January 12, 2017

Dear Students and Parents of the Class of 2020:

Next week, course selection for the 2017-2018 school year will begin. As you consider what courses to take, I wanted to make you aware of two significant changes that affect the class of 2020.

Last year, the State of Illinois added a new civics graduation requirement for all students, beginning with the class of 2020. Over the past year, we considered where the Civics course best fit, and we decided to offer the semester-long Civics course sophomore year, joining other semester graduation requirements of Health, Driver Education, and Interpersonal Communications.

The new Civics course will be a shared experience offered at the preparatory level and will fully incorporate the state-mandated course requirements: “Civics education must help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives; address government institutions; discuss current and controversial issues; and include service learning and simulations of the democratic process.”

Because so many students map out four years of courses to ensure they are able to take specific electives or course sequences, LT makes every effort to avoid make significant changes to graduation requirements once students have started as freshmen. We realize the addition of this new class will likely disrupt some plans; therefore, we are also making a change to the creative and practical arts requirement.

After reviewing student enrollment patterns, we noticed students often find it difficult to finish a sequence of courses due to state requirements and the LT requirements of one year of practical arts courses, one year of creative arts courses, and 4 ½ additional electives. Beginning with the class of 2020, students will be required to take a minimum of one year of classes from the combined list of creative and practical arts courses and 5 ½ additional electives. This will give students more opportunities for choice in the courses they take. As before, the 5 ½ other electives can include creative arts, practical arts and any other elective course offered.

Please take the opportunity to review all of the available courses in the Academic Program Guide online at www.lths.net. You will find more detailed information about the changes to graduation requirements and creative and practical arts in the General Information section of the 2017-2018 APG on pages 6 and 7. If you have any questions, be sure to contact your counselor.

I am confident the new Civics course and the changes to the graduation requirements will be an enhancement to the course of study at LTHS and will help all students in the class of 2020 to achieve our motto: vita plena, the quest for the fulfilling life.

\[Signature\]

Vita Plena