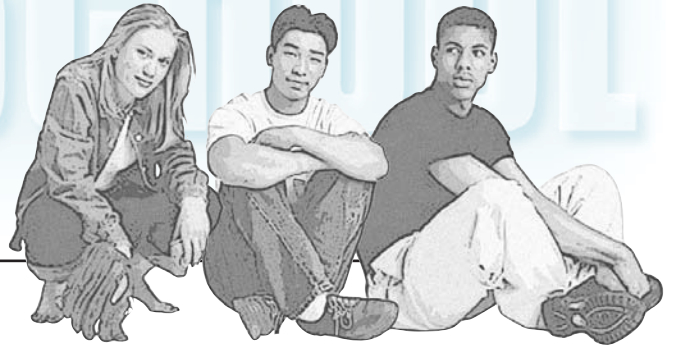


HIGH SCHOOL PARENT



Finding a winning combination— juggling academics and extracurricular activities

A wise grandmother once explained that life can become too busy, too busy with even good things. At times when her schedule became overwhelming, she would declare, "It's too much of muchness!" She would then re-evaluate her priorities, adjust her commitments, and bring her life back under control.

For many high school students, finding the right balance of classes, homework and study time, sports, clubs, social events, and after-school employment is a challenge. Students can overload their schedules with too many activities, leaving insufficient time to do a good job at anything. Or they can fill their days with one or two activities that do little to move them toward success after graduation. Either way, learning to make choices and to manage their time are critical skills they will need later in college and in the workplace.

Parents play an important role in teaching students to make these choices. Even the most well-intentioned and responsible students can suddenly find they have taken on too much—even of good things. The key is finding a proper balance of academics (their number one job) and extracurricular activities so there is room for both in a normal day.

As you help your child, here are some things to watch out for:

- ▶ **Pressure to be well-rounded and to take on too much**—Today's students hear that colleges are looking for well-rounded students. Too often that is interpreted to mean that students must be involved in everything if they hope to get into the "right college." Yes, extracurricular activities help demonstrate students' interests and the ability to interact with peers, but students can easily go overboard.
- ▶ **Too many interests**—Students often become overly involved simply because they like the different activities and enjoy the social interaction. Regardless of the reason, too busy is still too busy.
- ▶ **Need or desire for an after-school job**—After-school employment is a double-edged sword. It may help raise needed college funds, but it can also absorb too much of a student's time. Employers are always looking for good workers to fill shifts. A few hours a week can soon become too many hours a week.
- ▶ **Declining academic performance**—Short on time or short on sleep, students can suddenly find themselves hurrying through homework, missing assignments, or simply

doing less than their best work. Remember that academics are "Job #1," and if the extras begin to interfere with schooling, it may be time to cut back.

- ▶ **Change in mood or behavior**—Excessive pressures can effect each student differently. Inability to sleep, constant exhaustion, routine irritability, or obsessive behaviors can be just a few of the signs that things have gotten out of hand. Use your judgment as a parent to recognize signs that your child may be overcommitted.

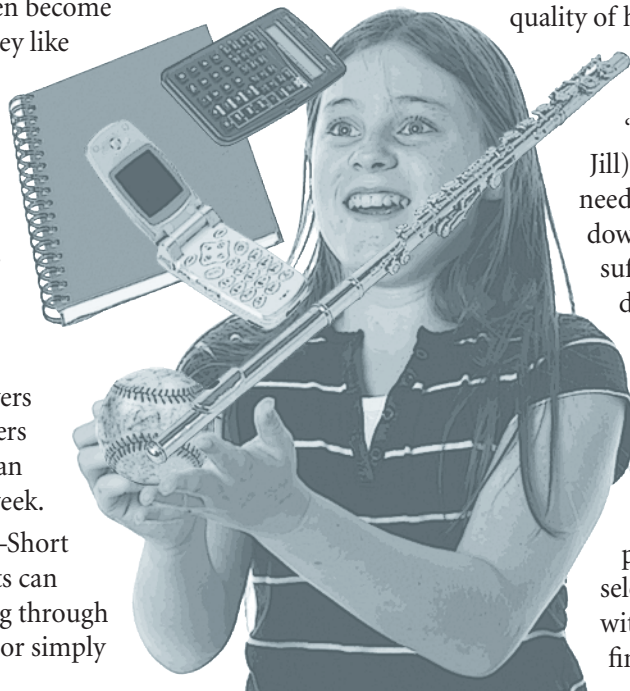
Helping your child cope with a full schedule

By high school, your teenager is taking a more active role in choosing his or her activities. This transition is a critical step in becoming an independent adult. Keep in mind that this is a process. Children still need your guidance as they make these decisions and learn to budget their time. Consider the following areas:

- ▶ **Organization**—The more activities students take on, the easier it is for them to lose track of their growing responsibilities. Help them learn to be organized. Show them how to use lists, planners, or calendars to keep in control.
- ▶ **Reinforce self-discipline**—Help your child avoid the temptations of wasted hours socializing on the computer or watching television reruns. Set aside a specific place for homework. Help your child learn to be realistic and to say "no" when things get out of hand.
- ▶ **Establish priorities**—From the very outset, remind your child that academics are his or her primary responsibility. Build on that foundation to select a reasonable group of activities based on interests, future plans, and time commitments. And don't forget home responsibilities, because they don't disappear as school becomes busy. Be realistic in what can be accomplished in a normal day throughout the school year. With too little time, that student may be forced to compromise the quality of his or her work, both in the classroom and outside.

- ▶ **Save time for self**—The old saying "All work and no play makes Jack (or Jill) a dull boy (girl)" is still true. Everyone needs time to sleep and eat as well as a little down time to relax and to socialize. Without sufficient time to unwind, even the most determined student can easily burn out.

Finally, be prepared to sit down with your children and help them re-evaluate their choices if things get out of hand. Rely on your experiences balancing home, work, and social activities. If you find you need a little help, please call your child's guidance counselor. Together, you can provide your child with a foundation on which he or she can find success in high school and later in life.



Scheduling for 2008-2009

It's the time of year when students, teachers and parents are thinking about next year's classes. Course Description Books have been distributed and counselors are meeting with students to help them plan out their schedule for the coming school year. Parents play a very important role in this process, so remember to ask your son or daughter what classes he/she has signed up for.

Course Description Books are also available online by visiting www.schenectady.k12.ny.us.

Mark your CALENDAR



February

- 14 PTO Meeting, 6:30 p.m., library; HALF DAY
- 18 - 22 No School, Winter Recess

March

- 3 HALF DAY, all students
- 5 Board of Education Meeting, ACC@PV, 8 p.m.; Career Center at Steinmetz International Potluck Dinner Night
- 7 ACT Registration Deadline (April 12 Exam)
- 9 Daylight Savings Time begins (turn clocks ahead one hour)
- 10 Third Quarter Interim Reports mailed home
- 10-21 IB English IA Orals
- 12 Board of Education Budget Meeting, MPMS, Rm. 128, 7 p.m.; Brooks BBQ sponsored by the SHS French Club, 3-6 p.m., SHS pool lobby
- 12-15 Blue Roses Theatre presents "The Laramie Project", 7 p.m. (2 & 7 p.m., Sunday)
- 13 PTO Meeting, 8:30 p.m., library
- 19 Board of Education Budget Meeting, MPMS, Rm. 128, 7 p.m.
- 21 Good Friday, NO SCHOOL
- 23 Easter Sunday
- 26 Board of Education Budget Meeting, MPMS, Rm. 128, 7 p.m.
- 27 SHS Spring Concert (snow date: March 31), 7 p.m.; IB Spanish IA Orals; IB Group IV Research Presentations, 12 p.m., Commons
- 28 Superintendent's Conference Day - NO SCHOOL for Students

College Timeline:

What your high schooler should be doing this February and March

Freshmen

Colleges want to see commitment. If something really intrigues you, explore it. Too often students wait until junior or senior year and then hurriedly and unconvincedly try to pad their resumes. Don't think about colleges at this point - just focus on your grades and interests.

Sophomores

Are you a teacher's pet? Keep it up. You will need teachers who have gotten to know you well - and who like you - to write letters of recommendation to your colleges. Also, decide if you want to take an SAT II subject test. It's often better to take the exam as soon as you've completed the relevant class instead of waiting until later.

Juniors

Check with the colleges you are interested in and find out if they prefer the ACT, the SAT I, SAT IIs, or no standardized tests. Most schools will accept either the SAT I or the ACT. Make a list of schools to visit during spring break (or in summer or fall). If possible, it's best to go while classes are in session. Some schools even help you ar-

range an overnight stay in a dorm or lunch with students in the cafeteria if you ask in advance.

Seniors

Check with the schools you've applied to and make sure they have all the required documentation. Also, be sure the high school sent those colleges your mid-year grades. Continue looking for financial aid sources. Try your place of worship, your parents' employers and Web sites like fastweb.com, students.gov and usnews.com. Ask your counselor for help.

