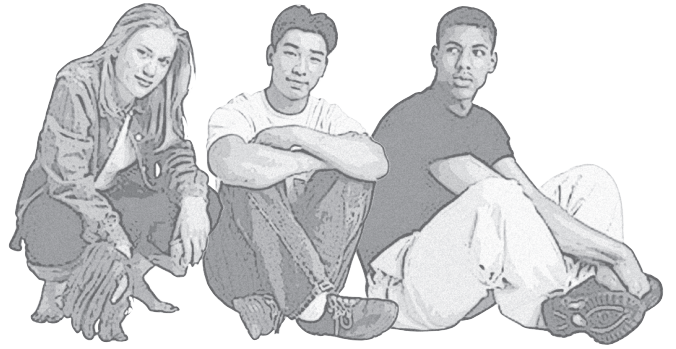


HIGH SCHOOL PARENT



The 21st century high school:

A laboratory for the new world

Who knew a generation ago what today's commonplace technology would be able to do?

Cell phones were mere science fiction not that long ago. Yet today these phones—some as small as matchbooks—are in the hands of most every teenager, linking them to friends and family no matter where they are.

Newer still is the science of the tiny—nanotechnology—that has brought new breakthroughs in consumer products: the micro-thin surface of ceramic flat irons that smooth hair, the UV coating on sunglasses and the microchips that hold research papers inside home computers, for example.

But, as the saying goes, the more things change, the more they stay the same. When it comes to high school studies, this phrase rings comfortingly true...with some exceptions.

Our rapidly changing world and increasingly technological workplaces have led high school educators to think long and hard about what teens need to learn to best prepare them for their future paths. After all, high school is the laboratory where teens can hone their “real-world” academic and social skills and learn about what they like and might want to do or study after they graduate.

What they have found is that teens need a solid foundation in the “basics” such as English language arts (reading, writing, editing), social studies, physical education and the arts (visual, performing and musical) as much as ever. College educators and today's employers echo the same conclusion.

The National Science Foundation estimates that by 2010, as many as one-fourth of all jobs will be based on science, technology engineering and math (often referred to as STEM subjects). These jobs will run the gamut from construction to robotics. So teens, *all teens*, need ample practice with these important subjects, too.

Spurred by this information, and by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act enacted in 2002, New York State requires all high school students (with some exceptions for students with special needs) to take coursework in five of the basic subjects and then pass corresponding state Regents exams in order to graduate. For a Regents diploma, these include English, Math A, U.S. History and Government, Global History, and one science subject area. A grade of 65 percent or better on these exams is required. Although a local diploma

option currently exists (a grade of 55-64 percent is required on these exams), it will be phased out as of 2008 and the Regents diploma will take its place as the reflection of basic high school competency.

Making math...and other “why do I need this” subjects...matter

Where today's high school learning differs from learning of decades past is in its delivery. Gone are the days when lessons were taught through lecture, “skill and drill” and in isolation (first-period biology *never* touched on the geometry taught later in the day). Today, students are frequently asked to take what they learn in one class and weave it into their learning in another areas. As much as possible, learning is also linked to what interests teens most.

Most adult work projects, regardless of the profession, require employees to tap into a variety of skills to successfully complete the task. Thus, high school teachers help prepare their students for these challenges through hands-on lessons designed to demonstrate that what they learn in school can be applied in real and meaningful ways.



Life skills matter, too

The hands-on, project-based learning that happens often in today's high schools also allows teens to practice the “soft” skills of collaboration (working well with others), problem solving, thinking creatively, managing time and organization. “Soft” skills are also what today's employers say they need from the people they hire.

Hands-on lessons: A link to the real world

As technology opens our personal lives and workplaces to people and co-workers in companies worldwide, it will be essential to have an understanding of other cultures and political structures, plus the ability to communicate in languages other than English. Consider how this knowledge might be used to fashion a high school global studies project.

In creating a faculty/student basketball challenge as a fundraiser to benefit a charitable organization in a third-world country, students would need to draw on much more than their understanding of continents and borders. Science in the form of economics would come into play as students set prices to maximize the profit and determine the supplies needed. Math and technology would blend when using computer spreadsheet applications to track the project's progress and provide eye-catching graphics. Language arts would be used when writing, revising and editing the project proposal, soliciting donations, and creating persuasive publicity. Web-research skills would help students learn about the good work their recipient organization does, and encourage them to think critically about how much of what they learn on-line is true and what is deceptive. Ultimately, all the photos, the charts and graphs, the ticket design could be pieced together to create a PowerPoint presentation for teachers and classmates to learn from and critique.





Mark your CALENDAR

Communicating a need for safety, support

Several violent, or potentially violent incidents at schools around the country and in the capital region over the last few months have once again brought the issue of safety and security to the forefront. At Schenectady High School we are committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for all students, and we ask that parents and students alike continue to join us in this effort.

Everyone in the community is urged to be vigilant and communicate with school district officials regarding potentially violent or disruptive situations that may affect our students. We also ask that parents continue to talk to their children about things they see and hear in and outside of school, as these details can often lead to preventing an incident.

Anyone with questions or concerns regarding safety or security at the school is urged to contact our Chief of Security Vincent Giammusso. Mr. Giammusso is a retired New York City police lieutenant with experience dealing with critical situations. He is currently assessing our buildings and grounds as well as our security procedures and practices. He is also training faculty and staff on recognizing, responding and reacting to violent or disruptive activity. Please call Mr. Giammusso at 881-3831 with any questions or concerns regarding safety in our schools.

Parents are also welcome to reach out to our new Parent Liaison Catherine Canavan, who joins Mr. Giammusso in our office for Community Involvement and School Safety/Security. Mrs. Canavan will be working closely with our school PTOs and will focus on increasing parent involvement in our schools. She can be reached at 881-2506.

Don't forget Financial Aid



This **December** seniors should be thinking about college financial aid. Here's what you need to do:

- ▼ Obtain a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from the high school guidance office, or on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- ▼ Read "Guidelines for Scholarships." A copy of this can be found in the high school guidance office, or on-line at www.schenectady.k12.ny.us.
- ▼ Plan on attending Financial Aid Night at Schenectady High School on Jan. 8, 2007.
- ▼ Ask your guidance counselor if you may be eligible for the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP).

| November | December |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 17 First quarter report cards mailed home | 2 SAT test at SHS, 8 a.m. |
| 20 SSFA Fall Concert at SHS, 7 p.m. (Snow date: Nov. 21) | 9 ACT test at SHS, 8 a.m. |
| 23-24 Thanksgiving Recess - NO SCHOOL | 15 Hanukkah (begins at sundown) |
| | 20 Interim reports mailed home |
| | 21 SHS IB graduation ceremony |
| | 22 Winter begins |
| | 25-Jan. 1 Holiday Recess |

College Bound



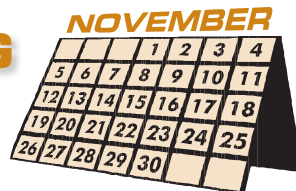
Attention college-bound seniors: It is important that you get your college applications and materials to

the guidance office by **December 1** in order to meet college deadlines. In addition to the college application, you should submit you resume, essays, teacher recommendation and test scores. Remember, if you have ANY questions about the college application process, **ASK YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR.**

Several college representatives are visiting SHS this fall. Visit www.schenectady.k12.ny.us or ask your guidance counselor for a schedule of these visits.

QUESTIONS REGARDING COLLEGE? SATs or ACTs? Call the High School Guidance Office at 370-8200.

SCHEDULING



FRESHMAN, SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS—believe it or not, it's time to start thinking about what courses you would like to take next year. Course Description Books will be available in early January and counselors will be visiting classrooms to discuss graduation requirements and important scheduling dates.

Sign up for E-newsDirect!

Parents, students, teachers and others in the Schenectady schools community can now have school news and events sent straight to their e-mail. All you have to do is sign up for the district's Parent's E-newsDirect.

The electronic newsletter is full of news, school reminders, updates and a listing of district wide events each month.

To sign up, visit www.schenectady.k12.ny.us and click on the E-newsDirect icon.

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November 2006

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Schenectady High School • The Plaza • Schenectady, New York 12308

"The 21st century high-school"

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