



July 25, 2018

Dear Parents,

I'm writing to address the concerns some of you have expressed about changes in faculty at the high school.

I know it can be hard on students when a favorite teacher leaves, but our number one priority is providing our scholars with the same high quality education that we've given them since elementary school. That has required some changes. Our chemistry teachers have been re-assigned to our middle schools because our high school students will be taking biology this year rather than chemistry. Similarly, our American History teachers have been reassigned to our middle schools since our high school scholars will be learning World History this year rather than American History. But most of our faculty will be returning next year and the new faculty we've hired have excellent qualifications. They have deep content knowledge in fields such as mathematics, chemical engineering, physics, and biomolecular science, and many have advanced degrees in these fields.

Some of you have also expressed concerns about summer homework and about our standards for promoting students. I understand that it can be hard for our scholars to meet the high expectations we set, but those standards must be high to ensure that our scholars not only get into good colleges but succeed there.

More than 40% of college students fail to graduate and the situation is far worse for students of color. Only 30% of African-American college students graduate within six years. Only 36% of Latino college graduate within six years. This problem even affects well regarded charter schools. While 89% of the graduates of the KIPP schools go on to college, only 33% of them graduate from college. Most drop out.

The problem isn't that students of color can't succeed. The problem is that they aren't given the rigorous education they need to succeed. They are victims of the soft bigotry of low expectations. We will not let that happen to our scholars.

College is hard. At Success, we provide our scholars with a lot of support. If a scholar doesn't understand the work, we'll help him individually. If she doesn't do her homework, we will talk to her and, if necessary, to her parents. Colleges don't do this. Students are expected to be responsible for their own work — and there is far more of it in college. In high school, students may have a month to read a book for a class. In college, they are expected to do so in a week. In high school, students have two or three hours of homework per day. In college, they may have six or eight hours of homework a day.

A student who can't do the work at Success despite all of the supports we provide is unlikely to graduate from college. That is why we will hold a scholar back if he isn't meeting our school's standards. It's better for that student to spend another year in high school than to set him up for failure in college by just passing him along.

Holding our scholars to high standards also ensures they will get the scholarship money they need. Only 66 out of 4,000 American colleges and university will meet 100% of students' financial need. Unless you are in a position to pay over \$100,000 for college, your child will need scholarship money.

To receive that money, your child must compete with students at other top schools like Stuyvesant, where 94% of students take Advanced Placement tests and 96% of them pass those tests. Unfortunately, as I'm sure you've read, very few students of color are allowed into Stuyvesant and other specialized schools. These students are instead forced to attend schools where the standards are low and where Advanced Placement courses aren't even offered.

Your child has the opportunity that other parents want for their child: a school that offers advanced courses; 3 electives a semester that range from dance to debate to basketball, and holds its students to high standards. That is why every single one of our graduates this year was admitted to a four-year college and received a combined total of \$2 million in financial aid.

We owe it to your children to make sure our school is rigorous. I know that can be hard on them but it will be far worse if they go to college when they aren't ready.

I will be holding a parent meeting on August 1 to discuss the above and hear any concerns that you have.

**Wednesday, August 1 at 7:45 - 8:45 am**

**Auditorium, High School of the Liberal Arts**

Hope you enjoy the final weeks of summer, and we look forward to seeing you in the new school year.

Warmly,

Eva Moskowitz