

Boys and girls, tomorrow we are scheduled to have our 72nd entrance ceremony, and all of you are going to see our new freshmen, your *kōhai*. I am sure that you have been looking forward to this experience. Many of you are planning to try to induce freshmen to join in your club activities. There must be a lot of good things that you want to pass on to them. You should tell them about our Sports Day, the *Gaien-sai*, and other extra-curricular activities. I hope you will tell them a lot about our school and its proud traditions. And I do hope you, yourselves, will all have fulfilling student lives at Aoyama High School.

At this starting point of a new trimester, I would like to talk about three things.

First, about *juku* and other preparatory schools. According to surveys we did last July and December, about 80% of our tenth and eleventh graders were not going to *juku* or other preparatory schools. And one-third of the twelfth graders weren't, either. It is very important for us to give you a curriculum in which you are able to study academic subjects in various fields that will be necessary for your studies at universities. Our class requirements for graduation are based on what we think will be your future needs. All our teachers have a profound knowledge of their fields and an accumulation of personal teaching materials. In every lesson you will be able to acquire not only knowledge but also the skills to learn things on your own initiative and in a collaborative way with your friends. Also, it is important to provide you with rooms in which you are able to study for yourselves after school with the help of tutors. We have equipped our main study room with desk panels that enable you to share desks with other students. And we are planning to add a new air-conditioning system to the main study room, which will make it much more comfortable for you to study there in the hot and humid summer months. I do hope you will make the most of the study rooms and use them to work toward realizing your dreams.

Second, I would like to talk about trial examinations, which you are going to take this year. Their results will help show you your weak points in different subjects — and let you know what subjects you should study harder. You should use them to make your own study plans for the next twelve months, consulting with your teachers, who are experts. Create your own personal agendas in which you write down strategies for solving your problems. This will be very effective. And please remember this: mistakes make you stronger. Mistakes make you wiser and a better person. As I always tell you, don't be afraid to set high

goals for yourselves.

Also, to twelfth graders, remember that time flies. You have only ten months left before taking university entrance examinations. Nobody can change the speed of time. Everybody is equally under its control. You can never compensate for lost time. So work hard.

And to eleventh graders, remember that it is important for you to maintain a willingness to accept the challenges of new things. Make the best use of activities after school, discuss things with your friends, and accept as many new challenges as you can. Do what you can do today for the sake of your future self.

Third, and last, I would like to consider how we treat one another. Please remember to be careful with the words that you use with your friends. It is possible that things you have said carelessly might hurt your friends' feelings—without your having meant to do that. You never know how your friends may feel deep inside. It is necessary for you to be considerate toward your friends. Listen to them, especially when they are in low spirits, try to understand, just be there, close to them, offering your friendship. And when it is hard striving to solve your problems all by yourselves, please don't hesitate to talk to your teachers, or the School Counselor, or to me. We will do all whatever we can to help out, and we will always be at your side, close to you. Every student deserves respect. Each of you is irreplaceable.

One more thing, to twelfth graders, you don't want to miss a chance to vote in the Metropolitan Assembly election in July. That will be a very good chance for you to think about some of the political issues we face in our society today, such as so many children on waiting lists for kindergartens and nursery schools, our social security system facing challenges in this aging society, and too many young people being forced to give up studying because of the lack of money. You should all take an interest in political issues in order to try to help make our society better.

Thank you very much.

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