



Deerfield Parent Network

“Network Notes”

**Sophomore Deerfield Parent Network Meeting:
“Insider’s Guide to Junior Year”
April 21, 2014 7 p.m. Deerfield Public Library**

Panelists: Panel: Chuck Silberman-Parent
Lori Zwart-Parent
Kristen Thorburn-DHS Counselor and College Counselor
Brian Verisario-DHS Activities Director
Hannah Simon-JR student
Sara Plowman-JR student
Taylor Beauseigneur-JR student

How is Junior Year Different?

The students commented that Junior year is getting down to business, looking ahead to college and taking ACT’s. Junior year was described as putting everything together-balancing the work load, sports, activities, time management. It is important to be on the right path by junior year.

Parents commented that during junior year the kids move from belonging to finding their place-leading projects as well as the responsibility of driving. Junior year is a move toward independence with driving and it is important for parents to maintain high expectations and continue to provide oversight and guidance. Academically, time management is critical with the focus on future goals-college

What are the “pro’s” of being a Junior?

The students reported that it is fun being upperclassmen. They felt they had a set group of friends and “know the lay of the land in high school.” Parents reported a change in some relationships and there seemed to be more “boyfriend/girlfriend” relationships developing during Junior year.

Driving:

Students commented about the transition and said all their parents have a strict sense of boundaries; however, the kids love the new sense of freedom. One student commented that her Mom tracks her on an iPhone app.

Parents indicated it is important to know that the curfew for driving is different (1 hour earlier) than if not driving. Parents need to continue to know where their children are, who they are with and whether the parents are home.

Mr. Verisario commented that car insurance may be an issue (meaning your child may not be covered) if new drivers are breaking curfew or the more than 1 person under 21 in the car rule. Best to check with your insurance company’s guidelines for newly insured drivers.





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School Activities:

Mr. Verisario commented that kids need to be involved and stay involved. It is possible to get involved in new activities as a junior. What is important is to be passionate about your activities. If you miss one opportunity, move on, recover, and think “what can I do next?”

Ms. Thorburn commented that college applications will ask about the activities students are involved in. Community activities and work are important too. Colleges want to see a balance of meaningful experiences, volunteer experience and community involvement. They are looking at “How is this child different from all other applicants?”

Students commented that it is a good time to be in leadership positions in the activities they are in. Students all had friends that started new activities Junior year.

Parents commented that sometimes children begin working and other areas of interest change. It is important that your child find something they love. Junior year can be difficult as sports at the varsity level can be very competitive and intense. Colleges want to know how students deal with adversity too.

Academics:

Ms. Thorburn commented that colleges are looking for academic rigor. They want to see honors and AP classes. “B’s” are OK on your transcripts. Schools are looking for an upward trend in grades. If you are a straight “A” student try a more challenging class. She reported that colleges are looking at both the weighted and unweighted GPAs. Colleges are reading the essays. To ensure your child is placed in the correct classes parents and students should have an ongoing discussion with teachers and counselor when recommendations come out. Deerfield High School has an outstanding reputation for academic rigor and colleges know it.

Several of the students wished they had signed up for harder classes; however, Junior year is hard with sports, ACT’s and school work. Students reported they are having ongoing contact with their counselors. One student reported that kids should use their own judgment and not always pay attention to the rumors about coursework or what their friends are doing.

ACT and SAT:

Ms. Thorburn reported that all colleges accept both tests. Most Midwest kids take the ACT. The ACT is a culmination of coursework through Junior year where as the SAT is math, critical reasoning and writing. The SAT will be changing in the Spring 2016. See the CCRC website for more information. Next year the Prairie State testing in April will be changing due to changes in the state’s assessments. The national ACT will continue to be offered 6 times throughout the year. Most DHS students are taking the test 3-4 times.

Staff recommended students start taking the ACT in February of their junior year. The students recommended starting in October of their Junior year. Parents reported that for the December and June tests you can get your test/answer key back and that it is an important study tool. Some students do test at the end of their sophomore year. Financial assistance is often offered based on the ACT test score.

The study strategies course offered at the high school was recommended. Some students test with no preparation, others have extensive tutoring. The students are using the ARC as a resource throughout the school year.

