

July 2009

Dear Members of the Class of 2010 and Parents,

This is a quick note to continue our communication near mid summer about the college selection process. As we indicated in our last update, the class of 2010 did an excellent job last year and shows promise of getting into the college selection process as quickly as possible. Happy hunting this summer, and do not delay. Here are some "bullets" to focus the thoughts of this update.

- Get most if not all of your college visiting should be done during the summer, because it is dangerous to miss school days in the fall when your GPA is all important. If you are expecting to apply early somewhere, but that college is not well known to you, and it is an early decision school where you will be committed to attend if your application is successful, you should plan to spend an overnight at that school sometime in September. This overnight, the extended Columbus Day weekend set aside for college visiting, and any paid visits for athletic recruits should be the only exceptions to our advice against fall term visiting. Seniors are allowed six excused absences for college visits, but the bulk of this time is best used in March and April when you are visiting the colleges to which you have been admitted.
- Enclosed you will find a listing of the courses you took over the last few years and the grades you received in them. If there are any mistakes on this, please let us know as soon as possible so we can correct the transcript.
- Are you reading a book a week this summer? Yes, we understand that some faculty may have assigned books for reading and study this summer, but in order to improve that critical reading score you really should be putting in an hour to two hours a day in extensive reading. Pander yourself - that is, read enjoyable books that will keep you reading. All the research indicates that extensive reading, even of books pegged to a seventh through ninth grade reading level ("beach books"), improve critical reading scores on the SATs significantly.
- In our opinion, you shouldn't start formal preparation for your SATs, whether done individually or with a tutor, until mid to late August. In mid August find a rainy day to put eight to ten hours at your computer writing the brag sheet. Immediately after you do the brag sheet, around August 20th or 25th, begin your preparation for the October 3rd SATs. Research suggests that ten hours or twenty

hours of preparation does nothing, while thirty to forty hours begins to make a difference. Work back from October 3rd to a period of thirty-five hours of preparation and you will probably arrive at August 20th to August 25th as the time to begin your half-hour, forty-five minutes, five days a week, preparing for the SATs. A similar preparation program should be used for the September 12<sup>th</sup> or October 24<sup>th</sup> ACT. Without this preparation, you will not maximize your performance. Incidentally, you can probably do this on your own without paying \$1,000 or more for a tutor or a special program.

- Now is the time, late June and early July, to shoot for the stars. Think about those long shots, those dream schools. Visit them, get interviewed, put your right foot forward, and plan your SAT preparation and your study schedule in the fall to make that happen. However, don't forget about the probable schools or the safer schools. Know that you must have three to four "safer" schools that you will be happy to attend if you have to. Frankly, a high percentage of our graduates each year attend what they regarded in June and July of their junior-senior summer as safer schools, but which became first choice schools as the senior year progressed.
- Check the college counseling website for the sample resume, just in case your teacher recommenders have asked for one prior to writing their letters for you. This is a very important item which will help them say good things about you, and will give you the opportunity of guiding what they say. The brag sheet is also available on the website.

Again, we hope you have a good summer. Don't hesitate to be in touch with your counselors if you have a question. If you have the brag sheet done by August 24th, don't hesitate to come in and drop it off. We are looking forward to working with you on this exciting college selection process through 2009/2010. Be assured that you will get 110% from us. Count on it. Accept our warmest personal regards.

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