



Family Journal for the Week of November 14, 2007

*Out of the clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony.
In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity.
-- Albert Einstein*

Grades at IACS

In the next day or so, you should be receiving a **mid-semester progress** report by mail. As described in the student handbook, students will receive an A, B, C, D or F in each of their courses. Additionally, students will receive grades for each of the “strands” in most courses. These strand grades provide the basis for the overall grade for each class. A separate sheet is included in the mailing that defines each of the strands. In every class, students are graded on the strand of work habits. Work habits include the timely completion of homework and assignments and the ability to use time wisely, among other things. In my own review of the assessments, it is clear to me that in many cases a strong work habit grade reflects a strong overall grade.

I have been meeting individually with students to discuss their progress and check in on their overall experience. In these meetings I am, above all else, emphasizing the importance of grades in terms of college preparation, as this is our ultimate goal for all of our students. **While strong test scores and solid recommendations are important, a student’s grades in school reflect their ability to complete assigned work on time and their overall work ethic -- a well developed work ethic is as strong a predictor of college success as any.** In summary, a student demonstrating a strong work ethic in school does the following:

- Completes his/her assigned work on time, setting a regular schedule to do so.
- Perseveres despite challenges and setbacks – deals well with adversity.
- Maintains a positive attitude in the face of challenge.
- Communicates their challenges to their teachers and advisors – asking for help when needed and accepting help when it is offered.
- Takes action to get caught up if they fall behind for whatever reason by putting in extra time when they’d normally have free time.

I am also speaking with students who are not achieving at a satisfactory level (C or better) in any of their classes about what they can do to improve their grade to *at least* a C. I am happy to report that all of the students I’ve spoken with, thus far, have agreed to take a working lunch until they have improved their grade to a C or better. This working lunch will be supervised by either me or another staff member and faculty members are around the facility to answer questions for students should they arise. We are working together as a faculty to determine how we will formalize and expand this kind of support as we move forward. As always, if a student wants or needs extra help or support he or she should approach his or her teacher directly to arrange a before, during or after school meeting that works for both student and teacher.

Please keep in mind that these are mid-semester grades and that final transcript grades for the semester will be sent home at the end of January. Should you have questions regarding specific grades, please contact the teacher directly. Please note that while it is my goal to meet with all students individually for a check in, it is unlikely that I will be able to do so before grade reports are received at home.

Sincerely,

Walter Landberg

The family journal is released every Wednesday afternoon and includes important information and occasional thoughts from teachers and school leadership. The family journal is also posted online at www.innovationcharter.org.

Important Dates

November 16 - Last day to order Thanksgiving pies from the Traveling Gourmet (info handed out at Athletics Banquet)

November 20 – Picture day at IACS

November 20 – Thanksgiving recess begins at the end of day

November 28 – Orders for gift cards due

December 7 -- First meeting of the Robotics Club

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