

## Parent Orientation 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades



# The Calvary

## A C A D E M Y

*Welcome to Being an Upper Classman!*

Congratulations! Your student just entered the final two years of their K-12 educational experience. Here's what to expect and how to manage through all that will be headed your way.

### SOCIAL LIFE

- ❖ If you have not yet found an extra-curricular activity in which to be involved, now is a great time to do so. Once you graduate and enter the college world, your social network has a strong potential to shrink. Being involved in something now will give you an incentive to join a similar club or activity once you start college. Getting involved right away will help you re-establish a solid network of friends.
- ❖ This is the age where you are starting to have more independence and may even apply for your first job. Make your choice carefully. You want to work in an environment that will allow you to keep your priority on your schooling. Also, you need to make it a priority to get your school and activity schedule to your employer in ample time to make changes. If you have a basketball practice next week, your employer should have known about it last week. Plan ahead! If you know you will be involved in an activity that may mandate more of your time, let your employer know even if you don't yet have a set schedule.
- ❖ You are young! You are free! You have a car, and are driving, well, there's nothing to it! Wrong! Driving and having your license are privileges which can be revoked either by the state or by your parents. Be smart. Always be alert when you are behind the wheel, always wear your seatbelt, don't speed, and while you are behind the wheel, turn your electronics off! Your choices don't just affect you; they affect everyone around you. Please go to [www.teensafedriver.com](http://www.teensafedriver.com) to learn more about safe driving tips and take the pledge to be a safe driver.
- ❖ Don't let your social interactions interfere with school work. Keep your main priority, *your schooling*, in check. Make sure that you are getting home at a decent time, so that you have ample time to finish assignments, study for tests, and rest for the next day of school.

### ACADEMIC LIFE

- ❖ These are your last couple of years! Maintain your good grades. This is not the time to slack off. In fact, now is the time to work even harder. To show improvement throughout your four years is much better than to start off good and suddenly drop off in your last year. Colleges would much rather choose the student who shows improvement because they show discipline and motivation, skills which are very pertinent in any college environment.
- ❖ Now is a good time for juniors to consider College Credit Plus for their senior year. It will provide you with the opportunity to get on a college campus and experience college level courses. However, do not enter this experience lightly. It will be a lot of hard work, and if you do not succeed, you are not only accountable for the fees of the classes, but you will also have a bad grade on your high school transcript *and* on your college transcript.
- ❖ Attendance becomes very important during these last couple of years. Your classes are becoming harder, and when you are not in class to learn the information, you may potentially

fall behind. If you do have to miss for whatever reason, be sure you connect with you teacher and fellow classmates when you return to catch up on work missed and ask any questions about material you do not understand. Remember, your classwork is your responsibility, not your teacher's. You need to make the first contact with your teacher and not expect them to bring it to you.

## **TESTING**

- ❖ Junior and Senior years focus a lot on end of high school assessments and college readiness and entrance testing.
- ❖ Pre-ACT – The Preliminary ACT (or American College Test) is a test that we start preparing the students for during their freshmen year. Scores will alert students and families to the student's college and career readiness as well as giving students a general idea of what type of score they would receive on the actual ACT. The test date this year is October 11. Seniors will not be taking this test.
- ❖ ACT – The American College Test focuses on english, math, and science reasoning skills. Juniors and Seniors will be required to take this in October. The test date is October 27, and the registration deadline is September 21. It is highly encouraged for students to take it multiple times throughout their junior year and one last time before their college deadlines in September or October of their Senior year. A perfect score is 36 with the average score ranging between 20 and 21.
- ❖ SAT – The Scholastic Aptitude Test measures critical thinking and problem solving skills. The areas of focus for this test are math, critical reading and writing. This test will focus more on the potential learning of the student versus an evaluation of information learned. We encourage all students to take this test as well, but we do not require it from them. A perfect score is 2400 with an average score ranging around 1540.
- ❖ Do not take these tests lightly. Test preparation is imperative for all of the above mentioned tests. We will help students prepare for many of these tests within their classes, but they need to take the time to put in extra study hours on their own time. There are many resources available for individual study. You may purchase study books through the ACT or College Board (*the company behind the PSAT and SAT tests*) websites or online through Amazon, eBay and any other online book provider. You may also purchase print books at any local bookstore.

## **COLLEGE PREP**

- ❖ Start Early! At the beginning of your junior year, you should begin looking at potential colleges. Make a list of your top colleges, and go for a college visit. By the end of your junior year, you should be selecting between 1 and 4 colleges to which you wish to apply. This is especially important now, as most college deadlines are moving up more towards October and November of their senior year due to FAFSA deadlines moving up. **YOUR SENIOR YEAR IS NOT THE TIME TO PICK YOUR TOP 3 OR 4 COLLEGES!** Your goal for your senior year should be reserved for **APPLICATIONS ONLY**.
- ❖ Go to College Fairs. There are local and state college fairs held at many area high schools and college campuses. There is also a national college fair held downtown at the beginning of

the year. Go and ask questions about majors, degree programs, clubs and activities, and tuition costs.

- ❖ College visits are a very important part of your junior and senior year. Choosing the right college is very important. Since you will be spending your next 2-5 years at that campus you need to fit in on that campus, and not all college campuses are the same. It is highly recommended that if a college you are interested in has a special high school day that you visit during that time. Always try to visit when classes will be going on and ask if you could sit in the back of a potential class to get a feel for the environment and see how classes might potentially operate.
- ❖ When you begin your college applications you will need letters of recommendation. Do well in your classes. Be a leader. Set an example. These are things that teachers, mentors, and employers are looking for and will reference when asked to write a recommendation letter for you. Remember, teachers and mentors can say no, so have alternatives in mind if one of your mentors is unable to write you a letter of recommendation. Furthermore, do your best to improve and excel because even if a teacher or mentor agrees to write a letter of recommendation for you it does not have to necessarily be about all of your shining qualities. They may choose, instead, to express their reluctance for your admission due to areas of poor academics, lack of discipline and undeveloped social skills that you were unwilling or unable to improve upon.
- ❖ Furthermore, give your teacher ample notice of any due dates for letters of recommendation. If you ask them a day before, or even a week before, they may not be able to get it submitted in time for you. Be responsible and proactive.
- ❖ Keep a resume, and update it every quarter. This will be very beneficial for you when filling out your applications.
- ❖ Start on your college applications early. When you are researching colleges during your junior year, download a copy of that college's application requirements so that you can be sure you are doing all that you possibly can to meet those requirements. Make sure that you have all required pieces and try your best to submit it in advance of the deadline.
- ❖ The Common App is becoming more and more popular among colleges. It is also very convenient for you since you will only have to fill out tedious background information once. It also keeps track of all of your current college applications and submissions. Get on early and get familiarized with this database. Issues may arise, and there is no phone number to call. Be prepared to communicate solely through email should any such problems develop.
- ❖ Your application essay could be a deciding factor in your acceptance to your desired college! Do not write these the night before! Be sure to write it well in advance, and be sure to have a friend or mentor edit it for you. Pay attention to the questions asked within the essay prompt and stick to those.

### **PAYING THE BILL**

- ❖ Scholarships are a great opportunity for students to get **FREE MONEY** for their college expenses. All it takes is an application with the potential of an essay, and, in rare circumstances, an interview. It is a lot of hard work, but it is worth it. An updated list of scholarships in the Cincinnati area and scholarship databases is available on the secondary page of our website. It is up to you to do the research from that point.
- ❖ Financial aid is available through private lenders and/or the government. This is not free money. You will pay it back with interest. There are two types of loans: subsidized and

unsubsidized. When a loan is subsidized, that means that the government will be paying the interest on that loan while it is in deferment. Unsubsidized means that interest will be accruing on loan while in deferment. Deferment is a time period in which you do not have to make payments on the loan. Any government loans will stay in deferment as long as you are enrolled at least part-time at a recognized college or university.

- ❖ The most common form of financial aid is FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Once admitted to a college you may fill out a FAFSA application for that college. Award packages are based on financial need.
- ❖ Work Study is an option for which you can apply when filling out the FAFSA form. This is not actual money that you receive, but rather it is a lump sum set aside for places of employment. If you choose to work on campus, places that accept work study will get that money to pay your paycheck during the school year. Furthermore, Federal Work Study jobs are usually more flexible to student's study hours, and when reporting your income for the following academic year FAFSA, the money you earned from your Federal Work Study job is not taken into account when determining your award package.

## **GRADUATION**

- ❖ Congratulations! You finally made it. Now how do you prepare?
- ❖ Your senior year can be quite expensive. Make a plan at the beginning of your senior year to start planning and budgeting for these expenses. Following is a list of items that you should anticipate:
  - Graduation Cap and Gown -- Prices for these range between \$30 and \$40
  - Graduation Announcements (*including the announcement, possibly a namecard, and postage*)
  - Senior Pictures
  - Graduation Open House
  - College Applications – These oftentimes range between \$30 and \$75
  - College Entrance Test Fees such as the ACT and the SAT
  - Thank you cards for graduation gifts
  - Miscellaneous graduation apparel such as class rings, senior t-shirts or specialized tassels and senior year memorabilia
- ❖ It is customary to have a Senior Graduation Open House for the students. We will allow the students to display a few items highlighting their educational career in a small reception held immediately after graduation. If you wish to have something further it is your responsibility to plan and host it. A good time to begin preparations for this will be in April as May is usually an extremely busy month with programs and exams.
- ❖ Graduation Day will be here before you know it. The date this year is May 24. Make sure that you give ample notice to any guests you may be inviting so that they are able to plan ahead for this momentous occasion.

## **SPECIAL NOTE TO PARENTS**

- ❖ Parents, as your student's time here comes to a close, we thank you for partnering with us. We have had a very memorable time with your students, and look forward with great anticipation for their futures. We appreciate you entrusting your student's education to us. We have been privileged to share these high school moments with you and your family.