

Dear Freshman,

Lawson High School is small. There's no way around it. The next four years, you will interact with students at interscholastic events from schools with more than 500 kids per grade. When you tell them you are in a class of 100, the look of bewilderment on their faces will make you aware of how different we are; however, not once have I felt those big schools offered more opportunities than ours.

Teachers and administrators here teach you to be creative and self-motivated. If you can't find a club that you are interested in, consider starting one. Administration is going to be very open to any idea that gets students more involved. There is the strong possibility you are not the only one who sees this need to be filled. Don't be afraid to take charge; leaders at Lawson are known to be the best.

Although the teachers will ensure you prevail, this is the time in your life when it's your turn to step up. You will be held accountable for cultivating your own curiosity, and in this small town, you have to create your own entertainment, too. When Spirit Week rolls around, be an active participant. Watching the senior class my freshman year was an engaging and rewarding experience because they created a fun atmosphere that made the whole town come together to cheer them on in everything they did. They all wanted to be there, they supported each other, and they extended a hand to anybody who wanted in on their all-embracing approach to life.

Audiences are important, too. A football game without anyone in the stands would hardly be a football game. If the field or court isn't your home, the student section can be. Listening for "Touchdown Cardinals!" before breaking out into the fight song will stir up your Cardinal pride and keep you coming back for more. I have heard athletes say they wish they could sacrifice a game to have a student section experience. I would advise you not to waste these opportunities I realize now are very limited.

I have learned that teachers, in exchange for these three things, will do almost anything you ask of them: mind your manners, do your best, and always assist others. For instance, chemistry isn't the easiest class you will take, so don't be afraid to ask questions. As you advance in math, you will learn that "I" is not talking about the self, but rather something that doesn't exist. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki said, "I think that probably the most important thing about our education was that it taught us to question even those things we thought we knew." High school is preparing you for so much more than your EOCs and AP tests. High school makes you brave by teaching you to take risks and chances now while you have a strong community ready to support you. The reason you are here—more so than your grades—is to learn, to grow, and to equip yourself with all that you will need for the future, whatever path you take; therefore, make school a priority.

Take advantage of our school's size and get to know people from all grades. Be involved, seize all opportunities, and when you're a senior, be the person freshmen look to as an example of what they want from their high school experience.

Best Regards,  
Senior Emily Dahlor