

Megan Stovall

LA IV Q4

Giles

Scholarship Essay

5 Apr. 2010

I've been a student at Presidio High School for two years, and I've learned so much. When I say that, I don't just mean that I learned how to work out *this* math problem or how to write *that* essay. Yes, I learned those things too, but I've also learned how different schools can be. Presidio High School's goal to provide effective instruction, to create a place where students can reach their highest academic potential, sums up this difference for me. The fact that at Presidio my work is my own, that I'm encouraged to work through problems independently and that there is always work to do, makes it clear to me that this goal is not simply an empty claim, but something that the school clearly works to achieve.

I've found that there is quite a difference between Presidio and other schools. At my past schools—elementary through high school—I never felt like my work was my own. The teachers were there and they lectured each day. When their lectures were finished, they'd pass out the day's assignments. But it didn't end there. They'd go over each assignment, question after question, problem after problem, and practically outright state what answer they wanted to hear. There was little I had to work out on my own, and it frustrated me. This is not the case at Presidio. When comparing Presidio to these past schools, I realize how greatly they contrast each other for even the most simple of assignments. For example, when it came to vocabulary worksheets at my past schools,

the teacher would go over every single word, not even letting the students venture a guess as to the word's meaning. At Presidio, I could define those words on my own. Of course, when it comes to other assignments—essays, for instance—there are guidelines, but that is all they are. I've been given the chance to think—not have someone else think for me. Here, every answer I give is completely mine, and that makes me want to work even harder on my schoolwork.

Part of my work being mine is that I am given the chance to work through problems I encounter independently. Yet, at the same time, if I find that I'm unable to get anywhere on my own, there is always a teacher nearby to offer a little help. I've noticed this most often in Language Arts when working on essays—when it came to different drafts, my teacher would leave notes on what had to be changed, but I figured how to make those changes on my own. I've noticed that as time went on, the more I thought the problems on my own, the less help I needed and that, to me, is proof that this style of learning has further helped me reach my academic potential.

It is not just Presidio's way of encouraging students to work through problems on their own that has helped me reach my fullest potential, but also Presidio's self-paced way of learning. For as long as I can remember, I have been bored at school. I was always the student who would finish an assignment in five minutes and have to sit twiddling her thumbs until the rest of the class caught up. I felt as though I spent more time staring off into space than I did actually working on schoolwork. It reached the point where a large portion of my freshman year of high school was spent helping one of the teachers—one not too fond of typing—type up memos because there was nothing else for me to do. That problem was eliminated when I came to Presidio. Here, I could complete

an assignment and move right on to the next. There was no more boredom, no more staring at the cracks in the walls. Here at Presidio I was constantly thinking, getting better at everything I tried, far different from my past schools.

All of these things have caused me to enjoy being a student at Presidio more than I ever thought I would. Walking through the doors each day, I know each person here wants the students to succeed. This school has changed the way I think of learning. It has changed how I think of school. No longer is school the place where I go and feel as though nothing is done. No, now school is the place where things get done. Because of Presidio's goal to help students reach their academic best, my mind has been changed, and I do, truly, feel as though I've reached my academic potential—something I don't think I could say had I attended any other school.