

September 16, 2014

Students are currently faced with ever increasing academic demands. Core Content Curriculum Standards, increased state requirements for high school graduation and more rigorous state assessments such as PARCC, fueled by the competitive global economy, have resulted in students needing to devote more time to academic pursuits. Extra-curricular activities such as sports, dance, and the fine and performing arts place even greater responsibilities on our students. It is our goal at Memorial to provide students with the supports necessary to be academically successful and achieve to their potential. We excel because our parents, teachers, staff and community do a remarkable job of supporting our students and setting high expectations so that students may meet the demands mentioned above.

To continue advancing toward excellence, Making Academics a Priority (M.A.P.) was initiated in 2012 as a program during which students were given the opportunity to complete assignments and assessments. Some students were assigned this option while others eagerly chose to attend. Students were assigned to a classroom, in lieu of reporting to the cafeteria for lunch, and ate while completing their work in a quiet, supervised location. With great consideration to the ever increasing academic demands identified above, a pilot program was implemented this school year to provide M.A.P. to all students. One day each week, students are assigned to a classroom, affording them a quiet place to complete assignments, work on projects or keep pace with their independent reading. This program provides an invaluable opportunity to develop positive life-long learning habits and increased college and career readiness skills. It is our hope that through M.A.P. students will gain academic independence and responsibility, while also teaching students to self-direct their own academic growth. This program will facilitate in the development of habits and self-discipline that will be essential to each student's successes in high school, college and throughout life.

We recognize that some students may object to this schedule; therefore, we must allow a brief "break-in" period to allow for thoughtful reflection and revision. During the last week of September, Mrs. Schwindt and I will be meeting with randomly selected students from each grade level so that they may have a voice in the future direction of this program.

As always, we appreciate your continued support of our efforts to enhance the educational environment for our students and look forward to the future development of our M.A.P. program.

Sincerely,

Scott Helfand