

July 8, 2011

Dear Students and Parents of the Class of 2013:

Greetings! I hope this past school year was a productive and challenging one for you. So as you rest up over the summer, it's always a good idea to have a sneak preview of what is to come. This letter contains some important information concerning the class of 2013. Please read through all the following information carefully. As always, please contact us if you have any questions.

- **Meetings for Juniors & Parents** – In February of this upcoming school year, all juniors will meet with one of the Guidance Counselors to discuss course planning for their senior year, as well as college and career related plans. We will provide you with information on various topics, such as diploma types, honors that can be obtained, AP courses (if applicable), college-entrance testing, the college selection process, transcripts, recommendations, scholarships, and other useful tidbits. Parents are welcomed to be at the meeting for their child if they so desire.
- **PSAT Testing** - The PSAT is a preliminary to the SAT and the standard of measure for the National Merit Scholarship Competition. All juniors are encouraged to take the PSAT, as it serves as a great practice for taking the real deal in the spring or summer. The date of the test is **Saturday, October 15th**, from 8:00am to approximately 11:30am. The fee to take the exam is \$14.00, and the deadline for registration is **Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>**. To register your child for the test, fill out the attached form and return it to Mr. Kaufman with either a check or money order for the testing fee (please make it out to GBCS). Parents can also register their child when he or she returns to school for the 2011-12 school year, or at our annual Back to School Night on **Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>**, at 7:00pm.
- **SAT/ACT Testing** - The ideal time for students to begin taking college entrance testing is in their junior year of high school. The two college entrance tests are the ACT ([www.act.org](http://www.act.org)) and the SAT ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)). The math section of the ACT primarily covers Algebra I and Geometry, while the math portion of the SAT covers through Algebra II and can include Trig/Pre-Calculus related problems. Students who have not completed Algebra II are advised to take the ACT first. Please check out each of these websites for the testing dates, registration (and late registration) deadlines, registration fees, and easy online registration. Testing for the 2011-12 school year will begin in September and October, but students in their junior year are advised to do their testing either during the spring (March/April) or at the beginning of the summer (June), when they are close to or have completed their respective Math and English courses. Student Services will have posters with all the dates for each test for your convenience. For those wanting to use paper applications as opposed to online registration, there will be some available in the Student Services Office at the beginning of the year. They usually don't last long, so make sure you pick one up early.
- **ASVAB Testing** – The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is given by the MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station) in Baltimore to students in their junior and senior year of high school. The test and the program associated with it ([www.asvabprogram.com](http://www.asvabprogram.com)) are designed to help students explore career possibilities and better understand their skills and potential in various career areas. It also serves as a foundation for evaluating potential service in the military and the various careers that are associated with that. This test will be given in late September, and registration is free. All students who take it will also meet together with an ASVAB program representative in the spring to review their individual results and do some career exploration. If your child is interested in this assessment, please see Mrs. Fry in Student Services to sign up. You can also sign up for the ASVAB at our Back to School night.

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- **Service Hours** – All students **must** complete a minimum of 75 hours of community service before graduation. If your child has been a student at GBCS since the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, they should have a minimum of 35 service hours by this time. They will need to complete a minimum of 20 service hours before the end of both the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. Some of the students have already met the requirement or are well on their way. Unfortunately, many have not even started. Summer is a great time to work on the service hour requirement and there are various ways to earn them, such as community activities, church-related activities, missions trips, and so on. Please check with your guidance counselors if you are unsure of how many hours you currently have completed and recorded, so you can plan accordingly. Be aware that any student who performs 200 or more hours will earn a special community service award, which will be recognized both at graduation and on their final transcript. Also be aware that any student who does not have the minimum requirement (55 hours) completed by the end of finals of their junior year may have their final report card held until the requirement is met. In the same manner, if the requirement for senior year (75 hours) is not met by the end of finals (regardless of whether the students attend the senior trip), the student will not be allowed to turn them in until after graduation, and therefore cannot receive their diploma or have their final transcripts sent out until it is met.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding information covered in this letter (or anything not covered), please feel free to contact us via phone or email listed below, or stop by in person to see one of us during the summer. All of us here at Grace Brethren wish you and your family a safe and wonderful summer. We are looking forward to working with you again next year! Be blessed!

Sincerely,

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