Dear Parents,

I would like to take a few moments of your time to introduce the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition course and to offer a few remarks to allow you to help your student be successful in the rigorous requirements of AP.

A new program to South Side High School yet a world-renowned program offered by College Board, Advanced Placement is designed to provide students with the opportunity to earn college credit while in high school and to develop valuable skills for college and career.

There are several benefits of enrolling in AP. Some of them include

* Students who take AP stand out in the college admission process as students who are serious about their education.
* Nationally, research shows that students who score a 3 or higher on the AP exam typically earn a higher GPA in college and have higher graduation rates.
* Entering college with credit can save students thousands of dollars in the future and help students complete a college degree in 4 years.
* In AP, students are made to think; the focus of the course is on learning and generating thoughts, not on regurgitating information. There are high expectations for critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, multiple perspectives, and evidence.
* AP students build life-long study habits and communication skills, advanced research techniques, problem-solving abilities, and time management skills. Each of these is vital not only for college, but also for career.
* Despite its many rigors, AP is enjoyable and allows students to explore deeply subjects that they enjoy.

It is my goal not only to prepare students for the AP exam in May, but also to offer them a challenging classroom environment that will prepare them for the demanding expectations of college. Along the way, there will be complications, long nights, tears, and doubts, but there will also be joys, newfound insights, and unbelievable successes. As students flounder in a belief that it cannot be done or struggle to overcome the seemingly impossible, therein lies our joys. It is in this moment of realization that the student can -with grit, determination, and hard work- achieve the seemingly impossible. We can work together to help students overcome their obstacles and bask in their successes. I urge you to help me: Encourage them, talk with them, and –most important- set high expectations for them, knowing that it is through struggles and challenges that we become great.

I commend each student for accepting this challenge and look forward to this semester with much joy. Each of the students enrolled in this course is capable of greatness. As parents and teachers, we are here to help students, but also to expect much of them so that they may become successful. Sometimes, however, this requires the uncomfortable, the difficult, the strenuous. I leave you with the words of John Locke: “The purpose of education is the cultivation of intellect, not the accumulation of facts.” Let us work together to cultivate intellect and create lifelong learners.

Sincerely,

Margaret Livingston, Ed.S.   
AP Literature and Composition  
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