

July 7, 2011

To the Students of the Class of 2012:

Greetings! Now that the Class of 2011 has graduated, it is finally time for the next group of young men and women to step up and be the leaders of the student body. The baton has now been passed on to you...it's your time now!

Please take a few minutes to review the important information in this letter with your parents/guardian. This should help to answer any basic questions you might have about what you should be doing and looking forward to. You can always contact us if you have additional questions or concerns, and we encourage you to do so.

- **Meetings with Seniors and Parents** - Every senior will be scheduled for an appointment in the early part of the upcoming school year to discuss college & career plans, and to verify that you have all your requirements in order to graduate. There will also be a Guidance/Advisor Information Night for all the seniors and your parents on **Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, at 7:15pm in the Worship Center**. This will give us as counselors a chance to pass along some important information to you and to your parents so you are both on the same page when it comes to deadlines and paperwork. It will also give parents a chance to ask questions, go over information with your class sponsors, and get information on the various class activities for the school year. Remember, you don't have to wait for these meetings to contact us or make an appointment to meet with us if you have questions, need some information or paperwork, or perhaps just a little encouragement and motivation during the school year.
- **SAT/ACT** - If you have not taken either the SAT or ACT yet, you're in big trouble! OK, just kidding. If you haven't taken either one yet and you plan to, or you want to take them again because you don't care for your previous scores, now is the time to act. For the SAT, you'll need to sign up by the beginning of September in order to take the test when it is first offered in October. The best way to register for the SAT is online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). For the ACT, you can go to [www.ACTStudent.org](http://www.ACTStudent.org), and you will need to register by mid-August for the first test given in September to avoid late fees. Paper applications for both tests will be available in Student Services when we get them and we'll try to get extra ones just in case. You'll need to keep track of the deadlines for when to mail it out, and remember that when they're gone, they're gone. In case you miss the first deadlines (both regular and and/or the late ones), both tests will be given three more times throughout the fall/winter, so you'll have another chance. When we get those big posters with all the dates and stuff, I'll make sure to put them on the bulletin board in Student Services for all of you to see. **NOTE:** For those taking the SAT prep course here next year, or getting prep help through an outside source, you can always wait to register to take it in November or December while it's still fresh in your mind. And don't worry about whether it will be "cutting it too close." Unless you are doing early decision, your scores will arrive in plenty of time to the colleges you are applying to.
- **College Applications** – By the time you come back in the fall, you should have a list of target schools you plan on applying to. If you plan to enroll in a 4-year college or university, your application should be completed and mailed by **December at the latest**. If you plan on applying via early action or early decision, your deadlines can be as early as **late October or early November**. If you are planning to attend a community college, you can apply in the spring. If you are still feeling out the possibilities, you can also check out college fairs that will be going at various locations during the fall. Perhaps you might be interested in meeting with various college representatives that will be coming to the school in the fall with information packets and who will answer your questions. Sometimes they can also take your application, waive the application fee, and even give you a decision on the spot! Of course, if you need help with college applications, you can bring them in and we can help you complete them. We will be stocking our offices and a section of the new library with college viewbooks and related materials as well to assist you with your research.
- **Requesting Transcripts** – Once you apply to a college, you must request an official transcript from the guidance office to be sent directly from the school. Certain scholarship programs, summer internships, and job opportunities may also require one as well. All you need to do is fill out one of the transcript request forms stored in the small brown box in front of Mr. Kaufman's door, and return it along with any additional papers that need to be completed. You **MUST** also provide me with a **stamped, legal-sized envelope with the address already on it**. Many colleges and universities have several extension campuses or various office locations, and your transcript must be sent to the right place to avoid delays and stuff getting lost. You only need to use one form for requesting transcripts to be sent out to multiple schools at the same time, but remember to include a stamped envelope for **each** school listed. If you need your 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes and/or grades (depending on when the request is made) sent with your transcript, please mark it on the form. Only the FINAL transcript that goes out after graduation will have the final grades posted on it. If you bring it in to be completed first thing in the morning, I can usually make sure that the request goes in the mail on the same day, unless I'm working on something major or if I am out of the office. Just to be safe, give me 48 hours notice between when you request it and when it needs to go out. You can also find the form at [www.gbcseagles.org/docs](http://www.gbcseagles.org/docs).

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- **Letters of Recommendation** – I’m sure you all want the schools you are applying to to know exactly how highly we think of you, and a letter of recommendation is just the thing. Just like your transcript, recommendations are used for college admission (either required or optional), scholarship opportunities, employment, and even certain summer programs. It’s a good idea to request one or two letters of recommendation, and at least one from either a teacher or either one of your guidance counselors. All you have to do is mark on the transcript request form that you would like a letter of recommendation to accommodate your transcript. If you just need a letter, use the separate form located behind the transcript request. Make sure you give each teacher and/or faculty member writing a letter for you at least **two weeks** notice before you actually need it. At certain times during the school year, teachers and faculty members have a heavy workload and may not have the appropriate time to write a letter for you, especially if you wait until the last minute to make a request. It is also important to attach a copy of your resume or activity sheet to the letter of recommendation request. Which brings me to...?
- **Resume or Activity Sheet** - A resume or activity sheet should be prepared to send with scholarship and college applications. You also need to turn one into whomever you are requesting a letter of recommendation from. There is an activity sheet in the brown box, on the school site, or you can come up with your own if you prefer. If you have already turned one in last year, you do not need to fill out a new one...we can simply pull it from your file and update it.
- **Scholarships & Financial Aid** – There are a myriad of potential scholarships available, and every little bit of money helps! The guidance offices always get stuff sent to us, and we always try to pass the information onto you as early as possible, either in homeroom, via email, our Guidance page on Edline, or through the different materials posted in and around Student Services. You should also check out the list of helpful web sites in Student Services to look for scholarships. Some of them will allow you to register with them (for free) and complete a personal profile. This will allow you to tap into scholarship search engines to find scholarships that match up best with the information you provide (what you wish to major in, schools you are looking at, where you live, your background, grades, your favorite color, etc.). NOTE: Some scholarships have forms that need to be filled out by a teacher or guidance counselor, and some might require a recommendation letter and a report card or transcript. Always make sure you check the deadlines for each scholarship you plan on applying to, and make sure the application is in AT LEAST a week or two BEFORE the deadline, if it all possible. Remember, the early bird catches the worm...and it could net you some serious green for college.
- **Service Hours** - Ok by now this should be a silly simple explanation...you need a minimum of 75 hours to graduate unless you were told otherwise by myself or Mrs. Vanderhoof. By now you *should* have a minimum of 55, and we know that a large chunk of you do NOT. Therefore, if you have hours completed and haven’t turned in the forms (even if they were from past), make sure they are filled out completely, and you get them to Mr. Kaufman ASAP. If you already have 75 and you have done more, feel free to keep turning them in...the more hours the better it looks. If you reach 200 or more, you will receive a special community service award, you will be recognized at graduation, and it will also appear on your final transcript. The summer might be the best time to rack them up if you have the free time to do it, so take advantage of that. If you’re going on any type of summer missions trip (GBCS or through a church or another organization) you can use those hours too...just make sure one of the leaders of your trip verifies it on the form. You don’t get hours for jobs you get paid for, so take that into consideration. If you need to know how many you currently have, or if there is a conflict in how many you have versus what you should have, please contact us. Remember, you will NOT receive your diploma at graduation unless the requirement is met by the end of finals, whether you go on your senior trip or not. After that, you’ll have to wait until *after* graduation to turn them in. There will be a list in both Mr. Kaufman’s and Mrs. Vanderhoof’s offices, in Mrs. Mack’s room, and on the senior bulletin board next to Mrs. Hornickel’s office towards the end of the year. So don’t tell us later on that you weren’t aware!

We are looking forward to working with each of you and coaching you along as you prepare to finish strong and move on to the many things that God has planned for you. Remember that our doors are always open, and I’m sure we will have plenty of candy available if you need to see us. You can stop in, email, or call one of us, or even catch us on Facebook if you or your parents or guardians have any questions before and during the school year.

So, have a safe and blessed summer, and we will see you in the August. The countdown to May 19<sup>th</sup> is on!

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