

# Mercy High School San Francisco

A college preparatory high School for young women

# MAP

*Maximizing Academic Potential of  
Students with Learning Differences*



The McAuley Academic Program (MAP) is a supportive program for students with documented learning differences to aid their success in Mercy's college preparatory curriculum. Students in MAP receive support with self-advocacy, study skills and learning strategies. The learning strengths and needs of each MAP student are known by her teachers and accommodations for the classroom and testing are arranged for to suit her unique learning style.

All students have access to the Achievement Center, a quiet classroom staffed by an educator who assists with study skills, test-preparation, organization and techniques to reduce test anxiety. During freshmen year, each MAP student is assigned one class period in the Achievement Center instead of a free period. Students may continue to schedule class periods in the Achievement Center in subsequent years.

The goal for each MAP student is to thrive in Mercy's college preparatory curriculum, develop confidence and participate in the extensive co-curricular activities that Mercy offers.

## *Available accommodations and services for MAP students:*

- ☆Academic Support
- ☆National Testing Accommodations
- ☆Extended Time on Tests
- ☆AlphaSmarts, DVDs, Books on Tape
- ☆Transition to College
- ☆Parent Resources
- ☆Faculty Support

### **Academic Support**

Counseling is available for students to work on study skills, self-advocacy, and strategies for test-taking, test preparation and organization. The school day frequently includes Academic Advising time, in which students are encouraged to work with their teachers on homework and test preparation. In addition, teachers are available for an hour after school to work with students who have questions regarding Math, Science or Writing. Mercy's block schedule gives students a full day between each class meeting, so students can ask for help with their homework before submitting it.

### **Accommodations for Learning Differences**

Accommodations that MAP students use include, but are not limited to, extra time on tests, alternate testing locations, preferential seating, note-taking assistance, frequent breaks/opportunities to move around during the period, and use of a laptop, audio books or calculator. The MAP counselor provides the Mercy faculty with information regarding each MAP student's learning differences as described in her most recent educational evaluation and a summary of her personal and academic strengths. The teachers, counselor and Achievement Center staff work as a team with the student and her parents to ensure that she has the support she needs to succeed at Mercy.

## National Testing Accommodations

The MAP counselor submits the applications for students' accommodations on the SAT and ACT, relieving pressure on the parents to complete additional paperwork in this aspect of the college application process. Common accommodations granted for these tests (depending on the students' processing difference) are: 50% or 100% extended time, a reader to read the test, ability to answer questions in the book instead of using the bubble sheet, and more frequent breaks.

## Note-Taking Assistance Program

If a MAP student's learning differences make it difficult for her to write all the necessary notes in class while simultaneously understanding the discussion, she can obtain copies of another student's notes from that class. Students pick up a copy of the day's notes from the MAP Coordinator at the end of the day and their identity is never revealed to the note taker. This accommodation is arranged confidentially in the same method that is commonly used by colleges around the country, and often helps students appreciate the value of using the same accommodation later in college.

## Transition to College

MAP students participate in the comprehensive college counseling program during their four years at Mercy. The college counselor helps MAP students identify colleges and universities that are a good all-around fit for that student, in addition to having excellent learning support programs. In preparing to advocate for their learning needs in college, students can access copies of their learning plans with a list of the accommodations they have used while in high school. One hundred percent of Mercy's MAP alumnae have been accepted to college.

## Student Peer Support

MAP students are incentivized to attend SAFE Voices, a support and advocacy group of high school students with learning differences in the Bay Area. Mercy hosts annual panel presentations by students with learning differences who share their experiences and suggestions for self-advocacy in high school and college with students and faculty. MAP students are encouraged to mentor younger students with learning differences as their community service, via the Project Eye-To-Eye program. These supports are provided through the Parents Education Network.

## Parent Resources

Mercy is a member school of the Parents Education Network (PEN), an organization comprised of Bay Area parents and professionals who work with and advocate for students with learning differences. PEN offers a strong community, learning-support resources and sponsors events in which professionals and panels of students with learning differences share their knowledge and experiences. Mercy hosts many PEN speaker series events to which all parents, faculty and community members are invited.

## Laptops, Audio Books & DVDs

If a student owns a laptop or a similar device such as the AlphaSmart Neo, she is welcome to use it in class for note-taking and class work.

Most of the books used for classes at Mercy are available in audio book form, whether from Mercy's library, Bookshare or other online libraries, or from the San Francisco Public Library. The librarians assist students who are auditory learners in acquiring the audio books they need.

Mercy's librarians also assist students who are visual learners in finding academic DVDs to help them in their classes.

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*Where young women prepare to make a difference in the world*