Graphic facilitation of a talk given by SLA's principal, Chris Lehmann
Addressing issues in education
Each student is part of an **advisory**, with the same advisor following him/her for all 4 years. Since the school has limited access to counselors, a student’s advisor helps with college counseling and applications. This is a wall of college acceptance letters for one advisor’s students.
SLA’s **Core Values** (Inquiry, Research, Collaboration, Presentation and Reflection) are posted in every room. Also posted in every room are **SLA’s 3 Rules**:

- Respect yourself
- Respect the community
- Respect SLA as a place of learning
One teacher reported that he uses quizzes as formative assessments. All other assessments are in the form of collaborative projects.

Every project is graded using the **SLA Standard Rubric**, which is posted in every classroom.

Using a Standard Rubric and the Understanding by Design model for planning and teaching provides a “common language” throughout the school. This cuts down on confusion and mixed messages for students.
**Interdisciplinary, cross-grade social justice project** – Students in 10th grade World History and Spanish 4 collaborated to create a *Social Justice Alphabet*, photographing SLA students. The photographs were printed on mesh scrims, and students were hanging these in the windows of the school during our visit.
Following the Understanding by Design model, SLA has **Essential Questions for each year**. These are addressed in each curricular area.

**Grade 9: Identity** – Who am I? How do I interact with the environment? How does the environment affect me?

**Grade 10: Systems** – How are systems created and defined? How do systems shape the world? What is the role of the individual in systems?

**Grade 11: Change** – What causes systemic and individual change? What’s the role of the individual in creating and sustaining change? What is the relationship between the self and the changing world?
During our Learning Journey, we visited an **engineering classroom**. While the teacher talked with us, students entered the room and worked on Google ChromeBooks to complete Reflections about their recently completed projects. Class sizes hover around 32 students. This science lab definitely saw a lot of use (but very little clean up).
Engineering projects were inspired by the National Academy of Engineering “Engineering Grand Challenges”, which were prominently displayed in the engineering classroom.
There were many **open spaces for students** to socialize and work outside of a classroom. Students played cards at a table, sat in hallways and worked independently in the photography/video lab.