

Lake Highland Preparatory School: Preparation for Success in College (Looking Beyond College Admissions)

As teachers and as parents, it is sometimes so easy to get caught up in the feeling that our students and children being admitted to college is the reason we labor over school decisions, dedicate our time and talent to LHPS, continuously work on improving academic programs, instructional units, lessons or textbook choices. In reality, getting into college is only one transition point of many during a learning process that does not stop with college admissions. The efforts of thirteen years PK-12, we must remind ourselves sometimes, comes to fruition and expands *after* college admission, during the post secondary and graduate school years!

The goal of any preparatory school, and specifically Lake Highland, is to prepare students for a successful and fulfilling college experience. Even though it may feel at times like the goal is admissions, it is really what lies beyond admissions: a success-filled college experience.

At every level from the early years in PK and K in LS, then throughout MS and US, our teachers deliberately and carefully plan activities, lessons and experiences that build on what was introduced before, carefully layering challenge, rigor and opportunities for academic and personal success. As our students accomplish these tasks, first with assistance then more and more independently, they begin to seek the next level of learning gradually gaining the confidence and the background they need for academic independence.

Academic projects that help our students create a plan, follow a timeline, persist through setbacks or frustrations, and finally produce a quality product prepare our students for future success. Without this kind of practice with these interim steps that lead to a finished product, a student will not gain the confidence in planning and trouble shooting which, as we all know, are so important to independent learning and living. Practicing a skill or studying a body of facts to the point of acquisition and then proving competence on a test or application task is how students learn about themselves and their abilities. All of the internal dynamics that occur as a student learns how to acquire these skills and knowledge are so very important to the student's future independent learning. Self knowledge is a necessary element in personal decision making. The more self knowledge a student can gain by participating fully in our programs, courses and requirements, the better prepared he or she will be. This is hard work and this is very personal work. Our students need to be applauded as we see them take responsibility for learning how to learn.

Our students need to gain a broad and deep reservoir of background knowledge, to learn about how they as individuals learn best, and to experience success in stages along the way from early childhood through young adulthood. The right combination will result in ability, ambition and preparation intersecting. The product will be confident well-prepared young adults not just ready for college admissions success but, more importantly, ready for success in their college experience.