

Dear Dr. Kumaresan (Dr. K),

I am sorry I can not make it tonight to the conferences at the high school. I do want you to know that A is really enjoying your class and the learning environment that you have created and I am so grateful for the work you are doing. I would love to connect quickly with you either by phone or in person to get the kind of quick update I am missing.

I am not sure if she told you... but she was so disappointed on her last test grade. She really felt like she "knew it." but ran out of time. It was was problem she had last year too. It is frustrating for her when she knows the content but takes longer to do the work- and it is always something that makes teachers wonder if she should "drop down." She never wants to "drop down" and she works hard and doesn't seem to struggle to understand the content so I think she is doing the right thing. She was glad to be able to do the test corrections.

I will tell you a secret - I think her basic arithmetic skills are slow and weak. It's embarrassing for her to admit but I think it takes her longer to recall factors and things like that- and that may be slowing her down. That's just a hunch on my part. I haven't done any serious analysis of what is going on when she takes a test. I think she also gets nervous. Aside from her test taking frustration, I think she is doing great. I share this because I am sure you are better able to evaluate what is going on with her test taking than I am and I am confident she would be responsive to any guidance you have on this.

No need to respond to this right away. I just wanted to share my insight with you. I know you have a great deal on your plate with conferences this evening. I would love to have a quick in person or phone conference anytime in the next few weeks. Please let me know if/when this would be doable.

Thank again for everything you are doing.

Hi Marisa,

Thank you so much for reaching out. I apologize that I could not write to you earlier this week. First of all, let me say that it is really wonderful to have A in class. She is a wonderful, thoughtful young lady and brings a wonderful smile and personality to class every day. I really enjoy having her in class because she participates and helps the students around her when we are working on problems in groups.

I understand A's frustration with her last grade. After the test corrections, the grade came out to 85%, which I think is not bad at all. Given A's other grades (of 92%, 93% and 92%), I don't think dropping down a level should be considered at this point. I believe A has the talent and the work ethic to succeed at this level, and I want to do everything I can to help her get there. 433 does tend to be a very fast-paced course though, and so A should expect to keep having to work hard to digest and understand the class material. But at this point, I have no concerns, and I would just say that A has started really well, and she should continue doing what she is doing.

The course material tends to get more abstract and difficult as the year goes on, so I would strongly recommend that A either come and see me and/or make use of our Math Center. She has come by a few times and hopefully that was helpful to her.

Thank you for the input on A's arithmetic skills. She should not be discouraged by this, and I will encourage her to not be too hard on herself. The best way to overcome that issue is to practice as much as possible. I know she is taking at least 5-6 other classes, but if she does have some time, I would recommend trying some extra problems in the Dolciani textbook...typically, the more problems students do, the quicker they become at seeing patterns, and they develop a good intuition for how to approach a particular problem they have not seen before.

Just so you know, we will have 2 more assessments this quarter. We will have a short quiz this Wednesday, and then the end-of-quarter exam the following Wednesday.

In any case, I'm really pleased with A's work up to this point, and again I can't emphasize enough how much of a pleasure it is to get to teach her!

Please feel free to reach out to me with any more questions. I would be more than happy to touch base over the phone or in person as well if you would like. For a phone call, I have some availability tomorrow (Monday) from 9:30am-9:45am or on Tuesday from 8:30am-8:45am. Let me know if either of those times work for you.

Have a wonderful week.

Best,
Michael

Hi Michael,

Thank you for the thorough and thoughtful update and all the kind words about A. I have a good sense from your email about how things are going and I don't really feel like I need to take any more of your time. I know A. I would like me to meet you in person one day so if I am ever in the building I may try to find you to say hello. I will certainly reach out if I have any concerns but for now I am all set.

Thank you again for all you do,
Marisa