Letter to Students and Parents 2018-2019

Sophomore English. Mr. McAuley

Welcome to 10th grade English. The sophomore year is, in my humble opinion, one of the best years of high school. The uncertainty of the first year is behind you, and the full rigor of the 11th grade is still far away. This is the year that we begin to truly find our identity and establish ourselves as to whom we shall become.

The sophomore year is a focus on self and others—this is not new. We will focus on both theme and text and provide the *whys* of all that we do. Writing and communication will be a major point of emphasis and in turn we will also study grammar and the concept of language. Not, grammar will be studied by us. ☺

We will also be incorporating novels into our curriculum, at least one per nine weeks session, and 98.4% of them will be read outside of class and 100% of them will thematically relate our overall units.

It will not necessarily be easy, but as Theodore Roosevelt states, “Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty… I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. tells us, “If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.” Never say, “I can’t”.

You may not want to do something, but discipline yourself. Listen to others. Do your work. Pay attention. Get help when needed. Communicate—it is amazing how far that will take you. These are the habits of success. On that note, I am here pretty early each morning and will be glad to meet you if you need some extra help/explanation. Never be afraid to question.

The late Stephen Covey (author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*) teaches us, me and you, to “seek first to understand and then to be understood.” I will always treat you with respect and dignity; I expect the same in return for both me and the others in your sphere. If you would like extra help or have a special need, talk to me. Never assume someone knows your needs.

In that regard, parents, please do not be afraid to contact me. Communication is fundamental to success. If you have a question, big or small, simply shoot me an email; I will respond as soon as possible. My email is [mcauleye@santarosa.k12.fl.us](mailto:mcauleye@santarosa.k12.fl.us)

All tests, quizzes, essays, and projects will be posted well in advance, and I will do my best to keep to use the remind texting app to keep you in the loop: however, do not solely rely on my sending one.

The signup information for remind is included at the bottom of this letter. All remind texts will also be posted on my website— coachmcauley.weebly.com

Vince Lombardi tells us, “The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.”

I believe that one of the great issues impeding education is a lack of rigor. Life takes work. Hard Work. Highly Successful People (HSP) are not sitting around doing nothing 50% of the day. They are organized, and they formulate a plan and then they **follow** the plan. HSP do not offer excuses for poor performance; they do not blame others. HSP are the ones you want on your team—be it sports, club, school, or business.

If I do not challenge you each day, I have let you down. We will read, write, discuss, argue, and learn from each other. If your primary goal is to do as little as possible and hope for the best, please be prepared to defend how that will help you meet your goals. I apologize in advance if a book is “not interesting” to you. This is not an excuse not to read it.

There will be times this year when you feel overwhelmed. There will be times when I feel overwhelmed as well. However, that does not mean I can shut down. You may be taking three honors courses and AP History. That is awesome. Colleges want you to take the most rigorous schedule available. But, you cannot shut down either.

The ACT board estimates that roughly 3 in 10 high school graduates are ready for college at the completion of high school. In fact UWF has a 20.2 % graduation rate in four years. It doubles to 42.3 % at six years. In comparison, UF has a graduation % of 86.6 in six years. FSU is 76.9%. (<http://www.collegeresults.org>). Here is a very short article explaining some of this.

I do not think that everyone must go to college, but I fully believe that everyone must learn how to work hard, to consistently give his/her best and to learn to co-exist in a diverse setting. We will discuss all of these in depth throughout the year, but for now I want to challenge you and your parents.

As we begin this school year, spend a few minutes reflecting on what you wish to accomplish both short and long term, how important those goals are to you and what you are willing to do to achieve them. Also, keep in mind that motivation must take place each day. You cannot hear a great speech once and put it into practice. You must remind yourself daily. Now, go do it.

Here’s to a great year. Go Dolphins!

Mr. McAuley