how they can begin working on them and remain consistent to see progress.

In the fall and in the spring, the leadership program coordinator met with every individual high school student to review their interests, their strengths and weaknesses. Based on these interviews as well as results of a student survey, Ms. Ossio assigned ninth and tenth grade students to leadership programs within the school. She also provided guidance to junior and seniors in selecting leadership programs outside the building. When these programs required essays and/or interviews, Ms. Ossio and other CCO staff members helped students submit applications and prepare for interviews.

Periodically, throughout the year the leadership program coordinator met with individual students to discuss concerns with academic struggles and supported them in developing grit and discipline with consistent practice of things like writing things down in their agendas, making to-do lists, setting pomodoros, organizing their school belongings and reminding them to stay current and encouraging them to ask for help. This consistent support has supported many students in developing executive functioning skills they often struggle with and will need post-high school.

Program Highlights

- I. This year there were two **new** in-house leadership programs:
 - A. **Urban Seed Stewards:** A youth seed stewardship program committed to regenerative earth-work and social justice in Jackson Heights. Inspired by the message, "*They tried to bury us, they didn't know we were seeds*", this program cultivates a space for participants to collectively envision the just and liberated futures we want to grow. The program will follow a seasonal rhythm to highlight the lessons that our urban ecosystem has to offer. **Fall** is for gathering seed stories and information, seed stewards will begin to connect with the ancestral seeds that they will focus on for their projects. Using the quiet and stillness of **winter**, this time will be used for rest and visioning our seed keeping garden. As daylight increases, we will emerge from the winter into **spring** ready to plant our seeds and continue to do community engagement with our mobile seed library. This program ended on March 26, 2020 and completed a zine that is attached to this report.
 1. Once quarantine began, Amara, the facilitator moved quickly and gathered consent from families to deliver seeds, soil and other materials so they could still learn about food justice from home.
 2. They had guest speakers who joined their zoom calls, like Lex Barlowe of Que No Se Pierda La Semilla, a seed keeping project in Puerto Rico and Jackie Pilati of Reclaim Seed NYC. Since students liked cooking as part of their program before quarantining, they also had short cooking classes and some great chef guests like Maya Stansberry who runs Bring It Home and Gabriela Alvarez of Liberation Cuisine.
- II. **Careers in Music, Theatre and Arts Business:** This program provides a deeper understanding of working in the music, theater, or creative performance industry. Students will explore careers and pathways into the arts, by visiting studios, performance venues, and other creative spaces throughout the city. Students will also meet a number of professionals working as performers, technicians, producers, administrators, and, yes, DJs. This program will be treated much like a college freshman level course: students are expected to engage thoughtfully in discussion and participation (both during class and in the

online forum), practice proper audience etiquette, and, if applicable, perform in one's art of choice. A final project/performance to illustrate one's learning will be expected.

- III. One of our students in the 10th grade went through a transformation after doing a lot of self-awareness work using youtube videos and books. These videos had influenced him so much he wanted to share what he learned with the high school student body. He worked diligently with the leadership program coordinator throughout the end of the fall semester and through the spring semester to finalize the workshops he had been working on. He presented two before quarantine:
 - A. Why We Never Get Enough Sleep and What We Can Do About it
 - B. The Secret to Getting Things Done
- IV. This year the College Program Coordinator networked with the SEO Scholars (Seizing Every Opportunity), an eight year academic program that provides educational preparation and mentoring for students in underserved communities beginning in the ninth grade and through college.
- V. Six students in the ninth grade class were admitted and began the program in January of 2020.
 - A. Once quarantine began, the program took a break to reconvene and reassess programming for the remainder of the spring semester while in quarantine. They checked in with all students and began having class on Tuesdays from 5-7 pm and Saturdays from 12-1 pm, from April 7, 2020 to May 30, 2020. Additional support and tutoring was offered on Mondays and Fridays from 5-7 pm online.
 - B. During the summer of 2020, the students will meet virtually from July 7 to August 7, 2020. Weeks 1-4 will meet Monday - Thursday, with three days of academics and one day of enrichment. Week 5 will be coding Monday - Friday.
- VI. Due to covid-19, the leadership program coordinator provided students with academic support one-on-one in response to individual student needs as brought up in RTI. As part of leadership, she also met with almost all students to discuss their leadership situations once quarantine began to assess how they could pass the semester if they were left without a program.

Spring Pause Workshops:

In response to the impact of COVID on student leadership programs, the following workshops were offered during Spring Pause in order to provide students with skill building virtually. The leadership program coordinator also met with students individually to help them with some of these one-on-one.

1. What is a Resume and How to start one
2. Updating your Resume
3. Writing a Cover Letter
4. Create and Facilitate a Workshop 101
5. Making Sense of Your Interests
6. Goal Setting 101

2019-2020 Requirements for All High School Students

I. Grading Rubric Requirements -

- A. All students are required to complete all of the following as part of their Leadership Program grade.
 - 1. One-on-one interview - 25%
 - 2. Enrollment form 10%
 - 3. Attendance / Time log - 40%
 - 4. Self-evaluation reflection - 15%
 - 5. Supervisor Evaluations - 10%
- B. Each student must accumulate at least 70% in order to receive a “satisfactory” mark on their transcript by the end of the fall and spring semesters.
- C. ****NOTE:** After quarantine officially began due to covid-19 in the Spring of 2020, some students were able to continue with their leadership programs remotely, while many others were not. Many programs and opportunities were affected due to the nature of the program they were enrolled in. An [Alternative Leadership Guide](#) was created so that students could still learn some important skills virtually and pass leadership for the remainder of the semester. (see attachment)

II. 9th Grade Students -

- A. Ninth and tenth graders participate in leadership programs within the school. These programs are generally scheduled on Wednesday mornings or after school.
- B. Leadership program choices available for ninth and tenth graders include:
 - 1. Urban Seed Stewards
 - 2. Careers in Art
 - 3. Jazz Band
 - 4. Tech team
 - 5. Sadie Nash Leadership Program
 - 6. Urban Word
 - 7. STEM Enrichment
 - 8. Careers in Music
 - 9. TREA (Teens for Racial and Ethnic Awakening)
- C. Alternatively, students have the option to intern with TRCS staff in various roles that include assisting classroom teachers with admin work and TA-ing, volunteering in after-school programs, and taking on leadership roles within clubs.
- D. During the 2019-2020 school year, ninth graders were scheduled as follows:
 - 1. 98% participated in partner programs
 - 2. 2% participated in programs outside of TRCS
- E. **** SEO was a new program this year**

III. 10th, 11th and 12th Grade Students -

- A. Students in these grades are encouraged to participate in leadership programs outside but are welcome to participate in programs at TRCS if they are aligned with their interests for a minimum of 26 hours each semester.

2019-2020 Enrollment

Programs Outside TRCS

In the Fall and Spring semesters, students participate in numerous programs, ranging from leadership development to assisting teachers with teaching materials or in their classrooms. The list below highlights programs and organizations outside of TRCS that our students attended during the academic year 2016-2017. We see our students as ambassadors of our school to the community; participating in new programs opens doors for the students themselves and for future generations at TRCS. 11 of 38 programs are new programs and the remaining 26 are programs our students have participated in in the past.

New Programs:

1. Centro Corona
2. YAYA (Youth Activists, Youth Allies) - Empower and Facilitation Bootcamp
3. Clinton Hill Dental Office
4. Queens Video Production
5. National Institute for Reproductive Health - TORCH!
6. Aster Levy Recreation Center
7. HD Construction Apprenticeship
8. Coursera: Cyberattacks course
9. UFC Gymnasium
10. Law Institute at Columbia University
11. Aeffe USA
12. SEO

Returning Programs:

13. Cornell Weill HPREP (Health Professions/Recruitment and Exposure Program)
14. NYU STEP (Science and Technology Entry Program)
15. NYU Saturday Dentistry Program
16. Goethe Language Institute
17. Regal Heights Rehabilitation Center
18. Tech 360
19. NYU Law Institute
20. Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice
21. Queens Public Library
22. NYU High School Law Institute
23. College Now, Action Now!
24. Queens Community House
25. Alka Ballet School
26. Bridge Up STEM
27. Mount Sinai MED DOC's Margaret Tietz Nursing Program
28. New York Presbyterian Hospital
29. Saint Sebastian Parish Center
30. Sadie Nash Community Action Placement

31. District 75 Best Buddies Program
32. The Possibility Project

In-house Programs by Outside Organizations at TRCS

1. TREA (Teens for Racial and Ethnic Awakening)
2. STEM Enrichment Program
3. Urban Seed Stewards
4. Urban Word
5. Sadie Nash Leadership Program
6. Jazz Band

What Students had to say about their in-house Leadership Programs:

I believe seeds are of biological and economic importance for the world. Urban Seed Stewards have taught me about the importance of food justice and growing your own food as a sustainable practice. I am interested in growing my own food because it could save me money, help the environment and with a new activity, especially one that requires me to get moving considering the possibility that I may garden in a backyard of sorts, could physically benefit me over time.

Careers in Music was the first time I was able to really get one-on-one attention on a skill I wanted to improve. I loved working with Katie individually so she could help me on my personal music goals which felt more comforting and I also learned to be accountable to my goals.

In TREA I learned that I have something to say, I just need to discuss it with others to learn more and find the words to express it. Before this I was shy and didn't know that there is no such thing as a wrong answer. I now say what I need to say in my classes and am less afraid to speak.

What Students had to say about their outside Leadership Programs:

I always wanted to do work in the medical field, but I was afraid and set my mind on law until I took a chance and participated in Med Doc's. It helped me remember and realize that what I really wanted to do was become a nurse.

I am so glad I challenged myself to try something I was afraid of. The encouragement to apply helped and I really loved the program and am so glad I took a chance.

I have always been inspired by social justice work but it wasn't until I joined Adhikaar that I realized it happens in my own neighborhood. I learned so many skills and that I can also make a change. It was also nice to do it with other friends of mine who share the same interests.

I am interested in construction and architecture which is uncommon, but I learned a lot about safety and OSHA from taking free construction classes at Home Depot and learning about what construction contracting companies do.

Programs and Positions at TRCS

Below is a list of TRCS programs our students participated in and positions that our students held with staff at TRCS. Next to the position is the name of the supervisor. The TRCS College Office is extremely thankful to all

TRCS teachers and staff who volunteered their time to provide such meaningful experiences for our high school students:

Programs:

1. Careers in Art, *Robert Evangelista*
2. *Careers in Music, Theatre and Arts Business*
3. Tech Team, *Curtis Anderson*

Positions:

1. College and Career Office Intern, *Inti and Ana*
2. Spanish Dept. Assistance, *Marta Bolivar and Lisjane Gaviria*
3. Writing Center, *Shahreen Islam*
4. ELL Support, *James Drumgoole*
5. Middle School Humanities Support, *Renay Moran*
6. Science Department support, *Riaad Etheridge, Yaacov Levy and Joann Ristau*
7. HS ELA, *Nicole Jollon and Shahreen Islam*
8. HS Algebra, *Natalie Kurzyna*
9. HS Geometry, *Erin Chae*
10. HS Calculus, *Adrian Co*
11. Homework Center Math Tutoring, *Dhariana Mojica*
12. The Learning Center, *Lisa Burns*

What Students had to say about their TRCS Leadership Programs:

I'm glad that I went out of my comfort zone and asked Shahreen to give me an opportunity to do writing center. I was sad it ended because of covid-19 but I learned a lot and was proud of myself for learning to help others with their writing assignments.

Enrollment Statistics

Leadership Program Enrollment 2019-2020

| | Class of 2020 [Seniors] 53 Students | Class of 2021 [Juniors] 54 Students | Class of 2022 [Sophomores] 58 Students | Class of 2023 [Freshmen] |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Positions at TRCS | 19% | 17.1% | 13% | 0% |
| Programs at TRCS | 23% | 33% | 47% | 98% |
| Outside Programs at TRCS | 12% | 7.3% | 24.3% | 2% |
| Outside Programs | 46% | 42.6% | 14.7% | 2% |
| *Not Enrolled | 4% | 2% | 1% | 0% |

***NOTE:**

- In the **Class of 2020**, (4%) students were exempt from participating in the Leadership Program at discretion of the High School Intervention Team
- In the **Class of 2019**, (2%) student were exempt from participating in the Leadership Program at discretion of the High School Intervention Team

Leadership Program Enrollment 2018-2019

| | Class of 2019 [Seniors] | Class of 2020 [Juniors] | Class of 2021 [Sophomores] | Class of 2022 [Freshmen] |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Positions at TRCS | 21.1% | 14% | 15.7% | 3.5% |
| Programs at TRCS | 15.3% | 6% | 12.7% | 17.5% |
| Outside Programs at TRCS | 19.2% | 46% | 54.5% | 78.9% |
| Outside Programs | 36.5% | 28% | 14.5% | 0% |
| *Not Enrolled | 9.6% | 6% | 0% | 0% |

***NOTE:**

- In the **Class of 2017**, (23%) 12 students were exempt from participating in the Leadership Program at discretion of the High School Intervention Team
- In the **Class of 2018**, (1.8%) 1 student was exempt from participating in the Leadership Program at discretion of the High School Intervention Team

Leadership Program Enrollment 2017-2018

| | Class of 2018 [Seniors] | Class of 2019 [Juniors] | Class of 2020 [Sophomores] | Class of 2021 [Freshmen] |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| At TRCS | 10% | 5.66% | 16.66% | 0% |
| Outside of TRCS | 14% | 15.09% | 57.4% | 91.37% |
| Not Enrolled | 4% | 3.77% | 0% | 0% |

Enrollment Analysis

Leadership Program Results - Fall Semester

**Students who are exempt from fulfilling the Leadership Program requirement are not included in the percentages below; rather, students who are exempt are listed on the last column.

| | Students who received a Satisfactory grade | Students who received an Unsatisfactory grade | Students exempt from LP Requirements |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| 9th Grade | 98% | 2% | 2% |
| 10th Grade | 86% | 14% | 0% |
| 11th Grade | 64% | 36% | 2% |
| 12th Grade | 93% | 7% | 4% |

Leadership Program Results - Spring Semester

**Student information regarding % of students who completed the Leadership Program in the Spring semester is currently unavailable.

Goals and Initiatives for Academic Year 2020-2021

Program Development

Class of 2020 [Seniors]

1. At least 60% of Seniors will participate in career-related internships.

Class of 2021 [Juniors]

1. At least 50% of Juniors will participate in career-related internships.
2. Assess the Leadership Program experiences throughout high school as part of their College and Career Portfolio.

Class of 2022 [Sophomores]

1. At least 45% of Juniors will participate in career-related internships.

Class of 2023 [Freshmen]

1. At least 90% of students will participate in programs run by outside organizations at TRCS.

Goals for 2020-2021

- Have more presence in the classroom
- Send out weekly emails to students about Leadership or Career-related topics
- Revamp the Leadership Program Website over the summer
- Continue to help students explore their interests and envision a future for themselves
- Provide students with opportunities that help build their self-confidence and hone their self-advocacy skills.
- Increase student access to information about career options as they explore what success means to them individually.

ARTIFACTS:

- Testimonial from three students regarding the support provided by our office
- Samples of student work for the Literacy Skills class for 9th, 10th and 11th grades
- A sample of work for the Senior Seminar class
- Alternative Leadership Program Guide
- PDF copies of Inti's created for the spring pause
- PDF copies of the parent workshops in English and in Spanish