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March 17, 2011

ECHS Junior
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Dear _____:

My years at Early College have probably been the best in my life so far. Certainly, the work has been hard at times and there has been literal and metaphorical blood and sweat involved in getting work done. However, in the grand scheme of things, I must say, that all the work leading up to senior year and our graduation is worth it.

For all that seniors from other high schools might brag about how easy their senior years are, I can assure you right now, that senior year is definitely not your easiest year. If you have prepared to apply for college and taken all your necessary tests, senior year will probably be what you expect though. During first semester, you will feel overwhelmed as you rush to fill out college applications, scholarship applications, order test scores, and get all the necessary work done, in general. Remember to keep all your work organized. This is 100% essential. If you do not maintain organization, you will find yourself hopelessly lost and missing important deadlines.

The college application process was actually quite easy. The hardest part was writing the essays for applications, but once the essays were finished, the applications were very easy. All that was required was mostly basic information about yourself and your academic and extracurricular background. The financial aid process, on the other hand, is far more complicated. It is your own responsibility to find scholarships to apply to, and there are literally thousands to choose from. Personally, I recommend that you check out the Best Buy @ 15 and the Ronald McDonald House Charity Scholarship. Both are relatively simple to apply to and they give you some insight to how larger scholarship applications might look like. It is important to remember, though, that it might be easier to look for many smaller scholarships rather than a few larger ones. Oftentimes, the competition is far fiercer for larger scholarships, and your chances of winning a smaller scholarship would be far higher.

If I could go back and redo senior year, I would start pursuing scholarships far earlier in the year, especially for the Questbridge scholarship, which offers full-ride scholarships to many of the top universities in the country, but closes by the end of September. In general, make sure to be proactive about all things related to applying to college.

Sincerely,

Harrison Chan
President, Student Council
President, MESA

PS: Join MESA Club next year, if you haven't already!