

# Examining our Core Values

- Amber Born

On Saturday morning, I took SAT subject tests at Marblehead High School. A lot of people were there, some from Marblehead and some from other schools, and we had to be there at 7:45 AM. We were roughly organized into three different “lines” (blobs of tired, confused people) for the SAT with essay, SAT without essay, and SAT II subject tests. Everyone had to check in before going to their assigned rooms, a new system which might have been implemented because the College Board said to, but might have just been a test to see how many people could fit in the lobby.

While waiting in line, I discovered that banners had recently been hung up on the wall. Each banner had one of the high school’s core values written on it, and while I waited in line, I pondered these values because we were there for over half an hour and the wi-fi didn’t work where I was standing.

## 1. Engage every person, every day

It’s a good idea, in theory, but every person? We should start small, with reasonable goals that can actually be accomplished, maybe “engage every person at your lunch table, every school day.”

## 2. Communicate clearly and with purpose

Between Remind, Google Classroom, Edmodo, teachers’ websites, Facebook groups, group messages, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, and the occasional face to face conversation, I think we have the “communicate” part covered. Clearly and with purpose? Occasionally. I find I communicate with the greatest clarity and purpose when I’m trying to figure out the schedule for a half day.

## 3. Analyze, organize, and evaluate information

Everything academic we do in school involves analyzing, organizing, and evaluating information (except when non-art teachers have us draw pictures. I still don’t know what that’s all about) so I think on the whole we’re doing all right with this one.

## 4. Honor people, place, and time

My admission ticket for the subject tests said to be there no later than 7:45, and I was on time, but I didn’t get through the line until 8:20. Honoring time? Not so much. We’ve been doing a decent job of honoring place: graffiti in the bathrooms has gone way down lately, and I haven’t seen a soap dispenser in a sink in weeks. And we honor some of the people, some of the time. There are various honor societies you can be part of, but that doesn’t cover everyone.

## 5. Navigate your opportunities; chart your future

Leave it to Marblehead to turn the whole concept of core values into a sailing metaphor.