

## A Student's Best Friend Kiani Arroyo

Tenth grade was the year of matriculation. It's when all the sophomores say goodbye to their High School courses and start picking their college ones. We had meetings with our advisors that were handled like a friendly gathering. We were able to get to know our fellow classmates better and discuss how we can improve not just our behavior in the classrooms but also socialize outside of them. It's a little stressful with all the meetings happening as we are concluding sophomore year.

I attend Bard High School Early College Cleveland, where kids that live in the inner city have the opportunity to earn a high school diploma along with an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts with no tuition. Your 9th and 10th grade year are high school level courses that get you ready for your college courses you take in your 11th and 12th grade year.

By the end of my sophomore year the line between my home life and my school life disappeared. My family issues added on to the mental stress I had from my school work. I was tired of feeling like everyday was just getting worse than the day before. I gave up on my school work and it was no longer my priority. My work was turned in late most times and I developed bad habits that caused my assignments to pile up.

As matriculation got closer I was afraid that my lack of punctuality would affect how I would pass matriculation. I was forced to use the resources that I ignored in order for my life to get back on a steady path. Going to the library became my daily routine and my advisor became my best friend.

I didn't like asking for help. I had this thought that if you ask for help you would be seen as weak and incompetent. I knew the assignments I was given were simple. That if I stopped thinking too much into it, I could complete them at an exceptional rate. When getting frustrated trying to think too little, my mind would immediately shut down. It was a sign that there was too much mental strain going on for one day. The library was a quiet place where I could work without the extra background noise and my advisor was someone who helped me take control of my frustration.

Unlike most schools, most of the faculty in Bard High School Early College have a specialty in what they teach, so going to office hours and to the writing center were helpful to complete my work more efficiently. In our weekly meetings in advisory, I felt that it was a waste of time. That the skills they were teaching us were useless because I never saw myself using them.

It wasn't until one week before my matriculation meeting that I realized advisory was more than just a mandatory class. It was a partnership between you and your advisor so you could be your best version of a student. The advisor was there to help you with your school work but also he/she is there when you need to talk to someone. My advisor at the time, Hannah Zipple, asked me to come in to discuss my matriculation meeting with her. My first period started at 9:00 A.M and ended at 9:50 A.M, my conversation with Zipple lasted for the entire period because we were just having small talk. We talked about time management strategies, how to resolve issues at home, and what was new in our lives.

I used these new strategies discussed and taught to me in this meeting for the rest of the year and now for the rest of my life. I went through matriculation and school work is now more manageable. I have become more open to ask for help and found that I had a lot of free time on my hands. I was happy again and my motivation to do my best grew. I started to turn my work in on time and developed a great work ethic. I felt a huge change in my school life. Work was getting easier, I became more engaged in my classes, and I was able to maintain a balance between my home and school life again. I felt a sense of accomplishment, it was the first time when I was excited about completing anything.

I was now able to control my frustration, and finally be able to complete my work without shutting down. There was no longer a mental strain that stopped me from doing my work. My mind became clearer and it left room for more character development. Going through this experience and finding out what works with me was the most stressful part of my sophomore year. It was an experience that showed me what I am capable of and what I can overcome.

This huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. I passed and am now a Year 1 at Bard High School Early College. If I didn't force myself to talk with my advisor or to use the resources available I would have still been struggling with that balance I needed. Use the resources Bard has to offer to your advantage! The relationships you build amongst your classmates and professors help and can set you up for success now and in the future.