

September, 2011

Next week, the doors of FCHS will open to over 1500 students as we start the 2011-12 school year. We have been very busy this summer hiring new teachers and staff, working on our new Honor Code, and running the AVID Bridge program for our incoming freshmen. Though we accomplished a lot, it is always better when the kids are here. I am really looking forward to seeing them next week.

I want to encourage you to encourage your student to take advantage of the many resources we have in place for them. Chief among these is the Learning Seminar which is held on Saturdays in the library from 9 – 12. The Seminar is a great way for students to access school resources and to get help from the teachers who work at the Seminar. Typically, three to four teachers attend each Saturday. Most often, there is an English and Math teacher at each Learning Seminar. Students can just show up – they don't have to sign up (but they do have to sign in!) Students can stay for the entire time or can stay for just a short time – it is up to them. We don't provide transportation, but it is a wonderful opportunity for kids to catch up, keep up or get ahead! Learning Seminar will begin September 24 and will be held the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month for first semester.

Another resource your child may need to consider is the Homework Café. The Homework Café is designed to help students have additional opportunities to use computer labs at school. This year all social studies textbooks (except AP and Psychology) are on-line. Students need to have regular access to computers in order to read the text and complete assignments. Though they will have some opportunities during the school day, we felt it important to set up additional time. Social studies teachers are surveying students next week to determine need and interest. Survey results will be examined and then the schedule will be developed.

And of course, we have Collaboration during Jag Time. Any student who has a D or F in any class after the first interim will be required to attend Collaboration with their teacher. This year, I am going to watch closely our student performance in Advanced Placement classes. I expect all of our AP students to earn AT MINIMUM a "C" in each AP class in which they are enrolled. If their performance earns them a "D" or "F" in an AP Class, they

will be put on "contract" which states that they may not remain in the class without increased effort. My goal is not to have kids drop AP Classes at all, but rather I want kids to monitor their own learning and to develop plans for their own academic deficiencies, if necessary. I need for our AP students to set the bar for high performance for the rest of the student body.

I love this time of year! Kids are excited to see each other and they come back to school with a freshness and anticipation that is hard to replicate throughout the year. We are going to have a lot of fun this year! Classes will be electing class officers in the next few weeks, which is a good thing since Homecoming is in mid-October and classes have much to do before then. And Seniors will have many decisions to make regarding graduation which will be here before you know it!

I hope you have a wonderful school year and that you are an involved Jaguar parent this year! Our PTSA needs you and I hope you will join. The Parent Resource Center will be sponsoring some very interesting workshops for parents this year that I believe will be informational, useful and powerful. Stay tuned for more details.

Lastly, please feel free to call on me anytime. I am incredibly proud to be the Principal of FCHS and I consider all of these students "my kids" too. I hope you will attend the monthly Principal Receptions which is a 90 minute chat about areas of interest and importance to you. The first reception this year is for freshmen parents only and it will be on September 14th. The next Principal Reception will be held on October 26 at 6:30 in the Little Theatre.

Again, best wishes for the best year yet!

Cathy Benner, Principal