

Here's to You, CHS

Smiles and good-natured laughs often ensue reflection upon my high school career. As a student, I participated in a variety of activities from basketball to theatre to math league, always trying new things. I held leadership positions and took rather stringent courses as an upperclassman. Cherished friendships were created through these activities as fun experiences and achievements were gained. Needless to say, I love my school. But like everything else in life, Carthage High School can be improved upon.

One struggle that I personally have faced these past few years is choosing a career path. This is often a self-initiated pursuit; however, I think it would be beneficial to everyone if our school offered more career exploration opportunities. Granted, we do have Lunch and Learns, which a few students including myself attend to hear speakers discuss their professions (and to eat free pizza). These are great, but I think we can do better. I propose that the classes to come have the opportunity to enroll in a practical arts course dedicated to introducing them to the workforce. This course could educate them on wages, benefits, the schooling necessary, and pique students' interest in growing fields. This could also be achieved in a club that meets during advisory. At the very least, I believe that teachers should include in their lessons how their subject relates to the real-world. For instance, I'm still not sure why I have subjected myself to memorizing the quadratic formula and differentiating quotients.

Second, I think that students should discuss college plans at school before senior year. Within this suggestion, I have a myriad of points to make. I believe that students should be informed of which type of college path they are on. This will relate back to their work ethic and take into account their career choice. In all reality not everyone needs a PhD and unfortunately, not everyone takes the right measures in high school to be accepted into their college of choice. Reminding students of admission and scholarship criterion throughout their time in high school may push them to reach their full potential. Next, I think that we should prepare these soon-to-be short-changed college students in their spending habits. Personally, I intend to avoid credit at all costs (pun intended);

however, warning high schoolers of the risks of debt should hopefully be sufficient in helping them make good discretionary purchases.

Last and certainly most importantly, as students are preparing for their future, encourage them to enjoy the present. School activities are what really cause students to flourish in high school. While it's impractical to require participation in extracurricular activities, I believe they should be incentivized. Incentives may include course credit (let's face it, you sweat more in football practice five days a week than power walking for an hour every other day). Another incentive may be extra credit offered by willing teachers (for example, I would love if participation in math league translated to a few bonus points in my calculus class). To further encourage participation, communication must be improved. I missed many opportunities due to lack of communication at our school. It's not that communication attempts are not made; it's that there is no centralized source to receive all communication at once. Reintroducing the newspaper to Carthage High could be a simple fix. Other options could be explored through social media as well—certain activities such as FBLA already make use of Twitter for spreading important information.

While it's important to be involved in their own activities, students should also participate in cheering on other teams and clubs from our school. Of the information that we spread, we must always encourage presence at games, pep rallies, and performances. Leading to this, I can now hop on my soap box. Do not make students pay for admission to home games! During our time in high school, we should have free access to the fields and courts in the spirit of cheering on our Tigers. That's how the high school experience is fully appreciated—finding your place and encouraging others in theirs.