

Freshman Newsletter

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Time to Reflect and Plan

As you begin a new semester, take some time to reflect on how the first half of the year went. Reflection is an important skill for school and for life. Ask yourself where you excelled first semester. Did you stay organized? Participate more in class? Perform well in a particular class? Recognize your strengths and think about how you can build on them.

Once you've identified where you did well, think about how you can stay consistent in those areas. You may even want to challenge yourself further! Maybe you want to set a higher academic goal (like improving your test scores or bring your grade up 5%). Is there a way to take on more responsibility in a class or activity? You could ask your teacher, parent, or coach how you could stretch yourself in an area/activity where you feel confident. You might be surprised by the ideas you hear from people who know you well and want to see you succeed.

It's just as important to reflect honestly on where you struggled. High school classes often require different skills than middle school ones, so strategies that worked before may not be enough now. It's actually a sign of maturity to recognize this! Instead of getting frustrated, focus on figuring out why something was difficult and what you can try differently.

Do you need a new study method, better time management, or more practice asking questions? Should you work with a tutor for a class you found challenging? Improving your grades starts with small changes, like taking more notes or asking good questions in class, getting extra help after school, or trying a new way to study for assessments.

Learning how to honestly reflect and make adjustments towards new goals is a life skill that will help you find success in high school and beyond!

In this newsletter you can expect:

Reflect and Plan

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Getting Involved

A fun part of freshman year is getting involved in your school community. Activities outside the classroom can help you make friends, build confidence, and feel more connected to school. Have you been on any sports teams? What about arts, music, or drama? Where could you find service opportunities? If you're not sure where to start, ask your friends, parents, or teachers where they think you'd do well! Attending athletic events, concerts, or school plays is also a great way to support your peers and discover activities you might want to try for yourself.

You can definitely continue activities you enjoyed in middle school throughout high school. Don't be afraid to explore something new as well. Consider trying one or two new activities, such as a new elective class or sport, helping with a performance or event, or signing up to be a peer tutor. Choose activities that interest you! It's ok if you end up deciding it's not for you. It's also great to limit yourself to one or two things at a time so that you don't become overwhelmed and unable to keep up with your commitments.



PSAT 9 Preparation

All freshmen will take the PSAT at OCS on March 25th during the school day. The best way to prepare is to continue doing great work in your classes at school and read challenging, thoughtful material outside school. Consider taking practice tests (Khan Academy has free SAT practice) to review and practice taking timed tests.

The PSAT is meant to help you prepare for the full SAT your junior year. Think of it as feedback you can use to see where you can improve, and focus on getting the most from your classes at OCS in those areas.



Resources and Events

Book Recommendations:

[The Motivation Myth](#) by John Haden. This book looks at how motivation comes as we engage, rather than waiting for motivation before we get started on our goals.

[Atomic Habits](#) by James Clear. This book focuses on how we can build good habits and break bad ones in ways that actually last!

Mrs. Kimosh has copies of both if you'd like to look through either of them!