



# Planning for Success

## From the Superintendent

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we approach the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester, it is a good time to re-energize oneself in preparing your child to finish out of the academic year.

Below are some ideas that could assist you in keeping the momentum of the academic year moving forward:

### 1. Parent-Teacher Conferences and End of Year Meetings with Teachers

Students do better in school when parents are involved in their academic lives.

Attending [parent-teacher conferences](#) is another way to stay informed. These are usually held once or twice a year at progress reporting periods. The conferences are a chance to start or continue conversations with your child's teacher and discuss strategies to help your child do his or her best in class. Meeting with the teacher also lets your child know that what goes on in school will be shared at home.

If your child has special learning needs, additional meetings can be scheduled with teachers and other school staff to consider setting up or revising [individualized education plans \(IEPs\)](#), [504 education plans](#), or [gifted education plans](#).

Keep in mind that parents or guardians can request meetings with teachers, principals, school counselors, or other school staff any time during the school year.

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## From the Superintendent (Continued)

### **2. Visit the Academy/Parish School and Its Website**

Knowing the physical layout of the school building and grounds can help you connect with your child when you talk about the school day. It's good to know the location of the main office, school nurse, cafeteria, gym, playgrounds, auditorium, and special classes.

On the Academy/Parish School website, you can find information about:

- the school calendar
- staff contact information
- upcoming events like class trips
- testing dates

Many teachers maintain their own websites that detail homework assignments, test dates, and classroom events and trips. Special resources for parents and students are also usually available on the district, school, or teacher websites.

### **3. Continue to Support Homework Expectations**

[Homework in grade school](#) reinforces and extends classroom learning and helps kids practice important study skills. It also helps them develop a sense of responsibility and a work ethic that will benefit them beyond the classroom.

In addition to making sure your child knows that you see homework as a priority, you can help by creating an effective study environment. Any well-lit, comfortable, and quiet workspace with the necessary supplies will do. Avoiding distractions (like a TV in the background) and setting up a start and end time can also help.

While your child does homework, be available to interpret assignment instructions, offer guidance, answer questions, and review the completed work. But resist the urge to provide the correct answers or complete the assignments yourself. Learning from mistakes is part of the process and you don't want to take this away from your child.

#### 4. Send Your Child to School Ready to Learn

A [nutritious breakfast](#) fuels up students and gets them ready for the day. In general, kids who eat breakfast have more energy and do better in school. Students who eat breakfast also are less likely to be absent and make fewer trips to the school nurse with stomach complaints related to hunger.

You can help boost your child's attention span, concentration, and memory by providing breakfast foods that are rich in whole grains, fiber, and protein, as well as low in added sugar. If your child is running late some mornings, send along fresh fruit, nuts, yogurt, or half a peanut butter and banana sandwich.

Students also need [the right amount of sleep](#) to be alert and ready to learn all day. Most school-age students need 10 to 12 hours of sleep a night. Bedtime difficulties can arise at this age for a variety of reasons. Homework, sports, after-school activities, TVs, computers, and video games, as well as hectic family schedules, can contribute to kids not getting enough sleep.

Lack of sleep can cause irritable or hyperactive behavior and might make it hard for students to pay attention in class. It's important to have a consistent bedtime routine, especially on school nights. Be sure to leave enough time before bed to allow your child to unwind before lights out and limit stimulating diversions like [TV, video games, and Internet access](#)

#### 5. Review with Your Child Organizational Skills

When students are organized, they can stay focused instead of spending time hunting things down and getting sidetracked.

What does it mean to be [organized at the elementary level](#)? For schoolwork, it means having an assignment book and homework folder to keep track of homework and projects.

Check your child's assignment book and homework folder every school night so you're familiar with assignments and your child doesn't fall behind. Set up a bin for papers that you need to check or sign. Also, keep a special box or bin for completed and graded projects and toss papers that you don't need to keep.

Talk to your child about keeping his or her school desk orderly so papers that need to come home don't get lost. Teach your child how to use a calendar or personal planner to help stay organized.

It's also helpful to teach your child how to make a to-do list to help prioritize and get things done. It can be as simple as:

- *homework*
- *soccer*
- *put clothes away*

No one is born with great organizational skills — they need to be learned and practiced.

## 6. Review with your Child Study Skills

Studying for a test can be scary for young students, and many educators assume parents will help their children during the grade-school years. Introducing your child to study skills now will pay off with good learning habits throughout life.

Teach your child how to break down overall tasks into smaller, manageable chunks so preparing for a test isn't overwhelming. You also can introduce your child to tricks like mnemonic devices to help with recalling information. Remember that taking a break after a 45-minute study period is an important way to help kids process and remember information.

In general, if studying and testing becomes a source of [stress](#) for your child, discuss the situation with the teacher.

## 7. Review the Disciplinary Policies with Your Child

Schools usually cite their disciplinary policies (sometimes called the student code of conduct) in student handbooks. The rules cover expectations, and consequences for not meeting the expectations, for things like student behavior, dress codes, use of electronic devices, and acceptable language.

The policies may include details about attendance, vandalism, cheating, fighting, and weapons. Many schools also have specific policies about [bullying](#). It's helpful to know the school's definition of bullying, consequences for bullies, support for victims, and procedures for reporting bullying.

It's important for your child to know what's expected at school and that you'll support the school's consequences when expectations aren't met. It's easiest for students when school expectations match the ones at home, so kids see both environments as safe and caring places that work together as a team.

## 8. Continue to Stay Involved

Whether students are just starting kindergarten or entering their last year of elementary school, there are many [good reasons for parents to volunteer at school](#). It's a great way for parents to show they're interested in their kids' education.

Many grade-schoolers like to see their parents at school or at school events. But follow your child's cues to find out how much interaction works for both of you. If your child seems uncomfortable with your presence at the school or with your involvement in an extracurricular activity, consider taking a more behind-the-scenes approach. Make it clear

Check the Academy/Parish School or teacher website to find volunteer opportunities that fit your schedule. Even giving a few hours during the school year can make a strong impression on your child.

## 9. Take Attendance Seriously

[Sick students should stay home from school](#) if they have a fever, are nauseated, vomiting, or have diarrhea. Kids who lose their appetite, are clingy or lethargic, complain of pain, or who just don't seem to be acting "themselves" should also might benefit from a sick day.

Otherwise, it's important that students arrive at school on time every day, because having to catch up with class work and homework can be stressful and interfere with learning.

If your child is [missing a lot of school due to illness](#), make sure to check with the teacher about any work that needs to be completed. It's also a good idea to know the school's attendance policy.

Sometimes students want to stay home from school because of problems with classmates, assignments or grades, or even teachers. This can result in real symptoms, like headaches or stomachaches. If you think there's a problem at school, talk with your child — and then perhaps with the teacher — to find out more about what's causing the anxiety. The school counselor or school psychologist also might be able to help.

Also try to avoid late bedtimes, which can result in tardy and tired students. A consistent sleep schedule also can help students.

## 10. Make Time to Talk About School

It's usually easy to talk with elementary students about what's going on in class and the latest news at school. You probably know what books your child is reading and are familiar with the math being worked on. But parents can get busy and forget to ask the simple questions, which can influence children's success at school.

[Make time to talk with your child every day](#), so he or she knows that what goes on at school is important to you. When kids know parents are interested in their academic lives, they'll take school seriously as well.

Because communication is a two-way street, the way you talk and listen to your child can influence how well your child listens and responds. It's important to listen carefully, make eye contact, and avoid multitasking while you talk. Be sure to ask questions that go beyond "yes" or "no" answers.

Besides during family meals, good times to talk include car trips (though eye contact isn't needed here, of course.), walking the dog, preparing meals, or standing in line at a store.

These early years of schooling are an important time for parents to be informed and supportive about their child's education and to set the stage for children to develop and grow as young learners.

Best wishes for a successful ending to the Academic Year for you and your children.

Sincerely,

Thomas Chadzutko, Ed.D.

Superintendent~Catholic School Support Services

For this **Parent Newsletter** segment, the focus is on **Math** and the new standards. You can find those on the New York State website: <http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-mathematics-learning-standards>

Some things to notice about the website as you review the **Next Generation Math Standards** are the **Mathematics Learning Standards Crosswalks**, the **Preface and Glossary Documents** and **The Revised Learning Standards Documents**. The crosswalks link will show teachers (and you) how the standards have changed. If you are interested in seeing this information, here is the link. <http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/teachers/next-generation-mathematics-learning-standards-crosswalks>

### **SOME THINGS THAT ARE NEW**

In 2015, New York State (NYS) began a process of review and revision of its current Math standards adopted in January 2011. **The New York State Next Generation Math Learning Standards** (Revised 2017) were developed by educators across the state. The New York State Common Core standards in Math are being phased out and their replacement is called the Next Generation Math standards. This is a year of discovery, and these are not being implemented until the 2020 school year. There are a few differences in what we will teach, but not that many. Some standards have been deleted or have been moved to other years based on feedback.

Other changes include: **Provide for Students to Explore Standards**- Exploring a standard allows students to be introduced to and learn a concept without the expectation of mastering the concept at that grade level. **Exploring the Topic** recognizes the importance of building a foundation toward mastering the concept in subsequent grades. For instance, in Kindergarten, students explore coins and will learn more about them and about place value in later years. **Clarification of Standards**- some of the standards as written in the common core were confusing. The language of the new standards is clearer. **Add and Consolidate Standards**- they pulled some apart and they put some shorter standards together to help them to be more understandable. **Maintain the Rigor of the Standards**- the new standards are written to allow students to grow in math knowledge without watering them down. They **Created a Glossary of Verbs**- to help all to understand exactly what the standard is asking a student to know and to be able to do.

The new standards will not be assessed until 2021. So, we have time to provide professional development and to prepare the curriculum in our schools and academies.

A great tool for you to see the alignment of the standards from one grade to the next or to a previous grade is found here: <https://achievethecore.org/coherence-map/> This will also help teachers with differentiation, and if a child is having a problem with a grade level standard, it will help to know what standard came before it. Some great sites to help with Math:

[https://illuminations.nctm.org/uploadedFiles/Activities\\_Home/FamilyGuide\\_FullText.pdf](https://illuminations.nctm.org/uploadedFiles/Activities_Home/FamilyGuide_FullText.pdf)

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/learning-toolkit-blog/parent-resources-for-helping-with-math-homework.html>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/kids-activities-and-printables/activities-and-printables-guides/math-printables-for-all-ages.html>

<https://www.parenttoolkit.com/additional-resources/academic-resources>

<https://www.sumdog.com/>

<https://momath.org/>

Have Fun With Math!



## **Internet Safety Tips: Parental Controls and Interaction Monitoring**

I've been working in information technology since before the time of social media. When I began working in education, MySpace was big and Facebook was emerging. As a technology teacher, I made a concerted effort to make my students aware of the potential dangers in using social media and putting your life on the Internet. Today many of the same issues exist, but we also have the experience of using social media over the past decade to help us inform, guide and protect our children from potentially harmful behavior that could affect them for a long time to come.

### **Parental Controls**

First and foremost, making sure that you are aware of what they are doing while using the Internet is an invaluable practice. Keeping Internet connected devices in common areas that allow you to physically see them is one way of keeping an eye on them. I guess you could call that the most direct version of parental controls you can have. Realistically though, we know that it's not always possible to monitor what they're doing 24/7. That is where parental controls on their device come into play. One example of this would be a setting that we use on iPads in the schools called guided access. Once enabled, guided access can be turned on with three presses of the home button on an iPad or iPhone. When activated, the device will be "locked" to the currently active application. In order to exit the app, a pass code must be entered to deactivate guided access. So if you want to make sure that your child does not have access to other apps while watching videos on the Disney app, guided access gives you that option. You can also set things like screen time limits, restrictions on downloading apps, and restrict specific apps on iOS devices. Google and the Android devices have similar controls that can be enabled to do the same thing. Videogame systems such as the Xbox and PlayStation offer parental controls as well. Those controls can be configured to only allow access to games and apps you feel are appropriate. This can be done by specifically disallowing certain content, or even based on the rating of the content. For example, you could set the limits so that your child can only play games that are rated T for Teen and below. This would stop them from playing games rated MA (mature) without any further intervention on your part. Rating limitations for video content on those devices can also be set in the same way. You can even set these types of parental controls on your child's computer account. A quick Google search or search in Windows or Mac OSX settings will point you in the direction you need for your situation.

### **Internet Content and Interactions**

As much as parental controls and monitoring their usage can help, the truth is there is way more content available than any one person can police. Every time a student does a search, there is the risk that objectionable content may be shown. Safe search filters within the web browser's settings can help to defend against unwanted content. Educating the children can greatly decrease the dangers as well. Warn them about the dangers of online interactions with people that they don't know. Make sure that they understand that they have no way of knowing that a person is who they say they are online. Also, make sure you let them know that they can and should tell you about any questionable content or people they encounter. Let them know that if someone tells them to do something, or someone sends them one of those "Internet challenges", they should not take part and tell you about it. Remind your children that their actions, both digital and in the real world, have consequences. Creating or sharing potentially harmful content online can land them in a very bad situation, and they should be made aware of this. Depending on the severity, there could be school related or even legal ramifications to their actions. As I had mentioned in my last article, the "infinite of the internet" could possibly cause what seems like a joke to turn into a lawsuit that follows them for a long time. Make sure that they understand that what they put out into the world is not always easily removed. When they send a SnapChat, they may believe that when it expires, it is gone forever. This is not so considering that anyone else involved could screenshot, share and send that message to countless others. Be sure that your children are aware of the possible consequences; that knowledge could be the difference between a good choice and a bad one.

Michael Greiner

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**Continuing Critical Importance of Parental Involvement in the Children's Elementary,  
Middle / Junior High and High Schools  
And  
The Increasing Challenges of Mounting Encumbrances  
[PART ONE]**

**By**

**Irnel L. Stephen, MSW, MPA, LCSW-R  
Chairman Emeritus, Rosedale Civic Association**

Changing times always bring about changing needs, and consequently neighborhoods undergo periodic demographic changes. These planned and unexpected developments in our evolving society also cause both wanted adjustments or forced accommodations, while new concepts are formulated in order to address effectively the "**eternal**" fundamental necessity of raising and educating children.

In my generation, the generations before and immediately after, there was the saying "**Parents are the first teachers**". Generally the few exceptions included the very wealthy and some of the power-couples in business, commerce, entertainment and politics who had space in their mansions for "governesses" or "au pair" (young adults from western Europe and few Caribbean nations) to raise their children, or who preferred the alternative course of having their children raised away from home, by others in expensive Boarding Schools.

In 2019 "**Parents are the first teachers**" is no longer a "**truism**". When this once commonly used saying is mentioned, one must quickly add new necessary complementary caveats since in the 2010's **parents** -whether biological, foster, adoptive, and parenting figures involving relatives, family friends etc.-- **have less and lesser amounts of "daytime" encounters with their children within the clearly delineated formative period from birth to 6 years of age.**

Currently children are placed in licensed and arranged non-licensed daycare programs, in certified structured early childhood centers **as early as 20 days after birth**; and now Monday through Friday constitutes only the **core** operating days, since there is an increasing number of Daycare Centers and Early Childhood programs operating on Saturdays, with few also beginning to offer limited services on Sundays in order to assist some parents scheduled to work on weekend without any readily available intra-family help.

Additionally, to accommodate parents having to commute to and from work, most Daycare Programs, Early Childhood Centers, Kindergarten and Elementary Schools have "**early drop off**" starting at 5:30 a.m. and "**late pick-up**" going up to 7:00 p.m., with many infants and toddlers enrolled in both.

**From the Elementary School level, there are observations that parental involvement has been decreasing about the very important areas of school programming, curriculum, operations and management.**

**(continued on page 10)**

Most parents invoke non-availability of enough time as they talk about the numerous duties at home and the mandatory job responsibilities in the workplace. Indeed, in addition to the marked reduction of "**daytime interactive bonding contacts**" with their infant and toddler children, today's parents have to deal with multiple other types and varied forms of encumbrances that their parents did not experience, particularly in situations of two or more children attending different schools.

With the rapid pace of technological advances, there is inherent urgency of educating today's children for the jobs of the future. The children need the necessarily essential skills so that as adults they can be adequately prepared to be productive citizens. The children have to learn with emphasis to understand fully the studied "materials" in order to apply/ use all the related concepts effectively and efficiently.

**Encouragement and active support from parents or parental figures have significant positive impact. Consequently parental involvement in Elementary, Middle / Junior High and High Schools continues to be extremely important, albeit quite necessary in many cases.**

Can one have **enough** useful functioning roles or possible instances of positive interventions by SCHOOL PRINCIPAL(S), SCHOOL OR ACADEMY BOARDS OF DIRECTORS, THE LOCAL CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS, CHURCH / SYNAGOGUE / TEMPLE SOCIAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS to assist parents (willing or reluctant) towards meaningful parental involvement?

In the context of this article I refer to "**parental involvement**" in relation to the parents, and "**parental engagement**" in regard to the activities of all individuals or groups working with the parents to become involved or more involved.

**Situations of effectiveness and /or counter productiveness of "engagement efforts" will be thoroughly analyzed in Part Two (II) :** what has already worked or what can be tried at the Elementary School level or in the Junior High or High School levels. Your interactive participation is appreciated. Therefore please feel free to forward your comments, suggestions, documented facts or anecdotes.

*TO BE CONTINUED*

*Irnel L. Stephen*

## **The Engaged Parent**

Brother Ralph Darmento, F.S.C.  
Deputy Superintendent

As we prepare for the feast of the Resurrection, many of our parents are busy with Spring cleaning, caring for the family, attending to their jobs, and, of course, accompanying their children through the daily surprises and routines that school offers.

By the time you read this Newsletter, you will have had the opportunity to review your child's second trimester report card and share appropriate congratulatory and/or encouraging sentiments to advance toward the challenges of the third trimester. If you have any concerns about your child's progress feel free to contact the appropriate teacher to discuss the situation.

In addition to working with your child at home research suggests that parents who are both interested and have the time might volunteer in the academy/parish school. The Home Academy Association (HAA) seeks the participation of parents who wish to share their talents in organizing events and fund raisers, serving as lunch duty proctors, gathering for discussion groups on raising children in today's media saturated world as well as considering service to the academy/parish school through engagement on a Board committee (development, facilities, marketing, school life). The children of parents engaged in school activities have often been found to achieve higher levels of proficiency and mastery in their studies.

To learn how to become involved in academy/parish school activities contact the principal or HAA leader.

## **Reflection Opportunity**

Have you attended and/or participated in any of the following activities/events?

- Parent Meetings
- Home Academy/Parish School Association
- Board Committees
- Fund-raising activities
- Class or lunch room proctoring
- Athletic and cultural activities
- Religious formation opportunities



### PDHP Outreach by Cary Anne Fitzgerald, Parent/Community Outreach Coordinator

PDHP attends the Brooklyn Alcoholism & Addictive Services Council which addresses drug, rehabilitation & legal trends along the spectrum of prevention, treatment & recovery. Eric Adams, The Brooklyn Borough President, sends one of his aids so he can keep aware of the best ways he can assist his Brooklynites. The Council has seen success in sponsored Narcan Trainings. We also have presence at The Brooklyn Mental Health & The Brooklyn Children's Mental Health Committees where trends in mental health are shared as well. OASAS & the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene also attend these meetings which run on a monthly basis & provide much access to support, information & referrals needed by agencies of these natures. NYWell has proven to be a helpful resource shared within these councils. Often, Brooklyn Public Library also is in attendance to offer assistance in various & creative ways. Monthly, at staff meetings, the notes from these meetings are shared. Pertinent links are also disseminated through the PDHP Parents Facebook page. It is imperative that Prevention always be part of these conversations so as to provide the best service to our demographic & further address risk & protective factors.



### Parent EBP Group: Guiding Good Choices

By: Cary Anne Fitzgerald

For five weeks, a group of parents from Saint Francis DeSales Catholic Academy met regularly for PDHP's Parenting Curriculum, *Guiding Good Choices*. This is a small, (15 parents maximum), but committed group of parents from grades 4 - 8. Over the weeks, they got to know about each other & their children. They often reviewed their parenting practices and learned about different strategies or methods and gained insight on a great deal of topics pertaining to this age group. In this group, the first two sessions deal with the science behind prevention and a parent's role. From here, there is a great realization that risk in the form of first experience with substance use can occur within the next two years and through a child's friends. The parents work on strategies to assist them in keeping their children healthy and bonded to the family. Refusal Skills are one of these strategies which can be applied in so many scenarios from "friend drama" to peer pressure. They then look at communication skills among family members and practical skills that they can teach their children in the home setting which will be needed as they reach adulthood. Parenting is hard work but being able to find support and community in its practice seems to offer a chance of reflection, empowerment and respite.