

Dear Parents of Freshman Students,

What a wonderful opportunity you have before you, helping your child through their high school years. During this time much of the foundation for your child's future career and life in general is established. As the high school guidance counselor, I want to assist you in whatever way I can so these important high school years are used productively by your student.

As you consider the upcoming school year, please think about the high school years as a block of time, not individual years. This is important because some of the classes your son or daughter may take as a senior are predicated on what classes they took as a freshman. So you can see that scheduling the appropriate classes from the freshman year on is important.

There is one other word of encouragement I want to offer parents of freshman students. Please communicate two things to your student: (1) working hard and being scholastically diligent is important and (2) their freshman GPA is very important to them. Occasionally I encounter juniors and seniors who didn't take the first year or two of high school very seriously. Now their attitude has changed, they see the importance of post-high school education or training, and they are applying for college admission or scholarships, and they have to provide their GPA. Perhaps they are applying for a scholarship in October of their senior year. You can readily see they have no senior grades yet to report, so what does their GPA consist of? Their grades in the first three years of high school, plain and simple. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to conclude that if they didn't put forth much effort as a freshman or sophomore, their GPA isn't going to be very helpful in obtaining scholarship money. Neither will it help them gain entrance to the training program or college they desire to attend.

If I could offer a suggestion based on experience, it would be this. Plan as if your student will attend college after high school graduation. That way, the appropriate math, science and foreign language classes will be taken. If the student does not go to college, he or she will have lost *nothing* but will have gained a tremendous education. On the other hand, if the freshman is not interested in post-high school education and does not take the necessary math and language courses, but in the junior year has a change of heart, well, it **isn't** too late. But *MUCH* extra time, money, and effort are going to be necessary to accomplish the new goal. Perhaps summer school or community college classes can make up the missing classes, but these come at extra expense and lots of extra time. Better to have the appropriate classes and not need them than the other way around. Schedule college prep classes, please.

Another subject: is it too early to be considering scholarships? **NO**. Again, what happens in the freshman and sophomore years significantly impacts scholarship possibilities. GPA, extracurricular activities, and athletics all influence scholarships. It is not too early to be considering the **FREE** money you might have available to you.

Be encouraged, parents, we serve a loving Father. He is more interested in these upcoming high school years than either you or your student. He will give grace, direction, and help. Thanks for sharing your precious sons and daughters with us. Always remember: **GOD IS ON YOUR SIDE!**

God bless and looking forward to the upcoming school year,

Larry Lawson  
Guidance Counselor