



Family Journal for the Week of September 19

“In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities,
but in the expert’s there are few.” – Shunryu Suzuki

Welcome to the IACS Family Journal

This is the first edition of a weekly family journal that we will publish at the high school. The weekly journal will be made available to students in paper format at the school and will be published online, beginning in October with our new web site. The journal will contain pertinent information regarding the high school for students and families. We’ll make the journal available on Wednesdays, each week.

A few comments on homework

In general, many students and families are adjusting to the high level of expectation that we are setting for our students; this is particularly so in regards to homework. As you know, it is our aim to prepare students for success in college level study. The work we are assigning both in school and out of school is designed, both in its amount and content, to prepare students for the work they will face when they enter college. While students should be finding the amount of work very challenging, we believe that this is part of a natural adjustment that occurs for many first year high school students. We want to be clear about the actual amount of time that we want students to spend, the way we’d like families to assist students as they make this adjustment and remind you of the supports that we have in place to assist students.

Generally speaking, students should have 2 ½ to 3 hours of homework each night. If a student is spending significantly more or less time on homework, we’d like families to do a couple things to provide support. First, check in with your student, reminding him/her of this ballpark timeframe. If it is significantly less, ask if he/she has done it all or had any difficulties that resulted in an inability to complete the assignment. If he/she seems to be taking much longer than the time frame, try to learn why this is happening – is he/she genuinely stumped? Did the work pile up on that particular night? OR, are there frequent interruptions in the form of phone calls, TV or other distractions? Additionally, we must be cognizant of the fact that students are learning for the first time how to balance short term assignments (due the next day) with longer term assignments. These prioritization skills are very challenging at first, but are perhaps the most important skills students will learn in preparation for college where there is not necessarily a consistent “daily” homework requirement.

Students: First of all, I am impressed with the work and effort that you are putting in here at the high school. We have raised the bar and, overall, you’ve responded impressively. If you’re working hard, you should be proud of yourself. This said, if you are getting your homework done quickly and not receiving positive results from your teachers, or if you’re struggling for too many hours and are having difficulty balancing your work with the rest of your life, you should speak directly with your teachers – after all, when you go to college, you’ll need to speak to professors on your own if you are having difficulty. Remember that you have time between classes, at lunch and at the beginning of the day to catch up with teachers and ask for help. You may also send an email to your teachers or leave them a phone message – both voicemail extensions and email addresses are in the student handbook. If you are having difficulty talking to your teachers, you should speak with your advisor who will assist you in contacting your teacher.

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In sum, while we want to make sure our students are prepared for the workload of college, we want to make sure our students are maintaining balanced lives. A willingness to work hard outside of school hours will be a key for success in high school, in college and beyond. We want you to know that we are here to support our students as intellectuals and as people. To do this, we need our students to communicate their challenges and successes to us so that we can address their needs appropriately.

Veterans Day

There is no school on Monday, November 12 in observance of Veterans Day. This was inadvertently omitted from the school calendar.

Art class needs

The Art students are currently working on some exciting projects. For these, and future projects, our Art Department is looking for donations of tools. Ms. Ferdinand is in need of hammers, screwdrivers, levels, nails, a circular saw, a jigsaw and a drill. The students need scrap plywood for their work, as well. If you, or your family, are able to donate any of these items, contact Ms. Ferdinand at rferdinand@innovationcharter.org, or call the Main Office.

Upcoming soccer game

The first IACS team sporting event is coming up next week! The soccer team has a game on Thursday, September 27 at 4:30 p.m. against Marblehead Charter School at the Chelmsford High School Graniteville Road fields. The game will last until at least 5:45. So, after your athletic activity, pop over to CHS to cheer on your soccer team!

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