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### Learning

“I will study and get ready and some day my chance will come.” This quote from Abraham Lincoln, written on our kitchen blackboard to motivate us every August as the school year began, encapsulates my educational journey. My education has always been a predominant aspect of my life. Learning has been my job, and sometimes, my passion. As I close out my high school career, I find myself looking back at the experiences I’ve had and the decisions I have made. What I realize is that my education has significantly contributed to my transition from a boy to a man who is confident in this next step and whose chance has come.

I have attended only two schools in my life. St. Eugene’s was my second home from preschool at age three through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. What stands out for me most about St. Eugene’s was the sense that it was an extension of my family. The connections I made in the classroom with my teachers and fellow students are ones I have not forgotten to this day. The friends I made there will be my friends for life. Having that comfortable and consistent environment encouraged learning. As I progressed through the sacraments at St. Eugene’s, I learned about my faith. The values and morals I absorbed shaped the person I have become.

Arriving at Cardinal Newman at the age of 14 felt like a natural progression of my education. High School was sometimes intimidating and overwhelming at first but adjusting to a new school, new classmates, and new teachers was a time of substantial growth for me. It was exciting to have new faces, new opportunities, and new challenges. I was impressed with how the teachers treated us as young adults. As I progressed through some challenging honors and AP classes, the teaching that was most effective for me, particularly in Math and Science, was consistent, frequent testing. I also enjoyed the open discussions that my teachers initiated and encouraged. Sharing ideas, stories, and viewpoints with my classmates and teachers has been an integral part of my learning experience.

Much of high school takes place outside of the classroom. My biggest growth has come from participating in and balancing activities outside of class. Leadership in Student Council, Student Senate, Link Crew and ASB has made me feel more connected to my school and classmates and my involvement has built my confidence. Playing baseball and football for Cardinal Newman has instilled a pride in my school and introduced me to friends I know I will have for life. My CBSL work with Challenger Baseball has left an imprint on me of how doing good feels good. These are essential lessons in my education I will take forward to college and beyond.

Now my fellow seniors and I find ourselves at a crossroad. Many of us will be spreading our wings and going off to college in the fall. I am grateful my education has afforded me the choice between several amazing opportunities. I have some big decisions ahead of me and many options to weigh. Do I attend a large, prestigious public university such as University of

Michigan, cheering on Harbough's team on Saturdays in the Big House? Or maybe a smaller, private college such as University of San Diego with a generous scholarship, four years in San Diego, and many opportunities abroad? Then there's the UC's, studying on the beach in Santa Barbara or biking to class in Davis? A month from now the decision will be made. Whatever I choose, I know that I will never stop learning, my future is bright, and that I am ready.