



Dear Parents of High School Students:

We welcome you to the 2005-2006 school year! As the first two weeks of classes come to an end we are quickly reminded of the excitement and satisfaction we gain by teaching your children. We are also reminded of the high level of energy it takes! At the start of this new school year we express both our commitment towards and gratitude for the opportunity of educating the future leaders of tomorrow, our high school students.

As a high school faculty, we focus our efforts this year around two important goals. The first is to create an environment where all students perform to their greatest academic potential. We plan to achieve this goal by working towards four objectives:

1. Improving student writing in all subject areas
2. Articulating the difference between honors/AP courses and college prep courses and supporting the advancement of both.
3. Using teacher created web pages as teaching and communication tools
4. Effectively using data from assessment tools to guide instruction and improve learning

Our second goal is to create a school-wide environment that is caring and supportive of the academic, social and emotional development of our students. We seek to create this environment so that all students feel a strong sense of safety and belonging. We plan to achieve this goal by working towards the following three objectives.

1. Implementing a newly redesigned mentoring curriculum
2. Continuing discussions with students and staff that promote the values of a caring community (http://www.asfg.mx/building_a_caring_community.php)
3. Continuing the strong partnership between parents and high school educators

Educational research shows that a strong parent-teacher partnership is one of the single greatest contributors to successful academic achievement in children. To continue this important partnership, we invite you to participate in our 05-06 Open House on Wednesday, September 7 from 6:00 – 9:30 p.m. Open House is a time for parents to meet their children's teachers and understand their expectations. Parents will also have the opportunity to hear about our plans for Week Without Walls 05-06 which will be March 13 – 16, 2006.

The schedule for the evening is as follows:

6:00 – 6:15	Parents pick up their children's schedules
6:15 – 6:45	Welcome Address
6:50 – 7:20	Presentation of WWW activities
7:20 – 9:00	Periods 1 – 7

New Staff: We welcome 6 new teachers to our high school team this year. Mr. Jason Secore – Math and AP Economics; Mr. Robert Bishop – Biology and AP Biology; Mr. Dennis Doty – English; Mr. Dario Carrillo – Spanish and Mexican History; Ms. Allison Marx – English; Mr. Garrett McKee

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION OF GUADALAJARA, A.C.

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– Science Lab Assistant. They all come to our school with a wealth of experience and knowledge. We hope they find themselves at home here in our ASFG community. We extend a special thanks to the Parents Association for welcoming our new teachers; their leadership and hard work made the often difficult and intimidating move to Guadalajara a pleasurable one for our staff. Thank you.

What Else is New? Our high school continues to grow in enrollment. Last year our final student population was 298. This year we are now completely full with a student body of 313 students. We have acquired 4 classrooms to accommodate the increased enrollment and the new teachers. For this school year, ASFG has purchased new digital projectors, digital video cameras, and software for audio editing, graphic design and desktop publishing. Moreover, most teachers now have computers with DVD players.

Meet Us Again: I take this opportunity to reacquaint you with our office staff in high school. At the helm everyday with wide smiles and bright eyes are our secretaries, Irma Fonseca and Ruth McCarthy. Irma is responsible for most attendance issues and scheduling parent meetings with teachers. Ruth schedules parent meetings with the principal. Dr. Julie Villand is the assistant principal responsible for discipline, attendance records and student activities. Ms. Spiesel is our high school counselor responsible for assisting students with academic and emotional concerns, course selection, college/university admission, and career exploration. Ms. Spiesel maintains a webpage with links to websites for college/university information world wide and career exploration. Click on “counselor’s web site” from the high school homepage to access Ms. Spiesel’s page (<http://www.asfg.mx/highschool/index.php>). I am Mr. David McGrath, the high school principal.

Free Tutoring!: We continue again this year offering free after school tutoring in math, science and Spanish. The three department heads in these subjects, Ms. Garcia, Ms. Rivas and Ms. Govea offer their assistance to all high school students after school. These teachers will also be offering preparation for university admission and placement exams to interested seniors. All three teachers offer their sessions from 2:45 – 4:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Also, Mr. Fernando Guzman keeps his computer laboratory open for high school students every day after school except Wednesdays.

Studying in the United States-Resources for Parents: The College Board maintains a website with a tremendous amount of information for students and parents regarding colleges and universities in the United States. Students can register for the SAT, search for universities and much more. There is even a special part of the College Board site just for parents. Parents can access information in English at <http://www.collegeboard.com/parents> and in Spanish at <http://www.collegeboard.com/spanish> Parents will find these links helpful in understanding more about preparation for studying in the United States.

ASFG parents who have already been through the US college application process with their children have graciously offered their support and experience to other parents. If you would like to attend an informal meeting focused on the role of parents, please contact Julie Spiesel before September 9th.

Parents of Seniors

Next fall most of our current high school seniors will enter universities in Canada, Mexico, the United States and possibly other countries. This is an exciting and sometimes stressful time for students and parents. Part of Ms. Spiesel's job as the high school counselor is to help students with the transition from high school to university. Students' needs regarding university preparation vary depending on their goals and interests. For this reason, Ms. Spiesel will be meeting with each senior individually during the first month of school to help them plan for their life after ASFG. Parents are also invited to make appointments with Ms. Spiesel if they need information and/or support in guiding their children.

Attendance: Our new attendance policy instituted at the beginning of last school year was very successful in reducing the number of absences in our high school. We saw a 21% drop in absences from 03-04 to 04-05. We remind you that in high school for a full year course, 15 absences, justified or unjustified, are allowed. Upon their 16th absence students lose credit for the class regardless of their grade. For semester classes, 7 absences are allowed; upon the 8th students lose credit. We also remind you that absences due to family vacations are considered unjustified, which means students are not able to make up the work missed for credit. Please plan your trips during our school vacations.

Important September and October Dates:

Service Learning Fair: The high school will host our 5th annual Service Learning Fair on September 20th and 21st. This year's fair will host both a keynote speaker as in the past and numerous field trips to approximately 10 different organizations. All students will participate in these service field trips with the goal that they experience service first hand. We hope that this will assist students in beginning their service commitment and continue to contribute to that organization throughout the year. We encourage parents to join us on these field trips. If you are interested, please contact Julie Villand in the HS office.

Progress Reports: All high school students receive a Progress Reports midway through each of the four quarters. The first is on **Thursday, September 22**. Progress Reports indicate a student's mid-quarter average. The grades are not final and are reported in enough time to make significant improvement in class. We require students who receive any grade below 70% in any class to have their parents sign the report and hand it in to the high school office. If the student fails to do this by two days after receiving the report, he/she will be pulled from class until the report is handed in. In order to have hard copies for our records, we cannot accept phone calls from parents verifying their knowledge of these grades. Emails or faxes are acceptable but discouraged.

College Fair: Our annual College Fair will be held on **Monday, October 3** from 12:30-2:30. Representatives from universities in Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States will visit ASFG to provide information regarding their institutions. Some of our visitors will also conduct workshops for students on topics related to university preparation. All of our high school students will attend these morning workshops and the college fair. College and university participants are listed on the high school webpage and will be updated as they are confirmed. To view this link please go to www.asfg.mx, click on "high school, then click on "counselor's web

site”, and finally click on “college fair.” Parents are invited and encouraged to attend the college fair with their children.

PSAT: All of our 11th graders and interested 10th graders will be taking the PSAT **Wednesday, October 19**. The PSAT is a practice test for the SAT which is an admissions exam for entrance into college and universities in the United States. ASFG pays the exam fee for all eleventh grade students to take the PSAT. If students in tenth grade want to take the PSAT, they may pay the fee and participate. Ms. Spiesel will visit tenth and eleventh grade classes prior to testing to provide information including practice materials. Although the main purpose of the PSAT is to help students practice for the SAT, it is also the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program when US citizens take the test in grade 11.

SAT & ACT Most colleges and universities in the United States require students to submit scores from either the SAT or ACT as part of their application for admission. Students can register for the SAT online at www.collegeboard.com. The SAT test dates for the 2005-2006 school year are as follows:

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>
October 8	September 7
November 5	September 30
December 3	October 28
January 28	December 22
May 6	April 3
June 3	April 28

The ACT will be given on October 22 and February 11. Students can register for the ACT with Ms. Spiesel.

Vocational Assessment: There is a comprehensive vocational assessment in Spanish available to high school students throughout the year. The exam is computer based and is designed to evaluate a student’s interest, aptitude and personality. The results include information that helps students with career exploration; however, should not be the only method used for making career decisions. For more information including the cost of this exam, please contact Julie Spiesel.

We are excited about the productive and successful year ahead of us in high school. With your participation, support and constant feedback, our high school will continue to improve. Welcome back to ASFG High School!

Sincerely,

David McGrath
High School Principal