



## The Final Goodbye

By: Jacquelyn Loria  
Editorial Co-Editor

They aren't kidding when they say that high school is four years long and will still fly by. I remember my first day of high school, how terrified I was to go from the oldest in the school straight back to the youngest.

Looking back, it's amazing how much time I had in high school and how fast it all burned up. It's also amazing how fast I grew and changed as a person.

Four years does a lot for a person. Sometimes it can be bad and sometimes it can be good. For me, high school was good because I found out a lot about life, the world, and learning from mistakes.

High school is where you find yourself. They won't be the best years of your life – I will guarantee you that. It's the years where you grow, learn, and discover the person you'll be in college.

To me, I had my best and worst days in high school. These days helped me to grow as a person. The bad days changed me into a new person and the good days made me appreciate the person I had become.

It's also important to know that the bad days will end. They'll make you appreciate the good days a little bit more.

High school is where you learn you have to grow up. Teachers don't tolerate any bad behavior, grades and school become more important than anything else, and learning to balance sports, friends, family, and schoolwork pushes you to grow up.

Many important life lessons were taught to me throughout the past four years. I found out who my friends were, I found out what is most important to my life, and I found out that mistakes are made once, never let yourself make them again.

The biggest mistake I could have ever made in high school was not trying in my freshmen and sophomore year with grades, extracurricular activities, and maintaining my GPA.

This hurt me and I didn't realize it until halfway through my junior year. My biggest advice to underclassmen is to stay on top of school and stay focused or it'll hurt you when it comes to college.

Junior year is so so so important, too. Some students may not realize this and will get annoyed by the ACT/SAT prep. But you can't.

You have to pay attention and try your hardest junior year the most out of all years.

Junior year is the year that comes down to fixing your GPA, getting a good score on your ACT/SAT, and the year you should start thinking about the future.

I know students don't want to think about it because it's too early. I did the same thing, but it is so important to start focusing your future on college or whatever you wish to pursue in your future. If you procrastinate thinking about the future, it'll come back on you when you have too many choices and can't decide what college will be best for you.

Then, lastly, there's senior year. The saddest, but exciting and fun, best year of high school any student will encounter. Senior year will make you realize how fast the past four years of your life have flown by. It'll make you realize that your life is about to change but it will be a good change.

The year full of lasts. Your last first day of high school, your last homecoming and snow coming, your last chance to sit in the student section and cheer your football and basketball team on, the last Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter you will be living at home, your last prom, the last time you'll sit in a classroom filled with people you grew up with and your closest friends before you all go your separate ways...Just all around the year full of lasts.

It's the saddest experiences when you look back and realize you won't be able to do any of these things as a student anymore. You graduate and become an alumnus and realize that it's all really over. You wanted so bad to leave this place and get out of here, but when you look back, you'll realize that nothing will be the same anymore and you wished those years away. So enjoy high school and living in your hometown with your friends and family before it's too late. Appreciate your life, your friends, your family, your teachers, and your school before it all becomes a part of your life you cannot change and you have to leave it all behind. Thank you Richmond Community Schools and all my teachers over the years for the past 12 years and preparing me for the next chapter in my life. I'm out.

Thank you Richmond Community Schools and all my teachers over the years for the past 12 years and preparing me for the next chapter in my life. I'm out.

## Where Did Those Four Years Go?

By: Nick Thomas  
Sports Editor

"High school is going to be the fastest four years of your life; it's going to fly bye," said all of our middle school teachers, back in 2012.

If there's one true thing a teacher has ever said to me, it's that short, little, quick sentence above. High school flies bye.

It seems as if yesterday was my first day in this school. I remember it like it was yesterday. I walked through the front doors, with my brother, Jake, after being dropped off by my mom. I was wearing white Nike shorts with a Michigan tee shirt and Nike slides because I hadn't gotten my new shoes yet.

I remember thinking the school was so big, the other kids were so big. I didn't know where anything was, and all I could think was about the next four years ahead of me in this school. Now all I can think about is where those four years went. Where did they go?

We all knew this day would come -- our last day as a high school student, our last day of not having to worry about the future. No more worrying about your grades or what your crush thinks of you or what happened in English class a week ago.

Now you have your entire future to worry the about, the rest of your life; and all we can think about is what happened to those four years? Where did they go?

We all walk into this school as freshman, and we all walk out as seniors. We walk into this school wondering if we're cool enough or if we fit in.

We walk out wondering how we're going to pay for college, and what we even want to be when we grow up, which is only another short four years away.

You no longer get to worry about what shirt you're going to wear to school tomorrow and with what pants and what shoes. Now you have to think and

worry about the rest of your life.

Freshman year: We all walked into this school with our friends and all we could think about was how big it was and how much fun high school is going to be. Before you know it, it's junior year and you're halfway done with high school; you've been to dances and on sports teams and had fun. Now you have to take a test that determines so much of the next four years of your life after high school.

No pressure, right? Now you're a senior. Your closest friends from freshman year you barely speak to now.

You've changed, made new friends, maybe found love along the way; and all you're thinking about is your last homecoming, prom, spring break, and finally getting to leave this place once and for all.

Before you know it, that's all over; you only have a few days left here at RHS; and all you can think about is where those four years went. What happened to them?

You begin to realize where you're going to go to college and what classes you'll take that will help you for the rest of your life and in your career field.

It begins to set in: You're never going to see some of your classmates again. Your friends are all leaving, everyone's going their separate way, and all you can think about is what happened to those four years?

Now you sit here, wondering what to do... what's next? But don't worry. You're not alone in this situation, nor will you be the last.

Like everything else, you'll figure everything out with time, you'll make new friends again, you'll figure out what you want to do for the rest of your life, and before you know it, this – high school – will all be just a memory, of what it used to be.

Our time is up here at Richmond High School, but this is not the end. It is another beginning, into the rest of our lives.



*Continued from page 5*

## The Best Four Years

It's crazy to think that some of the people you grew up with and went to school with for the past 12 years, are all going our separate ways in less than 4 months.

If someone would have asked me my freshman year, "Are you excited to be done with school?!" 100% yes. If I was asked that same question now, not in a million years.

I am excited to end school and graduate, and see what college brings, but I don't think I will ever not be upset that I won't ever be walking the halls of Richmond High School ever again.

Through the laughs between my friends, the random emotional breakdowns because of random tests, and the excitement for the last day whether it was Christmas break, Spring Break, snow days, or just a four day weekend I am going to miss all of it.

Although it took the Class of 2016 a few years to get close, now that we are, I wouldn't trade the memories I made with every single one of them for the world.

It's been fun while it lasted, and I know it might not have always seemed like the "best four years of my life". I know once I'm older, I will look back and realize that it actually was.

Thank you Richmond Schools and all of my teachers for the crazy adventures, but it's time for a new one.

**By: Kaitlyn Milliken**  
Staff Writer

It's always sad when a senior graduates. They leave their friends, memories, and all of their great teachers behind. From my own experience, I was blessed to always have amazing teachers each year at the RHS. Teachers that guided me, mentored me, and taught me not just the class subject, but also some very valuable life lessons. I was lucky enough to have teachers that never gave up on me. Their encouragement, wisdom, and determination has been a huge influence on a lot of students. I have something good to say about almost every teacher I have had at the High School.

(Those teachers are: Mrs. Vanham, Mrs. Smallwood, Mrs. Volpe, Mrs. Underwood, Mrs. Belf, Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Aronson, Mr. Rineer, Mr. Murphy, Mr. and Mrs. Germain, Mrs. Lepak, and Mrs. Laratonda.) And I won't be able to share my memories with all of them. But I will share some of my most important memories now.

One of the most influential teachers I have ever had has got to be Mrs. Volpe. I had her for Gym and Earth Science my freshman year. It was my first year at the school, and I was just hobbling around trying to figure out how things worked. I was adjusting to the change. And when Mrs. Volpe came in; she was new here too. So I could relate to her in that respect.

Freshman year was overall my hardest year in high school. But Mrs. Volpe made it better by being sort of a life coach for me. Whenever kids picked on me, she stood up and helped me out, telling me that it will eventually get better and the things that they were saying did not matter. I listened to her advice and things really did get better like she promised. And when I face a problem to this day, I still remember that "it will get better."

Another awesome teacher I had my freshman

## Looking Back and Looking Forward: A Brendan Hart Story

**By: Brendan Hart**  
Sports Co-Editor

It is finally here: Senior year has finally come. Four years ago when I walked into this high school I knew that things were going to change but how much, was still something I would have to find out.

Freshmen year is something I will always look back to and think, "I should've done better." Freshmen year at first seemed like it would be easy and it was but I didn't make it that way. Freshmen year was the worst year of high school looking back.

In ninth grade I began the year still thinking that I was going to Michigan and that I was going to play varsity basketball and have tons of friends, but I couldn't have been more wrong. Freshmen year was the complete opposite of what I thought it would be.

I almost failed my freshmen year tracking up a total of over 100 failed assignments, tests and even exams to finish with a 2.3 GPA.

Sophomore year, I came back like LeBron after he lost to Dallas in the 2011 NBA Finals. I was finally able to balance my grades and my life. I was able to get back to the way I knew I could be and probably should've been.

Sophomore year was a good year as it had memories of basketball, awesome teachers, and good grades -- all things I didn't have time to experience the year prior.

In tenth grade I was able to connect with people I hadn't connected with before, mostly upper classmen. I was able to learn with and from them. I got an opportunity to see what they did

and what I needed to do. The knowledge and friendships I gained in sophomore year turned out to be invaluable.

Junior year was a very big year, a year to remember the previous two and try to make the best of what time I had left.

That year, however, was a big year in school too. I had my biggest academic challenge ahead of me -- the ACT. The ACT decided my future and I am very happy with the result as it was something I feel represented my hard work from the end of my freshmen year to then. I got a 22, not too bad but not super but I'll take it.

Outside of school I remember junior year pretty important as I found my niche in the social-verse of Richmond. I stopped talking to certain people and put aside some of the friendships that I had prioritized the previous six years of my life. Thankfully, once I found my niche I knew that it was where I needed to be and where I wanted to be. My niche was off to the side, away from everyone. I deleted my Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat and pretty much went off the grid, focusing on my few real friends, my family and most importantly myself.

That decision to just say 'deal with it' and get away from the drama and stupidity on social media was one of the best decisions I made.

I made that decision in the middle of junior year and by the end of the year I was pretty much disconnected from most of my peers, which looking back kind of stinks. But then I think about it and then I realize that I wouldn't change it if I could. Towards the end of junior year I realized that I was almost in the clear.

I was almost done and that is when I began senior year, my last year, the fourth quarter. It started with the first last and they just seem to be piling up and while it is a little sad that I probably won't see about 75% of these people again, it also means that I get to go out and meet new people and begin my new chapter and write the rest of my story.

*Continued on page 8*

year was Mrs. Cole. I had her in art a few years in the past at middle and elementary school. But it wasn't until High School that I really saw how awesome she was. My entire life, Art has been a huge factor in who I am. Being a big part of my family, and what I would like to do for the rest of my life. So having some great art teachers was very crucial to me.

Mrs. Cole helped toughen me up a bit. She got me used to hearing criticism and also gave me two of the most important keys to being an artist. One: "There's never too much detail." And Two: "Don't stop drawing until you think you're done." Detail in artwork is essential. The more there is, the more realistic it will be.

But she also taught me to know my own limits. Your work is finished when you think it looks as good as it can possibly be. And ever since then, I have applied both of those concepts to almost everything in my life. Not just Art.

My sophomore year was the year I started to meet more people and develop stronger bonds with my teachers. I made lots of great friends like Angelica Barrows, Josh Blisset, Adam Hill, and Shadden Gee. And this was the year I had gotten to know my teachers Mrs. Vanham, Mr. Murphy, Mrs. Smallwood, and Mrs. Aronson.

Mrs. Vanham was my algebra teacher. She was actually able to teach me math in a way I could understand it. I would always be down in the dumps when it came to my math grades. Believing I was completely incapable of solving a complex math problem, always thinking that it was absolutely impossible for me to do. But she proved me wrong with her and her excellent teaching skills.

As thanks to her, I promised to draw her an elephant. But not just an ordinary elephant. A beautifully drawn, realistic, elephant. That promise was made two years ago, and it will finally be fulfilled at the end of this year. But I believe that waiting that long will only make the gift sweeter and more memorable.

*Continued on page 8*

*Continued from page 4*

## The Perks

We end the show on a good note, finally bonding again and building each other up with positive attitudes and support. Still, the idea of having that ball of stress being lifted off me is awfully pleasurable.

I'm tired and rested out. I am ready for a long nap. I am ready for vacations. I am ready for the most stressful year of high school to be over.

I guess they were right when they said junior year was the most complicated.

Senior year

Dear friend,

Here it is, the big year. The year of choices and lasts. The year of promises and memories. I got through it. I am finally a senior.

So I don't repeat myself by describing the ups and downs of this bittersweet, friend losing and friend gaining year, I am just going to say it wasn't all rainbows and butterflies like I thought it would be.

Ultimately senior year entitles the biggest decision of our lives so far: where we want to go after here. The list is long and dwindling. It is stressful and complicated but once the choice is made everything feels light as air. It's like the cage around me has finally been drawn up.

I am free.

What I really have to say about high school overall is that it is a time to discover new friends, new interests, and new hobbies. It is a time to make choices both good and bad. It is a time to regret a little but then to move on.

Within these last four years, I found my voice. I fell in love with performing. I fell in love with literature. I fell in love with the way each of our minds works just a little bit differently. I fell in love with being young just for this little bit of time. And I truly believe that if we look out at our lives from a higher perspective as we're in the midst of some of our best moments, we truly will feel INFINITE....