

October 24, 2019

Dear 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Families,

It was great to have the opportunity to talk with so many of you at the 11th-grade parent/guardian meeting. If we haven't had a chance to talk in person yet, I hope we'll be able to do so soon.

### **Preliminary Comments**

You should have already received your child's preliminary comments in the mail, but if for some reason you didn't, [e-mail me](#) and I will send you a copy. I hope you find the conference with your child's advisor – which should happen before Thanksgiving break – to be a helpful check-in and a useful exchange of information and ideas about how to encourage and support your child's growth and development. As advisors, we're always grateful for your perspective on your child's progress. If you haven't yet scheduled your meeting, please contact your child's advisor to do so.

As your child's advisor will surely emphasize, preliminary comments are intended not only to give students a snapshot of their work so far but also to provide suggestions on how they can improve in the coming months. As you work to support and encourage your child, keep in mind what we discussed at the junior parent meeting: focusing on specific goals for growth is always more helpful than getting bogged down in grades and scores. Please continue to remind your junior that teachers are here to help and guide them, and it is easiest for teachers to do so when students communicate with them. At the same time that we're firmly committed to lending our support and encouragement, we want to do all we can to encourage students to advocate for themselves.

### **College Counseling Kick-Off Night for Junior Parents/Guardians**

Looking ahead, remember that your child will have the opportunity to select a college counselor in November following the College Counseling Kick-Off Night on Thursday, November 14. Thanks to the new Common Day schedule, the college counseling team has already had the opportunity to meet with your children a few times this fall, so this meeting will be just for you. You won't want to miss this opportunity to learn about the current landscape of college admissions! While there isn't anything your child needs to be doing between now and then other than being the best student they can be, please feel free to contact Nanette Tarbouni, director of College Counseling, if you have any questions.

### **AP Exam Registration: Final Reminder**

Remember that due to changes in the College Board's timeline, the deadline for signing up for Advanced Placement exams is Friday, **November 1**. Students enrolled in an AP class are required to sit for the exam and have already been signed up — or will be signing up — for their AP exam in class. Students enrolled in a non-AP class for which JBS offers an exam (i.e., Statistics, Economics or Latin) have the option of taking that exam. If they wish to sign up for these exams, they should see Johanna Nicholas, our AP coordinator, for help. Because so many of our juniors elect to take the AP English Language exam and/or the AP US History exam, we've provided the sign-up codes for these two

exams to all juniors. To sign up, students must log in to their College Board account to register by November 1, to avoid a \$40 late fee. Earlier this week during a class meeting, we offered assistance to those students who still needed help signing up. Should you have any questions about the registration process, please contact Dr. Nicholas.

### **Thanksgiving Holiday**

There will be no school the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to give students a longer break and to make it easier for families to leave town for the holiday. Please do not take your student out of school early on Tuesday, November 26. Doing so puts unnecessary pressure on students to catch up and on teachers who need to help them do so. As you can imagine, it's also very disruptive to classes when several students are absent. As I mentioned in my summer mailing, students who miss school that Tuesday will not be excused from assignments.

### **Thinking about Smartphones and Technology**

An article in *Time* ("[We Need to Talk About Kids and Smartphones](#)") explores the negative impact mobile devices can have not only on young people's mental well-being but also on their ability (and even desire) to take part in face-to-face communication. Even those experts who point out that correlation doesn't prove causation readily agree that it's important to establish clear limits on teenagers' use of devices. In many ways, the article adds weight to our school's limitations on the use of personal devices during the school day. In fact, all you have to do is compare the ways students interact in the Commons during the school day to the ways they interact once their phones come out after the final bell to know that the concerns highlighted in this article are very real ones playing out around us every day. And of course, we as adults are not immune to technology's effects either. A recent article in *The Boston Globe* ("[The Case for a Tech Shabbat in a Too-Connected World](#)") makes a compelling case for turning off all technology one day a week. I hope you find these resources as thought-provoking as I did.

The next *Principal Link* will come out at the beginning of December. Until then, Happy Halloween and Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

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