

# Education: More Than Textbooks, Tests, and Grades

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “The things taught in schools and colleges are not an education, but the means to an education.” When people hear the word education they may think of reading textbooks, taking tests, and receiving grades. It is more than just the reading of a textbook. It is the comprehension of what is read. It is more than just taking a test. It is taking great notes so you know what to study for the test. It is more than just receiving grades. It is the study habits that are needed to earn the grades. So you see, education is not the final result, but rather the tools that are needed to achieve the final result.

Although reading textbooks, taking tests, and earning good grades is important in school, so is being able to laugh at yourself as you sing La Cucaracha in Mrs. Ziemann’s Spanish class. Fifteen years after graduating from Berlin High School I can still sing that song word for word. Lucky for you, I am limited with the amount of time I have tonight so you won’t have to hear me sing it.

In addition to being able to laugh at yourself, many important life skills are learned in and out of the classroom. These skills include leadership, compassion, strength of character, teamwork, communication, courage, dedication, and selflessness.

## **Leadership**

Leadership can be found in Mrs. Becker’s Oral and Interpersonal Communications class when someone volunteers to be the first person to give a speech. Showing classmates that if you can do it, so can they.

It can also be found in LINC crew members as they help new freshman transition into high school. Remembering what it was like to be in their shoes so you can help alleviate their fears with your own experiences.

## **Compassion**

Compassion is demonstrated when students assist Mrs. Gregor with the special needs students. Each time they take a few minutes out of their day to say hi and ask how their day is going.

It is demonstrated through tutoring students at Clay Lamberton Elementary. Realizing that they need extra attention and encouragement to help them succeed at school.

## **Strength of Character**

Strength of character is shown through Ms. Kuklinski's Journalism class. Spending hours writing the perfect story only to have it criticized by your peers. Being able to take the criticism and grow from that experience.

It is shown through working on the yearbook. Spending endless hours creating the best book you can, only to have it scrutinized with a fine tooth comb. Knowing that you have done the best you could with the resources you had available.

## **Teamwork**

Teamwork is working together on a news broadcast in Mr. Knoke's U.S. History class. Making sure each group member contributes to the project and that it is completed on time.

Teamwork can be seen on the football field. It takes all 11 players on the field to score a touchdown or to prevent the other team from scoring a touchdown. Each player must do his job in order to win the game.

## **Communication**

Communication is demonstrated through floor hockey in Mrs. Walker's gym class. Using verbal and nonverbal communication to move the puck down the floor and score a goal.

It is demonstrated through Forensics. By preparing and competing in categories such as dramatic interpretation, children's storytelling, or media broadcasting you also become more comfortable speaking to audiences.

## **Courage**

Courage can be found in every student that tries out for the school musical. Whether you get the lead role or don't get a role at all, pushing yourself to sing in front of your peers is a huge accomplishment that you can be proud of.

Courage is standing up for what is right. Helping students that are being bullied and defending them against those who terrorize them every day.

## **Dedication**

Dedication is playing an instrument at Solo and Ensemble. The many hours that are needed to prepare a superior quality piece that will move you on to the state competition.

It is spending several hours each morning during summer break to become a better, stronger, faster athlete. Spending time at school when you don't have to, making yourself run one more lap even though you are on the brink of collapse.

## **Selflessness**

Selflessness was demonstrated during the Shave-to-Save fundraiser for Hurricane Katrina Relief. Two teachers and a student sacrificed their hair to raise money for people they did not know and most likely will never met. This act of selflessness should be an inspiration for everyone.

It is selecting an angel off the Christmas tree in the high school office. Buying a gift for someone who may otherwise go without a Christmas present.

But what do these life skills have to do with you and National Honor Society? The National Honor Society is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. NHS strives to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

Each of these life skills along with reading textbooks, taking tests, and earning good grades demonstrate the qualities that National Honor Society stands for. It is a great privilege to become a member of an organization that strives to recognize well balanced individuals. Each of you that are being inducted into NHS tonight has proven that you possess these qualities. I congratulate you and welcome you into our elite group.

I would like to leave you with one last thought. I encourage each of you to develop a passion for learning. If you do, you'll never cease to grow. After all, it's what you learn after you know it all...that counts.