

Dear Parents/ Guardians:

On Wednesday, August 31, your student attended an assembly for the purpose of strengthening your son or daughter's academic efforts during this Freshman year. Five topics were presented. In order of presentation, they were the following.

1. **Credit Chart**. Each student received a copy of a 4-year credit chart. The chart is entitled, "Keys to Your Future; Florida High School Graduation Requirements." Semester grades can be posted on the chart. While other credits will be earned along the way, these lines **MUST** be successfully filled in to be able to graduate. The only exception to the chart outline could come from two successful years of ROTC. These two years would replace HOPE and a Fine Art. I strongly encourage you to place this chart in a very visible location such as your refrigerator door. You and your family will be able to travel with your student along the 4 year journey to the graduation stage.
2. **Self Talk**. Your student was informed or reminded that he/she has an invisible recorder working within the mind at all times. This invisible recorder is absorbing thoughts and words and it does not contain an "OFF" switch. This becomes extremely important for your son or daughter. If positive thoughts and words are heard by this critical part of the mind, positive thoughts will flow forth when the student is faced with a challenge. On the other hand, if the student consistently records negative thoughts and words ("I never could do math") then the student will have handicapped himself/herself when challenges come along. Self talk, positive or negative, will affect the direction of your young person's life.
3. **The Card Game**. When students or adults get to the point that too much is spinning in the mind, the unfortunate tendency is to "shut down." The individual can find that doing nothing is easier than trying anything but that solution will destroy school grades and/or completion of any tasks that the individual should be doing. One solution for your student works as follows. Take seven index cards and label each one with the name of a class taken during the day. Then the student should carefully fill in each card with whatever needs to be done to be all right in that class. In some classes, everything might be fine so the student should write "ok." When the seven cards are filled in, arrange them from easiest on top to hardest on the bottom. Then the student should react to each card in order, writing solutions on each one and deadlines for completion of the tasks written. The next day, the job of the student is to make things right in each class based upon the information found on each card. Write "DONE" when the tasks are done. Almost certainly the student will feel relief to know that the tasks have been pulled from the overloaded head, written down and addressed. This procedure can be done anytime that the overloaded feeling is experienced.

4. **The Rock.** Each student received a drawing of an individual starting out on a four year journey. At the end of that journey is a sign that says, “Graduation, May 2015.” A sight line is drawn from the individual to the sign to remind the student not to take his./her eye off the long term goal. Along the walkway, a rock is drawn within each of the four years. Students were asked to use a pencil and print within the rock the word that described their most difficult challenge. In some cases, students printed more that one main item. For example, some students printed the word, “math.” The purpose of the drawing is to remind students that there will always be rocks, that the nature of the rock will change over time but that the important thing is the way in which the student handles that adversity. Three possible reactions are written below the path line. The challenge to each student is to learn how to be a #3 and not a #2 or a #1.

5. **Life Lesson.** The assembly was summarized by a short discussion of what I refer to as a Life Lesson. If a student develops the pattern of taking the Rock route of #1, that is what the student likely will do each time adversity comes along. The same would be true of pattern #2 and #3. Clearly #3 is the one that allows students to reach goals, graduation being one of them.

I believe very sincerely in these ideas and principles. It would be wonderful if you could reinforce my efforts with your son or daughter as he/she begins the high school journey. Each student absolutely can succeed but internally the decision has to be made that adversity will not alter their path to success.

Mr. Schmidt
Counselor