

NEW PARENTS' ORIENTATION INFO August 17, 2020

Mr. Richard Murphy, Counselor [28th year at SPX as counselor]

WELCOME TO ST. PIUS X HIGH SCHOOL !! The following handout will provide you with information about the counseling services and interactions regarding your son or daughter throughout the school year.

HIGH SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT: As parents, it is important to be prepared for the adjustment process that all freshmen and transfer students will experience. All teenagers will have adjustments in beginning high school. There are new friends, and this exciting venture can test old friendships from grade school and test parents' patience. Academically, many freshmen will have--for the first time--7 different teachers with 7 different sets of expectations. Learning these expectations and how to adjust from hour to hour is hard for kids. Textbooks & coursework are more challenging. Transfers are doing this for a second or third time.

There is, likewise, a transition to being "the new kid on the block". No longer is your 8th grader the one looked up to by the younger kids. More than likely, this change is a big psychological one.

There is also an adjustment to a new school's policies, rules and regulations. Finally, freshmen or transfers often like to find an extracurricular activity that will be interesting. Making a sports team or choosing a club where one can feel accepted can be an anxious experience; it is often a measurement, importantly so, of self-esteem and successful transition to high school.



Finally, high school adjustment is one for parents, too. You will no longer be "the first to know" necessarily, about what is going on in your child's life. You will need to initiate communication frequently, read the school's newsletter, check the Counseling page resources under the "Academics" tab, log into "POWER SCHOOL" regularly, check your email regularly, and, most importantly, move toward allowing your son / daughter more independence and "space" to grow and mature. This will entail flexibility on your part with parameters of expectations; at the same time, they want and need to know parameters. The only thing that will be continuous will be "change."

CONFERENCES: We – counselors (Mariza Cascone and Richard Murphy) -- meet with all students, and each freshman in particular, at least twice during the school year, more as needed or requested. We discuss classes, teachers, social & academic adjustment to high school, extracurricular activities, etc. We use a questionnaire sheet as a discussion starter. Krista Daniels is the Inclusive Education Teacher who works with special needs' students, peer mentors, and accommodations' plans. During the second semester, we try to provide them with a 4-year plan for a course of studies. We also do a project in grade 10 whereby students research a particular career about which they are interested in this time of their life. Mrs. Cascone handles this.

TESTING: All underclassmen take a practice ACT administered and scored by the Cambridge company; it is a precursor to the real ACT and provides an in depth report of the student's skills. That will be October 14,

2020. Too, we may give freshmen and juniors the ACRE, an assessment of their knowledge of Catholicism. Sophomores and Juniors have the option to take the PSAT, a college-prep and scholarship qualifying test. A preparation booklet is provided.

Seniors take ACT & SAT for college entrance. I provide ACT testing preparation several times for a nominal fee outside of school time. Other options for ACT prep: see "ACT Information Page" on my webpage.



TEACH A CHILD RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HIS / HER OWN EDUCATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: This may well be the *most important skill* you can have your kids learn under your tutelage. Encourage your son or daughter to make sure (s)he learns how to ask teachers questions. Have them organize their work and have a regular study time for homework & reading. Have them learn to be advocates for themselves when conflict arises. Have them confront when unfairness or injustice occurs. This is not easy to teach, to monitor, or to watch, but it is truly one of the greatest gifts you can give to your children. “Rescuing them” doesn’t teach them how to handle conflict or resolve issues with friends or teachers.

COMPUTER ACCESS: St. Pius X students have a library card that grants them access to the Mid-Continent library and the Kansas City Library Consortium for kids to use electronic databases and access print resources for research and assigned papers.

PERSONAL COUNSELING AND CONTACT WITH PARENTS: One of the main strengths of the counseling program is personal counseling. Either of us, or Krista Daniels (inclusive education teacher), will be glad to talk with you via phone or in person about any concerns you might have. Please remember this if your son or daughter encounters difficulties during the year. You are encouraged to pay special attention to grades earned during the 2nd grading period (this is usually after Homecoming, but before Thanksgiving). They can often slip at this point when the newness of high school has faded.

The biggest adjustment for most freshmen and transfers is the social one. Sometimes kids encounter problems with covert bullying and cyberbullying. Unfortunately, it is a product of the times more than anything else. The important thing to remember as parents is to help kids cope with this and assure them that there are adults who can help, both at home and at school.

ACADEMIC GRADING REPORTS:

“Report Cards” are not issued per se with the access you have in Power School. Every six weeks is a grading period; grades carry over to the next grading period. The Athletic Director determines extracurricular eligibility every 6 weeks. A student’s final grade for the semester is the one that appears on a transcript.

Sometimes, students encounter academic probation – a semester-long period when (s)he has a cumulative grade point average below 2.00 or (s)he has two semester failures. If this occurs, the student must adhere to certain policies with regard to study hall and reporting to the Learning Center.

CAREER BRIEFS: This is a terrific resource and one that is easily accessible:
<https://www.bls.gov/ooh>

“EXPERTS” SAY THESE ARE THE 5 SKILLS GRADUATES MOST NEED IN 2018 AND BEYOND:

1) communicate; 2) write coherently; 3 solve problems; 4) get along with others; 5) computer literacy.