



BLESSED SACRAMENT SCHOOL
AND
EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



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October 8, 2009

Dear Eighth Grade Parents,

It may be difficult for many of you to believe, but it is indeed time for you and your eighth grade student to earnestly begin the high school decision-making process. This can be an exciting time, but it can also raise many questions and concerns for both the student and the parents. Please know that we are here to assist you during this year and hope that we can ease your concerns as you move forward. Take a deep breath and know that you can get through this process. Here are some pertinent facts of interest:

- Representatives from several Arlington Diocese High Schools plan to visit our eighth grade students this fall. These visits are informational and usually include a question and answer period with recent BSS alumni (when possible). This is very enjoyable for our eighth graders, as it is fun to see some of our former students (and it's great for them to come back for a visit to their alma mater).
- All local high schools generally hold weekend Open House events so that parents can visit area schools with their children. If you are interested in learning more about schools within or outside of the Diocese of Arlington, the best way to do so is to log onto each school website for current information about Open House dates and times. If you are searching within the Diocese of Arlington, you may go to catholicschools@arlingtondiocese.org in order to find information about our Catholic schools. If we receive information about an upcoming open house, we make every effort to include this in the newsletter; but the announcements, while as inclusive as possible, may not represent all the opportunities.
- In addition, many students wish to visit a school of interest to 'shadow' a high school student for a day. We ask that you please schedule these visits on a noon dismissal day or a day when our school is not in session (e.g., Parent/Teacher Conference days on November 11, 12 and 13). Just a reminder that this is NOT an excused absence from school.
- We scheduled today's field trip to Pope John Paul The Great High School in combination with our trip to visit the new Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, VA. This was a good opportunity for our 8th grade students to see the newest Diocesan High School.
- It is important to remember that you need to be proactive in gathering information from local high schools, confirm their specific deadlines and actually APPLY to the high schools of interest. I strongly counsel you to apply to several schools, as this will afford your child the benefit of having the most options. Even if your child is opposed to this strategy (often students have very strong opinions about local high schools), **I strongly urge you to insist that they broaden their options.**
- If you have questions about this information, please contact Mrs. Garcia prior to these important deadlines. Please mark your calendars with the following dates and take note of admissions requirements.

Important dates for Arlington Diocese High Schools:

Thursday, 12/ 03/09: HS Placement Test administered to all eighth grade students during school hours at BSS

Monday, 1/25/10: Deadline for applying to Diocese of Arlington High Schools

Monday, 1/25/10: Application deadline for financial aid (online or mail) through FACTS

Friday, 2/26/10: Earliest date on which decision letters will be mailed to eighth grade applicants

Saturday, 3/20/10: Deadline to submit registration materials and deposits to hold a place in Class of 2014

Admission to High Schools in the Diocese of Arlington/Transcript Information

- High School Preference Choices: The test registration form is included in this packet and must be submitted to the office prior to the test. The deadline for this form is Monday, November 16, 2009. Students may list up to three Catholic high school choices on this form. All students are required to list a Diocese of Arlington High School as at least ONE of their choices on the High School Placement Test registration form, **even if they do not intend to register or attend school in the Diocese of Arlington.** The purpose of listing this on the testing form is to have the scores available within the diocese. Schools listed on your test as your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices (even if they are in the Archdiocese of Washington, DC) will automatically receive the test results.
- High School Admissions/Placement Test: This test is used as criteria for admissions and as a tool for future placement in high school classes. There is no fee for this test. It is administered at Blessed Sacrament School to ALL 8th grade students on Thursday, December 3, 2009, regardless of whether they plan to register for a Catholic High School. Only students attending eighth grade outside of the Diocese of Arlington need to pay a fee and register to take the test at another location.
- High School Applications: Students must submit a separate application for admission and application fee to each Diocesan High School within the Arlington Diocese of interest no later than Monday, January 25, 2010.
- Release of School Records: Blessed Sacrament School will automatically send transcripts to the high school the student has indicated as his/her first choice on the REGISTRATION form. You must SPECIFICALLY request that all necessary records be forwarded to additional schools other than your first choice. This request must be made in WRITING TO Elizabeth Kuhn no later than November 16, 2009. ALL REQUESTS MUST BE MADE TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE ONLY; therefore, please mark these requests **“Attention: Elizabeth Kuhn/High School Transcripts.”**
- Recommendations to First Choice High Schools: If you are applying to a school within the Diocese of Arlington, a standard, required recommendation form is completed by our school and will be automatically forwarded to your first choice diocesan high school. There is no need to download forms from the Diocesan High School websites. The required forms are provided to us by the Office of Catholic Schools and they represent the form that the school MUST submit.
- Recommendations to Second and Third Choice High Schools: If you wish to have a copy of this required recommendation sent to your second or third choice schools in the Diocese of Arlington, you will need to provide a written request no later than November 16, 2009. The office ONLY will handle all recommendation requests; therefore, please mark these requests, **“Attention: Elizabeth Kuhn/ High School Recommendations.”**

Admission to High Schools outside of the Diocese of Arlington

In order to have transcripts and/or recommendations sent to schools outside of our diocese, you will need to provide the office with a written request for transcripts and/or recommendations no later than

November 9, 2009. *The due dates for these records vary from school to school. Therefore, it is very important that you call the high school of your interest outside the diocese and obtain these deadlines for transcripts, recommendations, etc. in addition to information regarding any additional required placement testing. Please mark these requests "Attn: Elizabeth Kuhn." to be forwarded directly to the office for processing, even if it requires that a specific teacher complete the form.*

I cannot stress enough the importance of being familiar with this high school information. Also, ***PLEASE DO NOT HAND ANY FORMS OR REQUESTS TO ANY TEACHER OR TO THE PRINCIPAL. PLEASE CLEARLY MARK THEM FOR "Elizabeth Kuhn: HIGH SCHOOL REQUEST.*** Mrs. Kuhn will process all requests and will submit required forms to individual teachers as needed.

Sincerely,

Valerie Garcia