

December 12, 2019

Dear 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Families,

It's hard to believe that we are wrapping up our first semester! I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving with your family and friends. The 9<sup>th</sup> graders seem to have enjoyed their break and are already back in the swing of the school schedule.

Last month, we enjoyed our 9<sup>th</sup> grade event in the field house with 90 students attending. They had a great time hanging out with each other playing trivia, dodgeball, musical chairs and other games. I enjoyed watching them run around having fun! Special thanks to our 9<sup>th</sup> grade sponsors, Coaches Desloge and Dieffenbach. They worked with the class officers to organize the event and kicked off the evening with a great trivia game — which included preteen pictures of faculty for students to identify! Thank you also to the parents who chaperoned the event and helped us set up and clean up.

### **Finals Week**

This busy first semester is rapidly ending and final exams are in sight. English papers are due the Friday before finals on December 13 and exams for other core courses will take place Monday through Thursday, December 16–19 at 10 am. Regular classes do not meet Monday through Thursday during exam week for our high school students.

Students are not required to be here until their exam starts, and they can leave campus when they are finished, but lunch will be served if they choose to stay. Please also note that we have scheduled an exam make-up day for Friday, December 20, in case it is needed. This make-up day will only be used if school has to be cancelled sometime during that week due to weather. If you are making plans for winter break, please schedule your departures around this make-up exam day.

### **Exam Preparation**

I've asked advisors to devote an advisory period to discuss exam preparation since this is the first time our 9<sup>th</sup> graders are experiencing high school finals. Dr. Deken also addressed the class during one of our Common Day meetings on effective study techniques based on cognitive neuroscience research. I am posting his slide presentation on the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Principal page (under the "Handouts and Mailings" section). Some of his key points include prioritizing time to study; spacing out time to study vs. cramming information; using active studying techniques; working toward understanding; taking small breaks; eating well, exercising and getting enough sleep; and having a proper mindset.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade Study Afternoon**

I also want to remind you that the 9<sup>th</sup> grade has an organized study afternoon, from 1 to 3 pm, on Saturday, December 14 in the dining room. This time is helpful for students to share study guides, compare notes, organize their work and help each other. After students have spent some time studying together, members of our math, history, and biology departments will arrive at 2:30 pm to answer any final questions that students may still have. I hope that students will leave the session feeling more confident with their preparation and will also have identified areas where they may need some additional time studying.

**Academic Integrity**

Sometimes the stress that comes with a deadline for a major paper and final exams leads to students figuring out ways to cut corners. Cheating hurts students by giving them a false sense of accomplishment. It is unfair to those who follow the rules, it is unfair to you because you have made sacrifices to send your children to Burroughs, and it is unfair to the reputation of the entire community. If your child is feeling terribly behind, please encourage them to seek out their teachers to discuss what can be done.

**ERB (Educational Records Bureau) Tests**

All 9<sup>th</sup> graders will take the ERB (Educational Records Bureau) tests for independent schools on Thursday, January 9 in the field house. Students should arrive at school by 8 am with No. 2 pencils (non-mechanical); they are not allowed calculators. Students will test during first and second periods and then will follow their regular schedules, attending periods three through eight. No preparation is needed for these tests. Results will be mailed home once tests are processed by the ERB. These scores are for internal use only and are primarily used to identify school-wide trends.

I hope you all have a wonderful winter holiday season and can enjoy time with your family. As I reflect on this past semester, I am grateful for the opportunity and privilege to work with your children and to be a part of this wonderful community. I look forward to the new year and to a new semester!

Have a wonderful winter break!

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