

COUNTDOWN TO GRADUATION CLASS OF 2009



A Handbook for
East Grand Rapids High School
Seniors and
their Parents/Guardians

CALENDAR 2008-09

SUMMER '08	Schedule senior pictures (Note the October 3 deadline for yearbook pictures) Investigate possibilities for post-graduation, i.e. college, work, military, travel, etc.
AUGUST 13	Registration deadline for September 13 ACT
AUGUST 20	First day for seniors to change schedules. Guidance office open 8:00-Noon and 1:00-3:00 PM
SEPTEMBER 4	First day college applications will be accepted in the Guidance Office
SEPTEMBER 9	Registration deadline for October 4 SAT (former SAT I) and Subject Tests (former SATII)
SEPTEMBER 13	ACT testing date
SEPTEMBER 19	Registration deadline for October 25 ACT
TBA	Senior parent graduation meeting (meeting called by parents of class officers)
SEPTEMBER 26	Registration deadline for November 1 SAT
OCTOBER 3	Senior pictures due for the Yearbook Baby pictures due for the Yearbook
OCTOBER 10	Last day to submit to the Guidance Office an early action or early decision application with a November 1 deadline
OCTOBER 24	Last day to submit to the Guidance Office an early action or early decision application with a November 15 deadline Recommended deadline for submitting applications to the Guidance Office for colleges operating on a "rolling" admission system
OCTOBER 31	Recommended deadline for submitting applications to the Guidance Office for colleges operating on a "rolling" admission system
OCTOBER 25	ACT testing date
NOVEMBER 1	SAT and Subject Tests testing date
NOVEMBER 5	Registration Deadline for December 6 SAT

NOVEMBER 7	Registration Deadline for December 13 ACT
NOVEMBER 28	Last day to submit to the Guidance Office a college application with a deadline of January 1-15, 2008
DECEMBER 1	<i>Financial Aid Information Night</i> 7:00 PM SAT and Subject Test
DECEMBER 6	SAT and Subject Tests testing date
DECEMBER 13	ACT testing date
MARCH 13	Registration Deadline for AP exams — non-refundable deposit due
MARCH	Academic Boosters' Awards Program (7:30 PM)
APRIL 1	Colleges on "deadline" admissions notify applicants of their admission decision
MAY 1	<i>Candidate's Reply Date</i> —The deadline for students to reply to the college of their choice
MAY 1	Deadline for providing Guidance Office with copies of letters offering scholarships and/or awards for inclusion
MAY 4	AP United States Government & Politics exam 7:40 AM
MAY 5	AP Spanish exam 7:40 AM AP Statistics exam 12:00 PM
MAY 6	AP Calculus exam 7:40 AM
MAY 7	AP English Literature exam 7:40 AM
MAY 8	AP United States History exam 7:40 AM
MAY 11	AP Biology exam 7:40 AM AP Physics exam 12:00 PM
MAY 14	AP World History exam 7:40 AM AP Macroeconomics exam 7:40 AM Honors Assembly at 1:00 PM
MAY 18 19	Senior exam dates
MAY 21	Graduation rehearsal at 9:00 AM in the gymnasium Graduation at 7:00 PM followed by the all night party

YEARBOOK PICTURES

1. SENIOR PICTURES

Seniors are responsible for submitting a picture to the yearbook. In the past families have chosen either a photography studio or a friend to take the picture. The yearbook guidelines are: one wallet size vertical, color photograph to be submitted to the yearbook by October 3, 2008. Consult past yearbooks to consider the type of pose, clothing, etc. that you would like for yourself. Many studios send out notices of “early bird” discounts that can help keep the price down. In deciding how many pictures to order, you might keep in mind some other uses for them: relatives and friends, some college applications, some scholarship applications, some athletic interest letters, some awards, e.g. Top 10, Free Press, Super Star Senior.

2. BABY PICTURES

Seniors’ baby pictures are solicited for a separate section of the yearbook. If you want a baby photo included, you must submit a current photo that is different from your senior picture with a check for the announced fee, payable to EGR High School. These pictures are optional and may be submitted in any size. The deadline for submission is October 3, 2008.

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR 18-YEAR OLD STUDENTS

Upon reaching the age of majority, each student at East has the opportunity to choose the *Attendance Policy for 18-Year Olds* or to remain under the current school year attendance policy. Before accepting this new policy, carefully read the responsibilities required of the student. A copy of the *18-Year Old Policy* is available in the attendance office.

MICHIGAN MERIT AWARD

The Michigan Merit Award Program awards student achievement on the Michigan Merit Award (MME) and ACT tests. To be eligible for the up-to-\$4,000.00 scholarship, a student must take all sections of the ACT and MME and obtain a qualifying score. For details on an alternative way to qualify, see your counselor.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

State law requires that school districts allow eligible students to enroll in college courses at local accredited colleges and support their enrollment by paying a portion of the school's foundation grant from the state toward the college tuition. Any student interested in the possibility of enrolling in college courses during their senior year should discuss this with the Guidance Office.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

► Seniors submit all college applications to the Guidance Office for processing and mailing to the colleges/universities. **The Guidance Office will begin accepting applications on Wednesday September 4, 2008.**

► The Guidance Office assesses a **\$3 processing fee** for each application. This fee covers the cost of copying the student's transcript and mailing the completed application to the college. It also allows the Guidance Office to track the application and receive notification that the application has arrived at the college. In January the Guidance Office automatically sends the student's seventh semester grades to all the colleges where admission is pending. In June, a final transcript is sent to the college the student has elected to attend.

► The Guidance Office guarantees that applications will be processed and mailed **within ten (10) school days** after submission, **if the application is complete when submitted, including teacher recommendations.**

▶ The Guidance Office will not accept an application until all sections are ready for submission.

▶ Most college applications require a processing fee, which can range from \$20 to as high as \$75 per application. Colleges will waive this fee if financial need is shown. Students might want to discuss this with their counselor.

▶ A number of colleges accepts the Common Application. A copy of the Common Application and information regarding any supplements requested by specific colleges may be downloaded from <http://www.commonapp.org>

NATIONAL TESTING OPTIONS AND TEST DATES

1. SAT (FORMERLY KNOWN AS SAT I: REASONING TEST)

The SAT consists of critical reading, math, and writing sections and takes three hours and forty-five minutes. The test is administered seven times per year at test centers around the country and the world. Nearly all selective colleges and universities require this test or the ACT as a part of the admissions decision. Seniors who have not taken the SAT, or those who wish to retake the test, may do so on October 4, November 1, or December 6, 2008. Registration must be completed no later than September 9, September 26, or November 5, 2008, respectively.

2. ACT

The ACT is a college admissions test administered five times per year in test centers throughout the country. Colleges usually require that students submit scores from the ACT or the SAT as a part of the college admissions process. The test consists of four required sections — English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning — and an optional writing section. Students receive a score for each section, a composite score ranging from 1 to 36, and a separate writing score if applicable. Seniors who have not taken the ACT, or those who wish to retake the test, may do so on September 13, October 25 or

December 13, 2008. Registration packets must be postmarked no later than August 13, September 19 or November 7, 2008, respectively.

3. SUBJECT TESTS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS SAT II)

These are one-hour tests measuring specific achievement in 23 subject areas such as foreign languages, mathematics, science, and history. Selective colleges may require Subject Tests in addition to the SAT. If required, most colleges ask for two or three tests of the student's choosing. It is advisable to check college catalogs for any specific requirements. **Students may take only the SAT or Subject Tests on any given test date.** Students may take up to three Subject Tests on October 4, November 1, or December 6, 2008. Seniors applying to any college on an *early decision* or *early action* plan are advised to take Subject Tests no later than November 1, 2008.

4. ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

Advanced Placement Examinations are available in May each year for students who have just completed specific Advanced Placement courses. East Grand Rapids High School offers specific AP courses in United States History, United States Government and Politics, World History, Microeconomics, Spanish Language, Physics, Statistics, Biology, Calculus, and English Literature. AP exams are not required for college admissions but are often used for college credit or for placement in advanced courses upon admission to college. Colleges will look favorably on strong results on AP exams, but students are not penalized if they have not taken them. **Students are advised to check with the colleges to which they may seek admission for specific information on how Advanced Placement credits may be applied.** Students at East will have an opportunity to take AP exams May 4-14, 2009. Each of these tests costs approximately \$84. Students will register with a non-refundable deposit submitted to the Guidance Office by March 13, 2009. The remainder of the fee will be due the day the test is taken in May.

SCHOLARSHIP SEARCHES

In the past several years, many computer scholarship search companies have sprung up around the country. But college financial aid administrators and high school guidance counselors are largely distrustful of these companies. Why?

Most search companies are run by people who have little or no experience with or knowledge of financial aid. These companies tend to charge a lot of money (between \$45 and \$200) for information that can be found free of charge in libraries, guidance offices, bookstores, colleges, and on the Internet. In addition, search companies simply provide a list of scholarships for which you **may** be eligible, but for which you still must apply.

Furthermore some of the scholarships they list are federal or state programs, which are available to you once you are determined eligible for need-based financial aid.

Beware of official looking, even federal government looking, mailings. Some of these companies are great at marketing!

Ask these questions before signing up!

Is the company for profit?

Is the company a franchise?

How much experience does this person have in financial aid?

Can I believe their guarantee?

How complete will the information I receive be?

Does the company have a list of past clients I can contact?

Do I need to spend money to receive this information?

When in doubt, ask the EGR guidance department.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

Twenty-three credits, with specific departmental distribution, are required to graduate from East Grand Rapids High School. Students are continually reminded by their counselor that they need to be aware of the number of credits they have and what specific requirements they must complete prior to graduation.

It is a good idea to check the credit area on students' report cards periodically. There you will find the total number of credits the student has earned to date. If there is a discrepancy in the number of credits you believe your student has earned, call your student's counselor. Be proactive.

The school operates with the following policy regarding who can and cannot "walk" at commencement.

*"Students lacking **not more than one credit** at graduation time will be permitted to participate in commencement exercises, provided they are enrolled in summer school for the necessary credit. However the diploma will be withheld until all graduation requirements have been fulfilled."*

Be aware that this policy means that counselors will closely monitor students until commencement. Only those who have at least twenty-two (22) credits will be allowed to participate at commencement.

Again, **be proactive**. Know how many credits your son or daughter has and what course requirements are remaining for his/her graduation to be realized.

HONORS ASSEMBLY

The annual Honors Assembly will be held on May 14, 2009 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM to honor all seniors and recipients of special awards and scholarships. All seniors will be expected to attend, and parents of seniors are invited. A reception, hosted by the PTSA, will follow for all seniors and their parents.

GRADUATION-RELATED TOPICS

1. Cap, Gown, Stole, Tassel, Etc.

Jostens has been chosen by the school to sell graduation items. They visit the school in December to distribute and explain their catalog to seniors. Orders are then taken in January with delivery to the school in mid-April. The cap, gown, stole, and tassel must be ordered through Jostens. The 2009 price will be approximately \$38. The cost for late orders will be \$55. Measurements will be taken when the order is placed. **Be sure to try on the cap and gown when it is received to check the fit! It must be sent back immediately if a replacement is needed for the ceremony.** In recent years students choose either gold or blue for their gowns. Students are seated in rows according to the color of the gown they choose. Solid, light colored dresses look best under gold gowns. Bobby pins are normally needed to hold on the caps. **Hang on to your tassel and stole.** They are easily lost or misplaced.

Announcements, mugs, open house invitations, thank you notes, etc. can also be ordered from Jostens at the same time.

2. College Scholarships Earned by Graduates

A listing of college scholarships and special awards earned by graduating seniors is included as a segment of the Honors Assembly program. Scholarships and awards are included, provided a copy of the award notification **is presented to the Guidance Office prior to May 1, 2009.** Awards, grants, or scholarships, which are part of a financial aid package, based on demonstrated financial need, are **not** included in this listing.

3. Commencement Ceremonies

Graduation is held in the football stadium or the gym, depending on weather conditions. In either case, there are no ticket requirements or

number restrictions. Older guests and those in need of special seating or parking should call the senior advisor at least one week in advance. Mrs. Fee will send a letter in early May, outlining the dress and behavior codes. The speaker is the senior class president.

4. Top Ten

Two different recognitions are given each spring to the top students in the senior class. At the Academic Boosters' Awards Program in March, the **top fifteen** students based on **cumulative weighted** grade point averages through the **seventh** semester are recognized. At commencement a **Top Ten** is named recognizing the ten students with the highest **cumulative weighted** grade point averages through the **eighth and final** semester of school.

PARTY Sponsored by Parents of Seniors

An all-night party after commencement for all graduating seniors is organized and chaperoned by parent volunteers. The parents of the senior class president plan this party.

Parental involvement is needed for the Graduation Party to occur. For planning purposes you might like to know that the cost for the 2008 Graduation Party was \$130. Students who need financial assistance to participate in these activities should speak with their counselor.