Dear C&C Families,

This is our latest edition of *Currents*, our newsletter that explores key City and Country programs in depth and puts them in writing for our families. We continue this practice with our Spring 2013 issue of *Currents* on the high school process in the Upper School.

High-school preparation is a serious matter for C&C. As educators, we understand and appreciate that, along with preparing children for life-long learning, we have a responsibility to prepare them as fully for the next step of their educational journey. At the same time, we believe the overarching responsibility of a C&C education is instilling in our students a curiosity for learning, a foundation of competence, confidence, resourcefulness, and a commitment to collaboration and active citizenship. These are habits of mind and life skills that will form the basis of their life’s work. At C&C, these qualities are fostered consistently from the IIs on up.

We believe that these are the skills that will matter in the next decades and know C&C students are well prepared. Beyond the immediate future, we know from our graduates that the skills, knowledge of self, and habits of mind acquired at C&C serve them throughout their lives.

I welcome your thoughts about the high school process and this issue of *Currents*. Read about other aspects of our program, such as Literacy, Math, and Rhythms, at www.cityandcountry.org/publications.

Sincerely,

Kate Turley
*Principal*
C&C Graduates Are Bold, Original Thinkers

HIGH SCHOOL: a new environment with new challenges and new rewards. After serving their final year at C&C as role models for the twenty-two Groups beneath them, our C&C graduates begin 9th grade as the youngest in their new high school community. Before they encounter new curriculum and processes and see the satisfying ways in which their time at C&C has prepared them for this chapter, our students must grapple with standardized tests, craft applicant essays, and navigate interviews, all the while identifying who they are as students and making the big decision on which high school will be the best match for them. This is a tall order, and we at C&C have put a lot of thought and structure into making sure our students can achieve their potential.

When teachers, parents, alumni, and admissions directors talk about graduates of our school, their comments revolve around the surprisingly mature characteristics they find in our XIIIs: C&C students are comfortable talking to adults, are eager to ask questions when in need of additional information, know how to self-advocate, have a strong sense of self and their interests, and know how to reflect on their own thinking. They are bold, original thinkers, genuine and self-assured, creative problem-solvers, expert collaborators, supportive of their fellow citizens, community leaders, and are equipped with strong academic skills.

These sought-after traits are the outcome of C&C’s nursery through XIIIs Program that is directed towards helping our students become independent, competent learners and responsible citizens of any community. These traits assure that C&C students have much to offer to the high schools they choose to attend, and that they will have the desire and ability to reap the benefits of a new social and academic environment.

“The way they taught at City and Country was not at all like the usual rote learning. As a matter of fact, it was like nothing I have ever encountered since. I don’t remember reading a textbook in that school, and yet, I came out of there with knowledge and especially an outlook that have permitted me to live in harmony with life, rather than in confrontation.”

—Former C&C student and journalist Vladimir Posner in Parting with Illusions
High School Preparedness: Group-By-Group

In conjunction with continuing to explore C&C’s social studies, inquiry-based program, C&C students in the Upper School devote time specifically towards high school readiness. Each Group expands on previous years and by the Xlls, C&C students are primed for any learning environment.

THE XIs YEAR
As students enter the Upper School, formal preparation for the high school admissions process begins.

In the XIs, a new Special, APL, is introduced. APL, or Academic Performance Lab, focuses on standardized test preparation and students practice general test-taking skills.

The goal of APL is to increase each student’s ability to perform academic cognitive tasks exemplified by, but not limited to, standardized tests. The specific cognitive goal is to help each student become more aware of his or her thinking in order to meet the student’s academic needs. Naturally, this builds upon and works with many other parts of the curriculum.

The XIs work on becoming familiar with the procedures and thought behind standardized tests and other formal academic assessments. Students take and review in class a variety of standardized tests, formal puzzles, and logic games. To deepen their introspection about their thinking, the XIs write and share some questions of their own. Come spring, the XIs take and review a battery of Stanford Math and Verbal tests. XIs take their first full practice test in January.

THE Xlls YEAR
The Xlls continue test-taking preparations and practice in APL. In the fall, most of the APL work centers on the Educational Records Bureau tests (ERB CTP 4 Level 6), which are completed as homework and then reviewed in detail in class. “Review is the key,” says APL Instructor Gino Crocetti. In the middle and end of the year, the Xlls take and review several other tests in addition to logic puzzles, the LSAT, and other sources. The Xlls also engage in mnemonic and relaxation techniques.

In the spring of the Xlls year, students and their families become more familiar with the high school application process through events such as a Coffee & Conversation meeting with the High School Placement Coordinator (HSPC) and the Director of the Middle and Upper School (DMUS). At this meeting, parents are introduced to the overall process and receive a timetable and basic calendar. Around the same time, parents and students attend the Secondary School Fair offered by the Downtown Independent Schools Consortium (DISC), where students meet representatives from local schools. Back at School, the DMUS and HSPC invite parents who would like to begin the process to meet with them.

“APL not only prepares students for different test formats, it gives them a chance to explore their own thinking and problem-solving skills. Through APL, students learn to focus on what they do and don’t know and how to be introspective about their thinking.”

—Gino Crocetti, C&C Alumni and APL Instructor
In the fall of the XIII, the pace of the high school application process picks up. Because we know our students so well, the process is highly individualized and supported by the DMUS and the HSPC. The DMUS and HSPC meet with each XIII family to determine a slate of prospective schools that would be a good match for each student, and the HSPC supports each family through the various application processes. At the start of the school year, XIII families attend an orientation meeting where information about attending open houses, preparing typical applications, and a review of various deadlines are discussed in detail.

To minimize absence from school, C&C works with high schools to select four days during which our students can visit. Standardized tests are required for many high school admissions. The ERB and ISEE are offered at C&C, specialized high school exams are offered offsite. During APL in the XIII, the students take and review numerous test forms and types of questions including some material from the ERB, SAT, LSAT, GRE, NYS exams, Iowas, and Stanfords. A part of the students’ work is to occasionally write questions of their own. Familiarity with the material reduces anxiety, but it is the specific recognition and attack strategies that often help the most. Later in the year, students review critical thinking ideas and thinking errors using a variety of texts.

“Our students have an edge in the interview process. That’s their strong point. They use their brains; they’re more self-confident. Other students spend their time trying to figure out what they’re supposed to do and how fast they can do it once they figure it out; C&C kids are freer to think for themselves.” —Ann Roberts, XIII teacher

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Focus On Our High School Placement Coordinator (HSPC)

C&C’s High School Placement Coordinator makes it her business to know her students well and to know the high schools to which they apply. This focus allows her to help families match their child with the right school. Just as with all learning, selecting a high school is a process. A school designated as a first choice in September may not turn out to be the student’s first choice come March, just as a school thought to be a good next step in the Xs is not where a student will be happiest by the time she or he enters 9th grade.

- **Knowing our students.** The HSPC follows students’ progress throughout their years at C&C and in the XIs joins the Group in class to deepen her understanding of each child.
- **Knowing the schools.** The HSPC, along with the DMUS, visits city high schools regularly to keep abreast of their programs and community. She speaks with Admissions Directors throughout the year; these strong relationships allow for good matches.
- **Explaining the process.** Significant experience has provided our HSPC with a battery of handouts that simplify the application process. She understands and anticipates common questions.

- **Prepping for interviews.** Through extensive mock interviews with students (and parents!), our applicants become aware of what to anticipate and how best to respond during an interview. After the actual interviews, the HSPC debriefs with each student, a step that further informs her prep process.
- **Reviewing applications.** When asked, the HSPC takes a careful look at both the student and parent pieces for clarity and strength of writing.

“What students think they want in September is very often not the school they choose in March: there is a greater understanding of the schools and of themselves as learners by the time they make their final choice. Getting into a school and being happy there are two different things.”
—Norma Bellino, High School Placement Coordinator
The Meet the Graduates Event

February of each year

At a typical Meet the Grads, five new alums return to the Rhythms Room to share their experiences at a wide range of schools where they participate in an equally wide range of activities, such as debate, volleyball, theatre, newspaper, genetics lab internships — and one grad even visited Peru with the Institute for Civic Leadership! This highly anticipated and attended event is an excellent opportunity to hear first-hand experiences of students' recollections of applying to and entering high school.

“Education [is] not an end in itself but [is] the first step in a progress which should continue during a lifetime.” — Caroline Pratt, I Learn from Children

Voices
Students, Staff and Alumni Discuss the Process

“This is a highly individualized process. We have basic guidelines for supporting our students, but ultimately we work with each family in a unique manner.” — Alex Ragone, Director of the Middle and Upper School

On High School Interviews

“At C&C we’ve had a lot of practice talking with adults. We never just sit and listen. This is a strong point for all of us in high school interviews.”

— Carley Watman, ’13

On the benefits of a N-Xlls Program

“Our Program allows the 8th graders to be the biggest young kids rather than the youngest big kids. Acting as important role models to the Lower School students encourages the Xlls to test their maturity in a developmentally appropriate setting.”

— Todd Rosenthal, Librarian

On the transition into to high school

“My confidence in asking questions came from my years at C&C. We were always encouraged to ask questions. Through asking, you learn.”

— Caroline Cantone ’06

“The main difference between my classmates and me was in our approach towards schoolwork. Instead of being stressed out about being the top student in the class, I was interested in understanding the material.” — Neala Horner ’01

“I chose my high school because it was huge and diverse and unlike anything I had experienced before. I felt C&C had prepared me to take on something completely different.” — Dot Weldon ’07
C&C Answers Parents’ FAQs Regarding Students’ High School Preparedness

Q: Where do C&C graduates attend high school?
A: C&C graduates attend a wide variety of outstanding high schools. The vast majority are accepted into the schools of his or her choice. See page 8 for the long list of acceptances from the past five years.

Q: How do admissions directors assess C&C students and their scores on the standardized tests they take for the high school application process?
A: NYC independent high schools admissions directors say they look for students with “well rounded backgrounds” and “a passion for learning,” not simply those who perform well on tests. Their opinion of C&C grads: “independent thinkers equipped with strong academic skills who know themselves and love to learn!” C&C students perform as well as or better than their peers in other schools on the standardized tests, and are accepted into competitive high schools.

Q: How does C&C’s curriculum compare to that of traditional schools; will C&C graduates know as much as other students going into 9th grade?
A: C&C emphasizes depth of knowledge and the acquisition of indelible learning skills over the traditional memorization and regurgitation of information. Our students come away with a solid foundation of academic skills and a profoundly thoughtful approach to learning. Their resourcefulness as learners enables them to make any needed adjustments along the way.

Q: How do C&C grads fare in a more competitive, less attentive environment where traditional standards are applied?
A: Learning how to memorize facts, take tests and compete for good grades are much easier, and far less meaningful, tasks than learning to think independently, be self-motivated, develop problem-solving skills, enjoy an intellectual challenge, and be an asset to one’s community. C&C teaches these more challenging skills in a positive environment, and these skills will enable students to easily tackle whatever the world beyond asks of them.

When students stay at C&C through the Xllls they know themselves and their interests well enough to choose a high school at which they will be successful and thrive.
High School Acceptances 2007 Through 2013

By the time C&C students reach the XIIIs, they have a strong sense of self, of their skills and interests, and are better able to pinpoint schools that appeal to their motivations and at which they will be challenged and successful. The result is telling: over the last five years C&C graduates were accepted to a broad range of some 75 high schools; schools as vibrant, diverse and challenging as our XIIIs.

Avenues
Bard High School Early College
The Beacon School
The Berkeley Carroll School
The Birch Wathen Lenox School
Bishop Ford Central Catholic High School
The Brearley School
Bronx High School of Science
Brooklyn Friends School
Brooklyn Lab School
The Brooklyn Latin School
Brooklyn Technical High School
Buxton School
The Calhoun School
Cardinal Spellman High School
City Polytechnic High School
Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School
Community School
Crossroads School
The Dalton School
Darrow School
Dwight School
Dwight-Englewood School
Eagle Hill School
Eastern Christian School Association
Eleanor Roosevelt High School
Ethical Culture Fieldston School
Fontbonne Hall Academy
Friends Seminary
The Gow School
Grace Church School
Hawthorne Christian Academy
The Heschel School
Hewitt School
Horace Mann School
The High School for American Studies
Kent
The Kew-Forest School
NYC LAB School
LaGuardia Arts
Landmark School
The Loomis Chaffee School
Loyola School
LREI
Marble Hill School for International Studies
The Marvelwood School
Marymount School
Millennium High School
Miss Porter’s School
Murray Berghan High School for Business Careers
NYC Museum School
New Roads School
NEST + m
The Nightingale-Barnard School
Notre Dame School
Oakwood Friends School
The Packer Collegiate Institute
Poly Prep Country Day School
Professional Children’s School
Purnell School
Riverdale Country School
Robert Louis Stevenson School
Rudolf Steiner School
School of the Future
St. Andrew’s School
St. Ann’s School
Saint Saviour High School
The Spence School
St. Joseph High School
Stuyvesant High School
Talent Unlimited High School
Townsend Harris High School
Trevor Day School
Trinity School
United Nations International School
Westover School
The Windward School
Wildwood
Xavier High School
York Prep