

New Beginning, New Opportunities

There are many things that I wish I would have known as a 9th grader as I believe knowing these things would have made my high school experience exponentially more enjoyable and would have better prepared me for my future. There are three main pieces of advice I would give any person about to enter high school.

The first piece of advice is to be involved in extracurriculars. Now, this is something I believe that everyone has already heard by time they walk through the doors on the first day of school. Extracurriculars help you to meet new people, develop passions, and become a more well-rounded person. I fully agree with this, but I think it is important to involve yourself in two different types of activities, a team or group activity and an individual activity. Group extracurriculars are important as they give you the chance to learn teamwork and compromise however it can sometimes be hard to excel as an individual. For example, the best flute player in the world cannot make up for an inadequate band and the best softball pitcher cannot win games if no one on the team can hit. I made the mistake of only involving myself in team activities and have often found myself frustrated and longing for something I can excel in individually. That is why I believe an activity such as cross-country or showing animals for FFA can be beneficial to motivate students to excel on their own.

My second piece of advice is to begin exploring career paths as soon as possible. It is scary to be a senior and have no idea what you want to do with your life and it is not smart to spend a lot of money on college if you do not yet know if it is right for you. My high school is blessed to be able to offer many opportunities to take classes in art, music, agriculture, accounting, home economics, business, government, and web design. These classes can spark an interest in a future career. Maybe through participating in a woodworking class you will find out that you do not have to attend college to be successful or by taking a home economics class you realize you would be better off attending culinary school. I wish that I would have taken more of a variety of classes so that I would have been able to explore more career paths.

Finally, I would tell any 9th grader about to enter high school to take their grades seriously but to never let it make them miserable. Over my years, I have missed out on fun

opportunities to do things with friends or family because I had to work on an assignment or study for a test. I have also seen much more extreme versions of this where students lack in social skills because they spend all of their time trying to get the best grades. While school is of course extremely important, it is necessary to remember that high school only lasts four years. It is a time to make friends, develop social skills, grow as an individual, and create memories. These four years will most likely be the last time in your life that you don't have the burden of bills and taking care of a family weighing on your shoulders. Try your hardest and do your best but do not ever sacrifice the experience of high school trying to be overly perfect.