

## **The High School Selection Process**

Your child is in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade – it seems like yesterday he/she was entering kindergarten. Now high school is just around the corner! You can rest assured that Our Lady of Mercy Academy has prepared your child to achieve his/her potential at any high school you choose – Catholic or public.

The process of selecting a high school can be daunting. Some families begin the selection process in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade. Others wait until the fall of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade year. Either choice is fine. A list of the local Catholic high schools follows. Their websites are good sources of admissions information, open house scheduling and “spend a day at our school” program information. The Open Houses are conducted throughout the school year. You and your child should attend them to get an overview of what each school has to offer. Public high schools do not usually offer a “spend the day” program, but they often have an Open House. Call your local high school and ask about it.

After visiting the Open Houses, your child should spend a day at each school. Visit information can be found on most high schools’ websites or by calling the school admissions office. Students usually arrange visits in the spring of 7<sup>th</sup> Grade and/or the fall of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. Every child is unique. A school that is ideal for one student may not be for another. Even within families, a school that is right for one sibling, may not be ideal for another sibling. Spending a day at a school gives the student a chance to get a feel for each school’s environment. He will discover whether he/she is more comfortable at a large, medium or small high school. All of our local Catholic high schools are excellent academic institutions. Their graduates are fully prepared to meet the challenge of college studies. Their college acceptance lists are comparable. This being said, high schools can be differentiated by size, co-ed or same sex, electives, academic offerings, tuition costs, and extra-curricular activities. Open Houses and days at the school will help you and your child pick the most comfortable fit.

One final resource to tap during this process is current OLMA parents who have an older child in one of the high schools. Ask them questions; find out what they like best; find out if they have any concerns; is their child happy? Although be forewarned – there is a friendly rivalry among the local Catholic high schools. Don’t ask them about the other high schools, ask only about the one their child attends! That is the only school with which they have had first-hand experience.

Every Catholic high school in the Newark Archdiocese requires that all potential students take the COOP exam. It is offered in November to 8<sup>th</sup> Graders. OLMA will prepare your child for the exam. Our faculty offers a free COOP Prep class for OLMA 8<sup>th</sup> Graders in the fall. Details will go home during the first few weeks of school. Additionally our Summer Enrichment Program offers an optional two week Coop Prep class. There is a charge for this class. Please note that all OLMA 8<sup>th</sup> Graders take the COOP exam, even if they are planning to attend a public high school.

Choosing a high school can be an intimidating process. Your child may experience peer pressure to choose one school or another. You may even experience peer pressure from other parents. It helps to remind yourself and your child that high school is not the same as elementary school. Even if you select a particular school because friends are attending, your child may not be in any classes with his/her friends. And more importantly, OLMA alumni always maintain strong friendships with each other no matter what high school they attend. This is one of the added benefits of attending Our Lady of Mercy Academy. Find the school that fits your child best so that the transition to the next step in his/her education will be seamless.

And always feel free to call the OLMA school office with any questions – after all, we’ve been sending students on to high school for over 50 years!

## **Area Catholic High Schools**

| <u>Name</u>                                     | <u>Telephone #</u> | <u>Website</u>   |
|---|--------------------|--|
| <b><u>Co-Educational</u></b>                    |                    |  |
| Paramus Catholic<br>Paramus, NJ                 | 201-445-4466       | <a href="http://www.paramuscatholic.org">www.paramuscatholic.org</a>         |
| Albertus Magnus High School<br>Bardonia, NY     | 845-623-8842       | <a href="http://www.albertusmagnus.net">www.albertusmagnus.net</a>           |
| <b><u>Girls' Schools</u></b>                    |                    |  |
| Academy of the Holy Angels<br>Demarest, NJ      | 201-768-7822       | <a href="http://www.holyangels.org">www.holyangels.org</a>                   |
| Immaculate Heart Academy<br>Washington Twp., NJ | 201-445-6800       | <a href="http://www.ihahs.com">www.ihahs.com</a>                             |
| <b><u>Boys' Schools</u></b>                     |                    |  |
| Bergen Catholic<br>Oradell, NJ                  | 201-261-1844       | <a href="http://www.bergencatholic.org">www.bergencatholic.org</a>           |
| Don Bosco Prep<br>Ramsey, NJ                    | 201-327-8003       | <a href="http://www.donboscoprep.com">www.donboscoprep.com</a>               |
| Saint Joseph Regional<br>Montvale, NJ           | 201-391-3300       | <a href="http://www.saintjosephregional.org">www.saintjosephregional.org</a> |