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Principal

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August 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Please allow me the opportunity to welcome you back to Westhill High School for the 2014-2015 school year. My name is Chase Dunlap and I will be the 9th grade administrator for the coming year. Prior to my new role I taught social studies at Westhill for two years, spending last year teaching in the Freshman Center. I am passionate about the 9th grade program here at Westhill and very excited to work with you and your child this year to reach their academic, social, emotional and athletic goals.

The move to Westhill High School means a move to a new building, with a greater number of students, new teachers, new administrators, new expectations, and a new, more rigorous academic and disciplinary system. In addition, students will also have to cope with the developmental task of establishing independence from the family while at the same time making new friendships. At this stage of life, parents have less direct input into school activities and academic decisions. Establishing new social connections, balancing work and social life, and, for some students, managing a part-time job, are some of the new demands faced by students entering high school. Pressure to experiment with or engage in risk taking behaviors is also often increased. Students are expected to have developed an assertive and efficient learning style, and good study and organizational skills. The transition into high school means entering into an academic environment which assumes that the student can take increased responsibility for decisions regarding academic tracks and course selection. The pressure of what to do after graduation and for many, college decisions is also present.

At Westhill we understand the difficult challenges facing students entering the 9th grade. Therefore, we have developed many new programs for this coming year to provide greater support for our incoming students. These new changes include but are not limited to:

- **Freshman Teaming** – This year freshman will be divided into five teams. All teams will be comprised of the core academic teachers (English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies), creating smaller learning environments for students and teachers.
- **Reassessment Protocol** – Students scoring lower than a 60% on a summative assessment, e.g., test, quiz, project, paper, etc. are required to revise the assessment or retake the assessment outside of designated course meeting time. Students scoring above a 60% on a summative assessment have the opportunity to improve their grade through test revision and or retake; however, they are not mandated to do so. Please note, midterm and final exams are excluded from the reassessment protocol.

- **Red Flags and Interventions** – are a set of guidelines for identifying students at risk of failure and intervening in a timely, directive (mandatory for the student), systematic and targeted manner.

Finally, I would like to personally invite you to a meeting on September 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the Westhill Media Center where I, along with Ms. Figliuzzi will discuss the common causes of student failure, our attendance policy, after school programs for academic support and the expectations of your child and how you can support them in their pursuit of their academic, social, emotional and athletic goals. Through the new policies and initiatives in the Freshman Center, as well as the above mentioned meeting, it is our mission to ensure that your child develops the academic, as well as social and emotional values and skills that will ensure their success at Westhill and beyond.

Respectfully,



Chase M. Dunlap
9th Grade Administrator
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