

CHOICES in EDUCATION

STUDY SKILLS
7 TIPS FOR HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS

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LOOKING AHEAD
HOW COLLEGE IS
CHANGING

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Aysha Abdul Shahid found herself rootless and financially challenged after emigrating on her own from Dubai. Then she enrolled at Macomb.

"I loved my journey (there)," said Shahid, a business major. "It was my family and my first college."

College staff mentored Shahid after securing her a work-study position, one of many types of financial aid available to Macomb students. She also received a private scholarship that allowed her to complete her degree and transfer to Walsh.

"Macomb not only prepared me for my studies," said Shahid, "but helped me grow as a person."

Jill Moffatt experienced growth in the professional sense after completing the six-month Certified Professional Coder program at Macomb.

"I'm working in the back of the office now, scribing for doctors," related Moffatt, who previously staffed the reception desk, checking in patients, "and Macomb helped me get here."

One of the college's many short-



Thomas Oliver, an apprentice at TK Mold and Engineering and CNC student at Macomb, found his niche thanks to a registered apprenticeship program coordinated by Macomb.

term certificate programs, Moffatt appreciated that all her classes were offered online.

"That really helped with my work schedule," said Moffatt, mother/stepmother of four, "and my kids' schedules."

Assisting Moffatt in cinching her dream job was Career Services, a

free resource available to Macomb students. For Kathryn McGlasson there were resources of another kind to help her prepare for transfer to Oakland University.

"The Reading and Writing Studio helped me keep on track with my assignments," said the psychology major, "and the Learning Center

(where free tutoring is offered) gave me a lot of assistance."

It was Macomb's apprenticeship coordinator who matched Thomas Oliver with his goal of becoming a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) operator via a registered apprenticeship at TK Mold and Engineering. The 22-year-old now divides his time between the classroom and the workplace, earning a U.S. Department of Labor credential and a steady paycheck.

"The apprenticeship allows me to apply what I'm learning in class the same day," said Oliver. "I can talk to the right people and ask questions."

For Danielle Madill, whose husband is on active duty with the U.S. Navy, Macomb offered a welcomed constant in her moveable life. After the couple were transferred to Florida, she was able to continue her studies online at Macomb and earn an associate degree in cybersecurity.

"No matter where I live," said Madill, "I can always go home."

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"I really enjoyed my time at Macomb."

Carissa, Macomb alum and Walsh graduate



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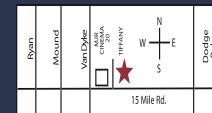
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OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

7 study tips for high school students

Assessments such as quizzes and exams help educators recognize areas where students are excelling and where they might need a little extra help. In addition to tests in the classroom, high schoolers generally take standardized testing for state or provincial assessment purposes.

Testing may come easier to some students than others, but having solid study techniques can improve students' performance on a wide range of exams. In fact, research by Stanford scholars, whose data was published in *Psychological Science*, found that applying a strategic approach to studying helped college students improve their exam scores by an average of one-third of a letter grade.

The testing preparation resource PrepScholar says it is important to build and maintain strong study habits to help students avoid undue stress and last-minute cramming. The following are seven techniques that may help foster good study skills.

1 . Find value in the lessons. Many students lament that what they learn in school just isn't relevant in daily life. That can make the subject matter feel less important and uninteresting. Finding value in what one is learning and seeing how it can be applied outside of the classroom may make a student more inclined to learn and retain information.

2 . Avoid distractions. Study time is time to take a break from social media, video games and any other distractions that can pull a student away from studying. Constantly checking notifications can interrupt thoughts and make it hard to learn the material.

3 . Establish a study schedule. Develop a system and a schedule for studying. Students should establish a fixed habit of studying each day or week — whatever is best for him or her.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Testing may come easier to some students than others, but having solid study techniques can improve students' performance on a wide range of exams.

Over time, studying will become routine.

4 . Establish dedicated study spots. Students should locate places that work best for them as study and homework stations. Certain individuals may need the quiet of a library or a bookstore. Others may do best with the hum of conversation around them or in a group. There's no right or wrong study spot. Maintaining consistency

will help the mind associate a place with studying.

5 . Use grades as benchmarks and motivators. Blaming a teacher for a poor grade won't get a student anywhere. Rather, grades should indicate how well one is learning the material, and in turn, the effectiveness of students' studying habits. Students can tweak their habits if they find their grades are not where they want them to be.

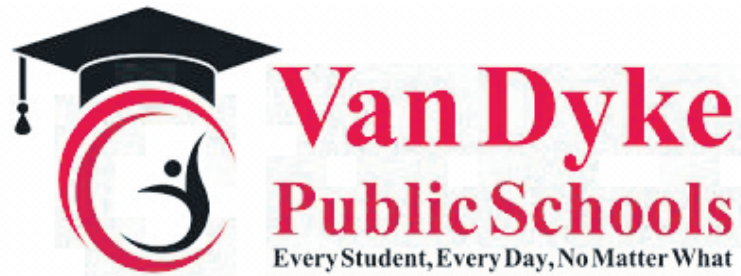
6 . Rephrase material. Textbook language can be dry and unappealing. Students can try putting the material into their own words or rephrase passages to make them easier to remember and recall. Similarly, teaching or sharing the material with another person also may improve retention.

7 . Make a formula sheet. Depending on the subject, having a sheet with short-

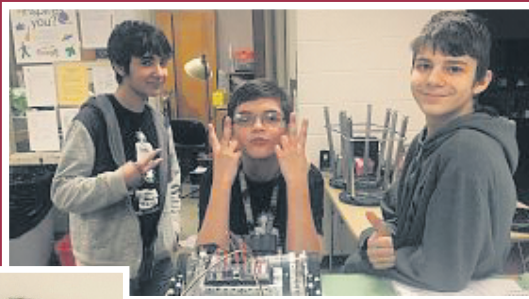
cuts, formulas or diagrams can put the material into smaller bursts of information that are easier to digest. Along this same vein, writing information down can help improve recall.

These are a few study tips that high schoolers can utilize to improve their grades so they can be more successful in school.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



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IN THE CLASSROOM

How the arts benefit academic performance

The cost of products and services continues to rise and organizations everywhere have increasingly been feeling the pressure to reevaluate budgets. It's no different in school districts nationwide, with school boards making difficult decisions about which programs to keep and which will have to go in order to save money.

Music and arts programs often are the first to be cut when school budgets are tightened. The organization Save the Music says that, during the Great Recession in 2008 and 2009, per-pupil spending in public schools decreased by approximately 7% across the country. This led to a trickle-down effect that resulted in the cancellation of art and music programs. Since then, many districts have continued to cut arts programs due to budget limitations. COVID-19 also did little to help the situation.

Art program cutbacks are rarely met with open arms, and that resistance has a lot to do with the positive effects such offerings have on students' academic performance.

Better test performance

Numerous studies have found a correlation between early introduction to music education and a number of benefits for children. Music education can help develop communication skills, brain plasticity, language, and motor skills. A study conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles used a database of more than 25,000 middle and high school students. The researchers found that students involved in arts performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with lower arts involvement. Furthermore, data from 2015 from The College Board, which produces the SAT, found students who took four years of arts and music classes while in high school scored an average of 92 points higher on their SATs than students who only took one-half year or less.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Music and arts education are important to students' development.

Improved emotional states

In addition to better performance on tests, a review in *Frontiers in Psychology* examined several studies linking arts and aesthetic experiences with "broad improvements" in people's emotional states. Those improvements included greater psychological and physical well-being.

Community involvement

Participation and even appreciation of the arts can have an impact as well. Researchers from the Department of Public Administration at the University of Illinois Chicago found that being an art curator or

audience member leads to high levels of civic engagement and social tolerance.

The support and therapy company Evolve Treatment Centers reports that involvement in music and arts leads to overall higher GPAs, higher scores in math and reading and a reduced risk of behavioral problems and suspensions.

Music and arts education are important to students' development. Keeping these programs alive in schools can benefit students in many ways.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



Art program cutbacks are rarely met with open arms, and that resistance has a lot to do with the positive effects such offerings have on students' academic performance.

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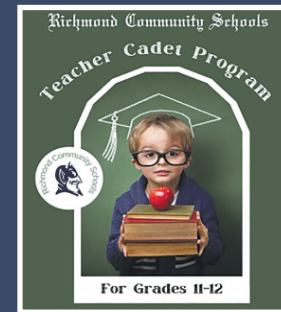
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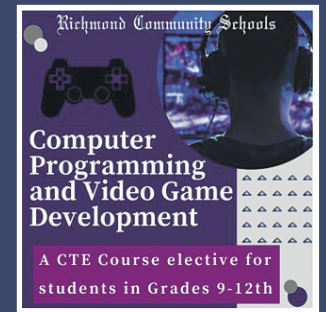
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PARENTING

At-home strategies that can improve reading comprehension

Strong reading comprehension skills are one of the foundations of a successful academic career. According to the Institute of Reading Development, students with strong reading comprehension skills get a big boost in all subjects, including math and science.

Though the benefits of reading comprehension are well documented, many students are struggling in this area of their academics. Officials with the National Center for Education Statistics note that, over the last decade, students have made no progress in reading performance. That likely comes as no surprise to seasoned educators, as data indicates students are reading less outside of school than they have in

years past. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress indicates the percentage of public school students who said they read 30 minutes or more a day declined by 4% between 2017 and 2019, dipping below 50% overall in the latter year.

There's likely a multitude of reasons why students now read less than they used to.

Parents concerned about their children's reading comprehension can try these strategies to bolster this highly valuable skill.

- Let kids read what they like. The tutoring professionals at Oxford Learning report that 73% of students indicate they would read more if they found books they liked. Parents can address this issue by taking



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Strong reading comprehension skills can help students reach their academic potential.

children to their local libraries and letting them choose which books to check out. The more practice kids get with reading,

the more their comprehension skills develop.

- Read aloud to children. Various studies have found that reading aloud to chil-

dren significantly benefits literacy development. One study from the National Association for the Education of Young Children found that listening to others read helps children develop key understanding and skills, including how stories are written. In addition, the Reading Rockets project, which aspires to bring reading research to life in the hopes of helping young children develop into strong, confident readers, notes that children can listen on a higher language level than they can read. That makes complex ideas more accessible.

- Ask questions when reading to children. When reading to children, parents can compound the benefits of this activity by asking youngsters ques-

tions about the book. Asking what, when, where, why, and how can encourage children to look for answers to these questions while they're being read to. As students advance and then read more on their own, parents can encourage them to ask these questions of themselves (if they're not already doing so on their own). Asking and answering these questions is a great way to strengthen reading comprehension skills.

Strong reading comprehension skills can help students reach their academic potential. Parents can employ various strategies to help children bolster those skills.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

CAREER PATHWAYS

Career options for people with art degrees

Creative individuals may be compelled to pursue degrees in the arts when enrolling in traditional colleges or universities or specialized schools. Studying the arts can be exciting, and an arts degree makes it possible to pursue an array of professional opportunities.

Students interested in the arts may question their desire to pursue an arts degree. Since technology is now ingrained in daily life, some students may wonder if they can chart a successful career path with a degree that does not fall under the STEM umbrella?

Thankfully, art degrees can prepare students for a wide range of jobs. Here are some career options to explore.

- **Illustrator.** Someone with an arts degree can work in many areas of illustration. This may include fashion illustration, medical illustration, comic book illus-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Art degrees can prepare students for a wide range of jobs.

- **General artist.** An artist works with different media to cre-

ate and sell original works. This may include weaving, glassblowing, painting, or knitting.

- **Production artist.** Production artists produce high-quality print materials, packaging and displays across a variety of industries.

- **Curator.** Curators specialize in particular subjects and work in museums. Curators also may work as educators.

- **Graphic designer.** Graphic designers primarily work in digital artwork for editorial products, company brands and logos and product packaging.

- **Industrial designer.** Industrial designers develop the look of manufactured products, such as cars, toys and home furnishings, among other items.

- **Art director.** Art directors develop the visual style for various items, including magazines, online publications, product packaging, and marketing materials.

Art directors work in conjunction with graphic artists.

- **Art therapist.** Art therapists are mental health professionals who use creative outcomes and tools to help patients deal with a variety of mental and emotional issues.

- **Interior designer.** Artists with an eye for home design will need to take some interior design courses in school, but this can lead to a career making spaces beautiful — both for private and corporate clients.

- **Architect.** Artistic individuals who also are interested in designing buildings and other spaces can pursue careers in architecture. Illustration skills are a valuable asset to have in this field.

Art degrees can open doors in a variety of fulfilling fields.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection



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OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

How to help student athletes navigate social media

Scholastic sports participation benefits student athletes in myriad ways. Competitive sports teaches students how to cope with the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat, while providing firsthand experience that emphasizes the value of working with others in pursuit of a common goal. Student athletes often apply these lessons long after their playing days have ended, benefitting from their experiences in competitive sports throughout their lives.

Athletes of all ages can relate to some of the common experiences of competitive sports. At one point or another, all competitive athletes must learn to handle losing. But modern student athletes have a relatively recent phenomenon to contend with that was not around when their parents played sports: social media. Social media can connect people in ways that were previously unimaginable, but it also poses unique challenges to modern student athletes. Parents and coaches can help student athletes navigate social media so it does not adversely affect their scholastic sports experiences.

- Consider shuttering accounts dur-

ing the season. In recent years, numerous professional athletes have bravely acknowledged their mental health struggles. For example, NBA All-Star Kevin Love has shared tales of his struggles with anxiety and depression. These issues confound many athletes and can be exacerbated by negative comments on social media, particularly after a loss. Student athletes can avoid the negative aspects of social media by avoiding it during the season.

- Emphasize the potential effects of athletes' own comments on social media. It's not just negative thoughts from disgruntled spectators that can make social media a minefield for young athletes. Student athletes' own negative comments can have some lasting and unfortunate effects as well. A 2017 survey from the American Association of Collegiate Registrars found that 11% of respondents indicated they had denied admissions to an applicant based on social media content. Furthermore, an additional 7% acknowledged rescinding offers due to social media content. Fair or unfair, these decisions highlight the very real effects that comments made on social

media can have on young people's futures. Sports often generates highly emotional responses, and parents and coaches can urge student athletes to avoid voicing negative or knee-jerk reactions about opponents, officials or even games they're not involved in via social media. Such commentary could have unforeseen consequences that adversely affect student athletes for years to come.

- Highlight how student athletes can use social media to their benefit. Social media can be a minefield, but it also presents opportunities for student athletes to showcase themselves in a positive light. Parents and coaches can emphasize how student athletes can use social media to show good sportsmanship. Win or lose, urge athletes to praise their teammates and opponents after a big game. Positive commentary on social media can be just as beneficial to student athletes as negative commentary can be harmful. Student athletes who showcase their maturity and sportsmanship on social media can improve their standing among college coaches and admissions officers.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Parents and coaches can help student athletes navigate social media so it does not adversely affect their scholastic sports experiences.

Student athletes who learn to successfully navigate social media can reap the rewards of those efforts for years to come.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

LEARNING

Answering questions about dyslexia

Learning disabilities affect millions of people across the globe each year. Though learning disabilities are often discussed in ways that highlight how they affect students' performance in the classroom, the International Dyslexia Association notes that the effects of a learning disability like dyslexia can reach well beyond the classroom.

According to the non-profit organization LD Resources Foundation, Inc., which is dedicated to helping individuals affected by learning disabilities, dyslexia is the most common learning disability. Answering some common questions about dyslexia can help people affected by it, including adults, get the help they need to overcome it.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Answering some common questions about dyslexia can help people affected by it, including adults, get the help they need to overcome it.

What is dyslexia?

The IDA defines dyslexia as a language-based learning disability that causes people to have difficul-

ties with specific language skills, particularly reading. Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties with oral and written language skills, including the writ-

ing and pronunciation of words.

What causes dyslexia?

The IDA reports that studies of brain images as well as the anatomy of the brain have indicated that there is a difference in the way the brain of a person with dyslexia develops and functions.

What are some symptoms of dyslexia?

The LDRF indicates that individuals with dyslexia may find it difficult and overwhelming to read, write and speak. The Mayo Clinic notes that signs of dyslexia may be difficult to recognize before a child en-

ters school, and symptoms vary depending on the age of the individual affected.

Young children affected by dyslexia may learn new words slowly; experience difficulty forming words correctly; have problems remembering or naming letters, numbers and colors; or find it hard to learn nursery rhymes or play rhyming games.

Signs of dyslexia may become more apparent once children enter school. At this point, kids with dyslexia may read well below the expected level for their age; have problems processing or understanding what they hear; find it difficult to find the right word or form answers to questions; have trouble seeing similarities and differences in letters and words; and have difficulty spelling, among other symptoms.

Difficulty reading; problems spelling; avoiding activities that involve read-

ing; requiring an unusually long time to complete tasks that involved reading or writing; and mispronouncing names or words are some of the symptoms of dyslexia in teens and adults.

Can dyslexia be cured?

The Mayo Clinic notes that there is no known way to correct the underlying brain abnormality that causes dyslexia. However, various techniques have made it easier for individuals with dyslexia to do well in school and in the professional arena.

Learning disabilities like dyslexia can affect individuals throughout their lives. But early detection and treatment can help students and adults overcome the challenges of dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Tips to help kids learn a foreign language

Bilingualism benefits children in myriad ways. For example, a 2014 study published in the *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* found that bilingual children have a higher vocabulary range than monolingual kids. In addition, a 2010 review published in the *Review of Educational Research* found that bilingual students typically have stronger working memories and attention spans than their monolingual counterparts.

The benefits of bilingualism are undeniable, but learning a foreign language can be challenging. However, that challenge could be less significant for youngsters. Though there are different theories regarding why children seem to learn lan-

guages more readily than adults, Dr. Eleonore Smalle of Tilburg University in the Netherlands indicates that adults tend to translate from their first language when trying to learn a new language. In an interview with the United Nations in Western Europe, Dr. Smalle said that adults' attempts to adopt language rules they already know results in a "less stable consolidation of the new language into memory." Children, on the other hand, unconsciously implement the new language rules and even use newly acquired words in everyday life. That, Dr. Smalle says, benefits long-term memory consolidation.

It's important to note that researchers, including Dr. Smalle, feel that chil-

dren may find it easier to learn a foreign language up to adolescence, at which time their conscious memory begins to develop more strongly. So parents who want to help their children learn a foreign language have a relatively long window of time to get that ball rolling before kids could find it more challenging. Parents also can try some additional strategies to help kids learn a foreign language.

- Bring lessons home from the classroom. Children learning a foreign language in school or via a private tutor can be encouraged to bring those lessons home and continue to develop those skills in a fun way. Play games in a foreign language at home on family game night. Young chil-

dren just beginning foreign language lessons can be encouraged to count to 10 when playing hide-and-seek at home.

- Shop for groceries in a foreign language. When grocery shopping with children in tow, parents can point to foods around the store and ask kids to say each item in the foreign language they're learning. Make a list before going to the store and reward kids who name all of the items on the list with a special treat at checkout.

- Read books in the language the child is learning. This could be tricky if parents are not bilingual. However, in that scenario, reading books to children in a foreign language provides a great way to reverse roles and let children teach their



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Parents can try various strategies to help kids learn a foreign language.

parents everything they've learned from their teachers or tutors. Keep stories simple and even seek recommendations from teachers or tutors.

The benefits of bilingualism are significant. Par-

ents can try various strategies to ensure foreign language lessons learned in the classroom are reinforced at home.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

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OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Sportsmanship principles all young athletes should know

Competitive sports have a lot to offer young people. In addition to exposing children to the thrill of competition, competitive sports can set a foundation for a lifetime of healthy living. One study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine in 2014 found that afterschool physical activity programs were the most effective strategy to reduce childhood obesity among children between the ages of six and 12.

Competitive sports also teaches valuable lessons about humility and respect. Sportsmanship is a vital and valuable component of competitive sports, and that's a lesson no athlete is too young to learn. Coaches and parents can work together to emphasize these principles of sportsmanship to young athletes.

▪ Always respect officials. In the era of instant replay in professional sports, criticism of officials has become more common. Such criticism can easily move from the professional to the amateur arena if players are not taught to always respect the officials. Unfortunately, many amateur sports officials continue to be the victims of over-aggressive behavior on the parts of coaches, parents and athletes, and many have simply chosen to walk away rather than subject themselves to abuse. Estimates from the National Association of Sports Officials indicates that the group's membership has dropped by more than 20 percent since March 2020. Coaches and parents can practice what they preach when teaching young athletes to respect officials at



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Coaches and parents can work together to emphasize these principles of sportsmanship to young athletes.

all times, regardless of how games unfold on the playing field.

▪ Respect the rules. Respect for officials should co-exist with respect for the game itself. Every game has rules, and knowing and adhering to those rules is a vital component of good sportsmanship. Coaches and parents can set the tone for this by encouraging kids to play by the rules during the games, but also by adhering to rules governing practice times and off-season workouts when no one is watching too closely.

▪ Respect opponents. Showing respect for opponents is another principle of good sportsmanship. Social media provides a readily available platform for athletes to disparage their opponents before and after games. Such platforms have even proven too tempting to resist for some professional athletes. But showing respect for opponents, even in defeat, illustrates to parents and coaches that young athletes are mature and cognizant of the fact that participation in sports requires

good sportsmanship.

▪ Respect coaches. Good sportsmanship also involves respecting coaches, even when they make decisions players and their parents do not necessarily agree with. That respect has been dwindling in recent years, and it's contributing to a coaching shortage in youth sports. One survey of more than 200 coaches in the Syracuse, N.Y., area found that nearly 60 percent of coaches had considered quitting over conflicts with parents. Many coaches volunteer their time to teach young people the game, and players should be taught to respect coaches at all times. That includes those times when players feel like they aren't getting enough playing time or when they disagree with coaches' in-game decisions.

Sportsmanship is a vital component of sports participation. Teaching young athletes the principles of sportsmanship adds one more unique benefit to sports participation.

Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection

PARENTING

Tips to encourage creativity in your tween

The tween years can be incredibly tough to navigate. Between trying to figure out their passions, building friendships and keeping up with the demands of school, many self-discoveries happen. Research suggests that it takes time and exploration for tweens to find their identity and discover their passions, but that can be confusing and come with a lot of pressure.

Help your tween explore their creative pursuits by giving them outlets and the support to try, fail, learn and discover. With kids headed back to school, your family's schedule can easily start to feel hectic. Being purposeful about integrating moments of creativity can help your tween discover what gets them excited, even in the little pockets of time you have with them.

Below are a few tips to help encourage your tween to think and act creatively this school year.

Make the kitchen into a screen-free zone

Every parent knows their kids' first stop as soon as they get home from school will be the kitchen. Why not make yours a screen-free zone? That way, when your kids grab a snack, there's greater room for open-minded thoughts, free of distraction. To remind and encourage your children, have a basket near the entrance to the kitchen where everyone can put their phones and other devices.

Be their confidence coach

Role model the self-talk you want to see in your tween. Normalize mistakes and help them to overcome the fear of failure by instilling confidence-building mantras (even if they don't realize they're mantras) like "you can do hard

things" into your everyday language. Share the challenges of your day and how you managed them, demonstrating how overcoming small and big tests is something we all can do.

Encourage inventiveness in the kitchen

Stock your fridge with grab-and-go snacks that can mix and match with anything. Frigo Cheese Heads string cheese is the perfect canvas to pair with deli meat, fruits, nuts, spreads/sauces, pickles, pretzels, crackers and more.

Tween years are typically when children become more curious and comfortable trying new things. Take advantage of this curiosity by trying new flavors and finding favorites together to help create common interests and encourage creativity in and outside the kitchen.

Give them a 'yes day'

Like the notable movie, carve out a day where your tween gets to dictate which creative-focused activities you do. A water balloon fight in the winter, a trip to a theme park, a concert that starts at 10 p.m. — it's all fair game and can help open their world to new possibilities for their future.

Let them answer first

If a problem arises that affects both of you, give your child the chance to weigh in first with a potential solution. Got turned around on a hike? Let them think through the best way out. Rip in their favorite jeans? Let them brainstorm creative fixes or research how to sew them.

Create challenges that get them thinking

Fuel their creativity by putting them up to unex-

pected challenges with a time limit: Create a unique creature out of folding a piece of paper, see who can get through a scooter course the fastest or make up the silliest new lyrics to a favorite song. Use everyday moments like a snack in the car to double as creative inspiration. Challenge your tween to create a one-of-a-kind Cheese Heads character while they devour their string cheese on the way to practice.

Let them take a few risks

Allow your tweens the space to take moderate risks that get them out of their comfort zone. Let them sign up for an activity they've not yet tried, just to give it a shot. Show trust in their judgment by saying "yes" to things you wouldn't have when they were younger, like snowboarding or going to the park with friends alone. Encouraging independent thinking in small ways helps build confidence and allows space for creative thinking.

Give their room a decor update

As your tween edges closer to their teen years, an upgrade to their room's style may be in order as they transition from more adolescent colors and interests into more mature preferences. Let them dictate the style and work together to paint, curate and organize.

Lastly, sometimes the best thing you can do is to let them have space and time to figure out what they enjoy the most, what makes them happy and where their passions lie. If you foster an environment of open dialogue, they'll share some updates when they're ready.

Story courtesy of Brandpoint



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COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS

New study finds key insights into how college is changing

As a new academic school term begins for colleges and universities nationwide, many students and faculty are thinking about how to respond to the changes caused by the pandemic as they settle into their first true “post-pandemic” school year.

Research from Barnes and Noble Education (BNED) reveals insights into how education institutions are adapting. The study called “College 2030 — Emerging from the Pandemic: Reimagining Higher Education,” explores changes and visions for the future of higher education by surveying over 2,500 U.S. students, faculty and administrators regarding five areas: the value of higher education, career preparedness, student loans, mental health, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

“This study provides a snapshot of higher education at an inflection point,” said BNED CEO Michael Huseby. “These insights are not only indicative of how higher education is evolving, but can help educational institutions respond more effectively as they set goals for the future.”

Here are five key takeaways from the report, and what higher education institutions can learn from them.

1. The value of higher education

Rising tuition costs and student loan debt have made many question the value of higher education, however, one-third of the students surveyed (33%) said the value of college has actually increased. The majority of students seeing increased value were community college students, graduate or professional students and students 25 years or older. One reason can be attributed to class format, which has pivoted in response to the pandemic. Nearly half the students (49%) said they preferred a hybrid format, while more than half of faculty (54%) favored a fully in-person environment. This difference poses a challenge for institutions.

“Over the next decade, institutions need to continue listening to students by creating personalized learning experiences based on their needs,” said Huseby. “This can be achieved by giving students choices between a variety of class types — in-person, remote and hybrid.”

Hybrid/online learning can provide better access and equity for students of all ages and backgrounds. To further help students have equitable access, Barnes & Noble College (BNC) has created First Day Complete, a program providing all required course materials (digital and physical) to all students before the first day of class, bundling costs as part of their tuition.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRANDPOINT

Research from Barnes and Noble Education reveals insights into how education institutions are adapting.

2. Career preparedness

The perceived value of higher education is strongly connected to career preparation. When asked, 73% of students said they feel prepared for the industry/field they’re pursuing. However, students also wanted more school support with networking (46%), resume help (43%) and mentors (38%).

“Institutions need to better connect students with the business community,” advised Huseby. “They can do that by building strong networking opportunities with businesses, assessing employers’ requirements and tailoring curriculum to develop a clear path between college and career.”

3. The state of student loans

While tuition rates remained steady during the pandemic, rising inflation and the end of federal stimulus funding will likely increase costs, impacting students’ ability to pay. According to the survey, just under half of students (47%) had student loans, and of that half, 53% were forced to apply for additional loans due to the pandemic.

4. Supporting mental health

Many institutions saw spikes in student mental health concerns throughout the pandemic. While over half of students (53%) and faculty (58%) say mental health has improved since returning to campus, 28% of students and 21% of faculty noted that mental health has declined, indicating that the transition itself caused challenges, including a lack of preparation to be back in person.

While on-campus mental health support continues to be crucial, a majority of students and faculty are not using available mental health resources. And although 81% of students and 92% of faculty indicated they knew their school offered mental health resources, only 20% said they have used them.

5. Fostering diversity, equity and inclusion

Schools could benefit from proactively seeking feedback from students and fac-

ulty on DEI efforts, and by educating everyone on DEI issues. Only 35% of students indicated they had been asked for feedback on DEI efforts, while 58% of faculty indicated they had been asked for input.

“Through the next decade, it will be crucial to ensure schools are not just asking for faculty feedback, but are also listening to their students,” said Huseby. “Ensuring student needs are met helps build an inclusive campus that provides mental health support, plus the financial, career and life services students need to succeed.”

As in many aspects of life, the past two and half years have forever changed higher education — and it will continue to change over the next decade. Institutions need to understand the needs of their students and ensure that they are providing them with what they need to continue to succeed in school and beyond.

To read the full report, visit [BNCollege.com/insight/report/college2030](https://www.bncollege.com/insight/report/college2030).

Story courtesy of Brandpoint

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