

## **Eighth Graders Taking Their First Exams!**

By: Lynne Robinson, Director of Counseling Services and Middle and Upper School Counselor

Eighth Grade is an important year. Eighth graders are taking more sophisticated courses and are learning more sophisticated ways of thinking and studying. They are learning what it takes to make it in high school. During the week of Monday, Dec. 17, our eighth graders will be doing something that is very “high school.” They will take semester exams. One of my former students referred in jest to exams as “the semi-annual alien mind probes.” In a way, she wasn’t that far off the mark (not about the alien part). On an exam, a teacher is probing the student’s mind to see how much he has retained of the content and skill taught throughout the semester.

The eighth-grade teachers are talking to our students about what to expect during the last weeks of fall Semester and exam week. To make sure you are “up to speed,” Mr. Eric Bright e-mailed all eighth-grade parents the information specific to the four non-elective courses and the Reading Day and exam schedules. Please look over that e-mail and let me or any of the eighth-grade teachers know if you have any questions.

Here are some ways you as a parent can help your eighth grader prepare for exams:

1. During these last weeks of fall semester, attendance is important. Unless your student is sick, please make sure your student is at school and on time.
2. Encourage your student to continue to use the good study habits he has been taught in his classes. Here at the end of the semester, students may feel tempted to cut corners when it comes to studying and completing homework. It is important that they continue to work, so that they finish fall semester in a strong position grade wise.
3. Encourage your student to begin studying for exams now. It is not too early to start studying. Remember, “cramming” is never a good idea, especially for exams. A lot of content and skill has been covered, so we want them to spend ample time studying.
4. If possible, please allow your student to stay after school to clear up any misunderstandings or uncertainties about material that has been covered. All GWA teachers are available from 3:15 to 3:45 Monday through Thursday to help students.
5. Be positive when you talk to your student about taking exams. Taking exams is a rite of passage. There is bound to be some apprehension since he has never taken an end-of-the-semester exam. It is important that he take exams seriously, but not be overanxious.
6. Once we are closer to exam week, please make sure your student understands the plan for Reading Day and knows which exams he will take on which days.

With all of us pulling together, the eighth graders can have a positive first experience with their exams, and then they can begin their Winter Break knowing they did all they could have done to make the most of fall semester.