

## Freshman Follies and Feats

### Parent's Tips for a Fabulous Freshman Year!

(brought to you by PTSA Class Coaches Committee)

Freshman year is pivotal, especially first semester. Many students find the leap to High School difficult. Expectations are higher, work load is heavier and more study independently is required. In addition, freshmen find an array of new activities, opportunity and temptations. So what can parents do to help their 9<sup>th</sup> grader adjust?? Here are some tips from parents, teachers and students on ways to make it a Fulfilling Freshman year.

**Academics:** Many students jump from 1-2 honors classes (English/math) to taking 3-5 in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. They find each is more intense and demanding than most middle school classes. Watch carefully, freshman traditionally have the highest levels of "ineligibility" (less than 2.0, 1 or more Es). When they falter they may resist asking for help and accessing supports. Learning supports and self-advocacy skills are important.

**1. Check Edline regularly.** The online grading program allows parents to see current grades and upcoming assignments.

**2. Email with teachers/resource teachers** if you have questions. Ask them for insights about your student's weaknesses and recommendations for improvements.

**3. High school grading policy** is "recommended" not mandated. Teachers have some flexibility. Re-teaching/reassessments are available for certain assessments, but not for County, end of unit, and/or summative assessments.

#### **4. MHS policy:**

Homework: 10% of grade

Due Dates/Deadlines

Zeros can be given for work not turned in or work turned in after deadline.

Good Faith effort, students completing 50% of assignment/test may not get less than a 50%.

Reteaching and re-takes for some quizzes/assignments; varies by teacher.

**5. Final Exams** are two-hours long; most classes have "MCPS exams" created by the County, which may or may not link closely with the teacher's emphasis in class. Exams tend to be comprehensive and significantly harder than tests.

Some subjects have study packets online

Some subjects may offer after-school prep sessions

**Get Involved:** Those students who feel "connected" are more motivated and achieve more.

**1. Homecoming:** A great way for many freshmen to bond with their class and connect. If your student didn't participate this year, they might want to in future years.

**2. Clubs:** More than 30 different clubs from Key Club to Anime and more.

**3. SGA:** Students don't have to be officers to be involved.

**4. Go to Games:** Join the *Colonel Crazyies* and root for MHS team.

This year's shirts are available from Mr. Su, Room D-127. There are events several nights a week including: football, soccer, volleyball, cross country, hockey in the fall.

#### **Learn the MHS Web Site:**

<http://www.magruderhs.org> OR

<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/magruderhs/>

**1. Daily Announcements:** Find out what's happening at MHS. You can sign up for them or check the Web site.

**2. Latest News** and **Upcoming events** are listed, as well as staff emails, calendars for athletic and other school events, and academic help.

**3. Pictures/slide shows** of MHS events give you a glimpse into the student world.

**4. Check out: Class Pages** (where SGA officers update the page on activities for that class) **PTSA** page.

### **MHS Resources:**

**1. Academic Help:** After-school Student Center is open daily for students to study to receive extra help, Mr. B226. National Honor Society students also offer 1on1 tutoring. by pre-arrangement. Most departments a teacher available every day after school. The math department has a list of MCPS teacher/tutors.

**2. 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Leaders:** If you have questions turn to your 9<sup>th</sup> grade

**Administrator: Susan Frishman**

**Class Sponsor: Ms. Stephens**

**3. Department Chairs:** Sometimes department chairs (resource teachers) can offer you some more perspective and details about their department's policies:

**English:** [Grant S Goldstein@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Grant_S_Goldstein@mcpsmd.org)

**Social Studies:** [John P. Wattcamps@mcpsmd.org](mailto:John_P_Wattcamps@mcpsmd.org)

**Math:** [Rebecca Sanderoff@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Rebecca_Sanderoff@mcpsmd.org)

**Science:** [Donna S Considine@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Donna_S_Considine@mcpsmd.org)

**Language:** [Shannon R Pruitt@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Shannon_R_Pruitt@mcpsmd.org)

**Art:** [Nancy G Seidenberg@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Nancy_G_Seidenberg@mcpsmd.org)

**Attendance:** MHS policy may be stricter than those at Middle Schools.

**1. Excuse Notes:** Whether you call in or not, students need a note from a parent/guardian in order to have an absence marked "excused."

**2. Athletics:** If a student misses any period, they may not practice that day.

Dr's appointments must be pre-approved by Athletic Director/Coach.

### **Start Thinking about College Issues Now**

There is a college for everyone. 9<sup>th</sup> graders should be encouraged to:

1. Take the most challenging courses you can handle (meaning you anticipate you can earn a "B" or "A")

2. Take at least 5 academic classes each semester

3. Get involved in extracurricular activities

4. Take on a leadership role or position in an activity

5. Strive to make the National Honor Society

6. Get a part-time or summer job. Work experience counts

7. Volunteer at your school or in your community

8. Make an appointment to see your guidance counselor every summer to review your academic progress and goals - parent should attend.