

August 1, 2007

Dear Parents of Freshmen,

Freshman Year is here for your son or daughter. Is it difficult to believe you have a student entering high school? For some of you, this will be the first time to begin this new journey, while others may have experienced this before. As school draws nearer, we wanted to write, introduce ourselves, and extend a warm welcome from the VES College Counseling Department.

Choosing a college is serious business. The process of choosing a college does not just involve filling out applications and dropping them in the mail. Finding a school that is a good match for a child is an important task that really begins in the ninth grade with course selection, grades, activities, and relationships with teachers.

The College Counseling Office is staffed by Amy Koudelka, Patti Culbreth, and Catherine Faulconer, '98. We will get to know you and your child over the course of the next four years. We will assist you and your child with understanding the College Process lingo—PSAT, SAT, SAT II: Subject Tests, ACT, early decision, regular decision, etc.

While freshman year will be an exciting time for your child, we ask that you encourage your child to be aware that choices made freshman year impact the college process. Listed below are some topics that will interest you about the upcoming year. As we visit with the Freshmen Class this fall, we will emphasize how and why freshman year is important.

Helpful Hints for Students

- Get to know your college counselor and teachers.
- Become active in the extracurricular activities that interest you—clubs, community service or athletics.
- Select courses carefully....do not be afraid to challenge yourself!
- Talk with your parents about your college plans.
- Ask older friends and siblings who may be in college about their college experiences. Ask them what they would have done differently if they were just starting high school now.
- If you are near a college campus—for any reason—make an effort to visit and “get a feel” for the campus.
- Remember that GRADES MATTER your freshman year!

With more than 3,500 colleges to choose from, many students and parents view this process with both bewilderment and dread. One of the most difficult and stressful parts of this process is sifting through the choices to find ones that would be a good fit for your student. Hopefully, we can reduce the stress involved by being supportive of your child and working together through this process.

We look forward to meeting you and your child!

Sincerely,

Amy G. Koudelka
Co-Director of College Counseling

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Co-Director of College Counseling