

Recommendations for Eileen

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The HomeScholar

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"Helping parents homeschool through high school"

Dear Eileen,

What a joy and a pleasure to work with you on Felicia's transcript! She is an amazingly gifted young woman with a lot to offer the world, and her academic record looks incredibly strong!

I want to review briefly our conversation about grading. I believe that when a parent requires a student to know material before moving on, they can safely give an "A" for the class. Based on my experience with community college grades, university grades, and honors program grades, it's not uncommon for students to be allowed to correct work in order to improve their grades. I want to remind you that my own children thought my grades were "bogus" until they got into college – and that's when they realized I was a harder grader than many of their professors. On the other hand, you know your child best, and grades are determined by the parent, not by me.

Although Felicia's math level is fine, nursing degrees do require a firm background in math. Although her transcript is very strong, math may be the only area where she does not demonstrate real strength at this moment. I don't think it will be difficult to get into nursing school, but I do want to encourage Felicia to be consistent and work hard in math. When I worked as a nurse, I used algebra every day. It is critical to many areas of nursing, and an algebraic mistake can be life-threatening in a nursing environment. It really is an important skill. However, the genuine care that a nurse has for a patient is much MORE important than math. Genuine caring can't be taught, and math can. Felicia is very strong in the "caring" department, and that is much more important. The math skills will come in time, if she works hard.

Felicia is demonstrating her specialization in her choices of sciences. I think it's likely that the UW Tacoma Math, science, and leadership program will provide an accredited college credit, so please check that out! I also think that although she loves human body sciences, it's also important that she has basic cell biology and chemistry during high school. I also really regret that I didn't have physics in high school, although it was not required for nursing. Once Felicia has completed algebra 1, consider taking chemistry as a science. It will really improve her ability to succeed in nursing school.

You may want to consider an additional foreign language. Almost all colleges accept ASL, and she can demonstrate her fluency in that language because she is a translator. It's a wonderful language for nursing, especially in critical care areas where people are

intubated and can't speak. On the other hand, Felicia has exceeded expectations in every area except math and foreign language. She is working hard at math. If you want to, knowing that it's not required, you could try to introduce a second foreign language and see if it is fun for her. If it's not fun, don't push it, but it might be something that she could enjoy. Does Felicia know how to type? Typing is a crucial skill to learn for college. Many computer-literate students already know how to type with "home keys" but I always want to ask, just to be sure.

We talked briefly about testing. Because of her SAT vocabulary training and skills, I think she might be a good candidate to try the PSAT in 10th grade. You have to contact a local high school during the first week of September to register for the test, and it's only offered in October. Take it without studying first, and it will give you a good "starting point" for estimating her SAT score in the future. It will tell you if she could be a candidate for the national merit scholarship when she takes the PSAT in 11th grade. In 11th grade she will also need to take the SAT or ACT. The SAT has a mandatory hand-written essay, and tests only math, reading and writing. The ACT test has no mandatory essay, and it tests math, reading, writing AND SCIENCE. For that reason, she may score higher on the ACT. We talked about using CLEP exams for outside documentation. I'm confident that by the end of next year she would be able to pass a CLEP in Biology, for example. CLEP exams are purely multiple choice exams. You can read more about them on my website here:

http://www.squidoo.com/How_2_Homeschool_College

For more information about testing, see my audio course on my website: http://www.thehomescholar.com/products_audiocourses_highschooltesting.php

Nursing degrees come in two varieties in Washington State; BSN and ASN. The BSN is a four year degree, and the ASN is a two year community college degree with fewer options for promotion. Both require intensive clinical experience. The UW has frequently been rated the number one nursing school in the country, and it is extremely competitive to get into (think Harvard). Admission to the UW does NOT ensure admission into the school of nursing, so it often takes much more than 4 years to graduate. Because of the nursing shortage, many scholarships are available. Here is a link to the Washington State Nursing Scholarship.

<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/paying/waaidprgm/HPScholarshipPage.asp>

Scholarship Program Information - The Health Professional Scholarship program was created to attract and retain health professionals to serve in critical shortage areas in Washington State. The Scholarship program provides financial assistance to students training to become primary care health professionals.

Most high school freshman begin their freshman year as a 14 or 15 year old. Most sophomores start the year when they are 15 or 16 years old. This is exactly where Felicia is right now. When we spoke, we decided that last year was Felicia's freshman year. Parents are in complete control of their homeschool transcript. If you decide to include

her prior year as a year of high school, we can talk about that if you like. You could also decide to graduate her a year early if you like. It's completely up to the parents. In my opinion, it would be helpful to keep this current transcript, because she's right on track with math. If you were to advance her a grade, then her math might look like a weak area.

There is one area of Felicia's transcript that stands out – she has TOO strong of a transcript! Seriously, 10 credits, even well documented credits, is a LOT! A college preparation is 20-24 high school credits, and Felicia will almost double that at her current rate. On the other hand, some college prep high schools will have a transcript with 35 or more credits. Some children love their area of specialization so much, that working for 10 hours a day is FUN for them. My own children were like that! So I don't think her strong transcript is a REAL weakness right now, but I wanted to point out exactly how she compares to others – WAY ahead! So don't feel like you have to put every little thing on her transcript, it's already strong. Some of her activities can be just that – activities. Things that are listed on her activity list and written about in her admission essays do not necessarily have to go on the transcript itself. Just be aware of how ahead she is, encourage her with math and science but don't push her too hard. Remember to relax and have fun while you are homeschooling.

Colleges want to see academic strength, activities and specialization, leadership, volunteer work, and compelling admission essays. Felicia has it all! I really believe she will succeed beyond your wildest dreams.

Blessings,
Lee

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Disclaimer: Parents assume full responsibility for the education of their children in accordance with state law. In addition, parents assume full responsibility for the accuracy of all homeschool records.