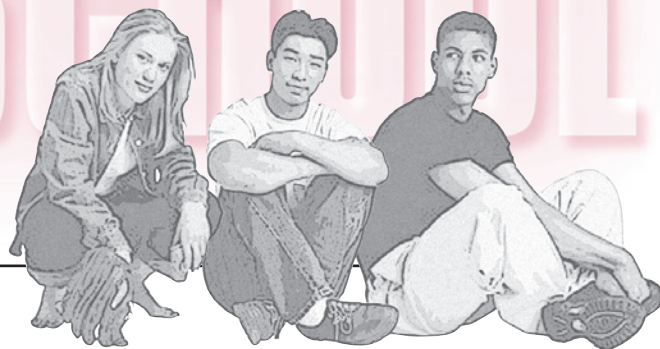


HIGH SCHOOL
PARENT

Making study time a priority

It is a familiar scene in many households. The computer flashes the latest instant message...music rings through earphones...the cell phone buzzes with text messages—and children insist that they are doing their homework! But, is all of that activity school related or merely a distraction from studies? Parents play a key role in helping their teens understand that making the most of study time will translate into better grades and less stress.

Multitasking?

Researchers agree that our kids have developed the ability to comfortably bounce back and forth between the phone, MySpace pages, and instant messages. At a glance, technology enables teens to accomplish more in a period of time. They seldom sit idle waiting for a person to respond or a computer program to load. Instead they move to the next task.

Although many claim multitasking improves efficiency, two problems arise. First, complex tasks require greater focus for an extended period of time. Just watch a student who becomes engrossed in a conversation with a close friend about a serious topic. Those e-mails, texts, and calls get ignored—multitasking comes to a halt. Most students need that same degree of focus to do their best as they write up a science lab or finish an English essay.

Second, a recent study shows that students may spend as much as 65 percent of their time addressing nonacademic tasks as they multitask with technology. Ten years ago, that would have been like watching television for 40 minutes and stumbling through homework for just 20 minutes. Your teen may be feverishly typing away, but is it schoolwork or socializing?

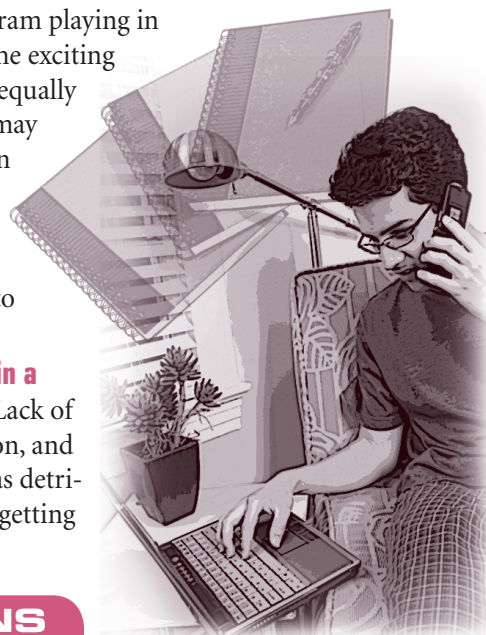
Keeping a homework focus

Balancing school, extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, family responsibilities, and personal time is not an easy task. In an effort to save time, teens often see homework as expendable. Nothing could be further from the truth. Homework is designed to reinforce lessons taught in class. Like the athlete who repeatedly catches a ball or leaps a hurdle to become confident of that sports skill, students perform math problems or write

essays to master classroom skills. Students who routinely tackle their homework learn the required material steadily throughout the year. They retain that information more easily and are less inclined to cram at finals time.

Parents can play a critical role in helping their children keep study time a priority. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Reinforce the fact that homework is essential to good grades.** Use the example of a hobby or pastime that interests your teen and show how practice in everything from music to video games yields improved performance.
- **Establish a study schedule** so that schoolwork is a routine part of your teen's day.
- **Ask if your child has homework—every day.** A simple inquiry can be enough to spur a procrastinating youth to get started.
- **Find a suitable study place.** Lying on the sofa in front of the television is probably not the best place to focus on those algebra problems. Some work is best accomplished sitting at a table or desk.
- **Minimize distractions.** It is easy to recognize that typing away on an iPhone keypad is not homework, but don't overlook the television program playing in the background. The exciting "CSI" plot may be equally distracting. Teens may not function well in complete silence, but try to limit anything that can cause their minds to wander.
- **Help them maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Lack of sleep, poor nutrition, and high stress can be as detrimental to study as getting lost in IM chat.



HEALTHY TEENS ARE PRODUCTIVE TEENS

It is easy to blame technology for diverting kids from their studies, but don't minimize how health affects your teen's ability to focus on studies. Some relatively simple steps can have a powerful impact on school performance:

- Make sure your child gets enough rest. The average teen needs nine hours of sleep each night to function at his or her best. A teen that gets into bed at 11 p.m. gets only seven hours of sleep when the alarm clock rings at 6 a.m.
- Don't neglect physical exercise. Studies show that busy schedules leave little time for exercise—one of the major contributors to the growing problem of teen obesity. Physical exercise improves

energy levels and can provide a welcome break from a lengthy study session.

- Watch what they eat. Meals on the run are often light in nutrition. High sugar/high carbohydrate foods lead to energy crashes. Caffeinated foods, including energy drinks and bars, only mask the symptoms behind a tired teen. Kids who eat regular, well-balanced meals perform better.
- Watch for signs of stress. Abnormal levels of frustration, discouragement, or anger can be warnings that your teen is overloading. Take a moment to talk with your child to decide if something needs to change before studies begin to suffer.

School Reports:

How Parents Stay 'in the Know'

As the fall leaves start to change, parents may start to wonder how their children are doing in school. Interim reports and report cards can give high school parents a better handle on their children's academic strengths and weaknesses. They can also point parents toward helpful resources when their children start to struggle.

Interim reports and report cards both are mailed home to parents four times every school year. Interim reports contain comments from teachers rather than specific grades as in report cards, but those comments can help parents figure out if their children have hit any stumbling blocks. The first interim report of a new school year is an excellent tool for parents looking to help their children get off to a good start.

Schalmont High School Assistant Principal Jacqueline Gordon encourages parents to use the report as a way to begin a dialogue with teachers. Parents should read through it with an eye for the comments, which may include teacher requests for contact from parents, as well as the period-by-period attendance record, which may indicate that a student has been skipping class.

"If a comment raises a concern, talk to the teacher to get more information and find out what your child needs to do to improve," said Gordon.

Parents also may want to speak with a guidance counselor, who can help arrange parent-teacher meetings. Counselor Annie Hughes encourages parents, especially those of ninth-graders, to approach the first report of the year with a positive attitude.

"A lot of ninth-graders don't understand what high school is like yet, so they may struggle in the beginning," said Hughes. "Don't panic if their grades are slightly less than in middle school, but be sure to discuss the importance of homework. That's where I find most ninth-graders fall behind."

Good comments are also worth discussing with your child. "Students who get good grades probably understand the importance of doing well in class and studying for tests," said Hughes. "But parents may want to look at their children's classes and see if there are other classes, advanced classes or clubs they can fit in their schedule. Being more involved in school helps students build their college resumes."

With each interim report or report card, Hughes encourages parents to first congratulate students on their successes and then to start a discussion on areas where students appear to be struggling.

"Be specific," encourages Hughes. "Ask them, 'What are you finding difficult about high school?' Sometimes it has to do with a social thing, so ask who their friends are and find out what classes and teachers they like."

HS teachers and guidance counselors will try to answer any

Mark your CALENDAR



NOTE: All events at Schalmont High School unless otherwise noted.

October

- 9 NO SCHOOL – Yom Kippur (observed)
- 10 HS/MS Interim Reports Issued
- 13 NO SCHOOL – Columbus Day (observed)
- 14 Board of Ed. Meeting @ Mariaville, 7 p.m.
Hockey Assoc. Meeting @ Rotterdam Library, 7 p.m.
- 16 HS Concert, 7 p.m.
- 18 Hockey Assoc. Fundraiser @ Applebee's, 8-10 a.m.
- 23 Friends of Music Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 24 NO SCHOOL – Staff Development Day
- 27 Board of Ed. Meeting @ MS LGI, 7 p.m.
- 11 NO SCHOOL – Veterans Day (observed)
Hockey Assoc. Meeting @ Rotterdam Library, 7 p.m.
- 12 Athletic Assoc. Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 14 HS/MS Report Cards Issued
- 19 Friends of Music Meeting, 7 p.m.
- 20-21 HS Drama Club Production
- 21-22 Area All-State Festival/ Concert @ Saratoga HS
- 24 Board of Ed. Meeting @ MS LGI, 7 p.m.
- 26-28 NO SCHOOL – Thanksgiving Holiday Recess
- 28 Hockey Assoc. Fundraiser @ Towne Bowling, 10 p.m.-2 a.m.

November

- 3 Tri-M Induction @ MS LGI, 7 p.m.
- 8 Craft Fair, 9 a.m.
- 10 Board of Ed. Meeting @ Woestina, 7 p.m.

DON'T FORGET
to sign up to receive the latest high school news through Schalmont's **School News Notifier** at www.schalmont.org!

HS Interim Reports and Report Cards Schedule

Interim reports and report cards are mailed home to parents. If you haven't seen one for your child within a few days after the scheduled mailing date (see below), please contact the HS Guidance Office to verify that your child's report was mailed.

2008

- OCTOBER 10 – HS Interim Reports Issued
- NOVEMBER 14 – HS Report Cards Issued
- DECEMBER 19 – HS Interim Reports Issued

2009

- FEBRUARY 6 – HS Report Cards Issued
- MARCH 13 – HS Interim Reports Issued
- APRIL 24 – HS Report Cards Issued
- MAY 21 – HS Interim Reports Issued
- JUNE 30 – HS Report Cards Issued

questions you might have about a school report. To contact a teacher, call 355-6110 or visit www.schalmont.org/District/teacherpages/teacherwebpages.htm. To contact Guidance, call 355-6110 and ask for one of the following counselors:

- Chris Bailey – grade 9 (letters L-Z) and grade 12
- Annie Hughes – grade 9 (letters A-K) and grade 11
- Debra Schmidt – grade 10