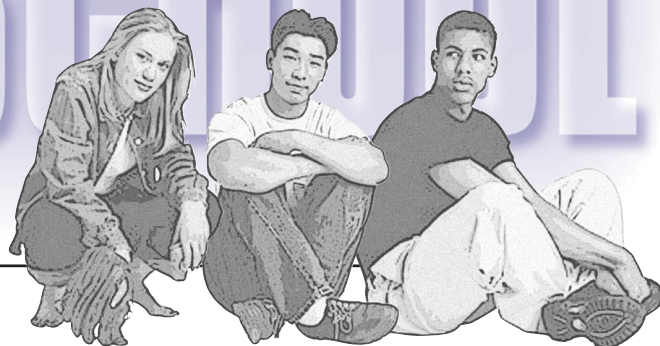


HIGH SCHOOL PARENT



Picturing high school success: Why attendance matters most

Eastman Kodak couldn't find enough skilled workers to make its line of digital cameras, so the upstate New York photography giant recently announced it is sending this production to a manufacturing firm in Singapore—marking the first time in more than a century that the company would completely outsource the labor and manufacture of a product.

Fellow New York manufacturing giants IBM and Xerox, along with other businesses large and small, are also turning to companies overseas where employees are geared for creative design and technical production.

What this trend means for our students

Workers require more academic and technical education than ever before. And employers are looking for their new hires to come to them job-ready. In fact, most of today's jobs—from auto mechanics to Internet Web design—require additional training beyond high school, if not a two-year or four-year college education. Of the 30 fastest-growing occupations in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2006-07 Occupational Outlook Handbook, only three list short-term, on-the-job training as the most significant source of post-secondary education or training.

Attendance is not a school elective

To help better prepare teens for the world of higher education and work, the high school curriculum has become more challenging and varied.

Additionally, the way teens learn is changing so it better reflects the work world they'll soon enter. High school students are being asked to collaborate on long-term projects with their classmates both at school and electronically with their peers in other locations. They are also learning while using many of the same types of technologies (e.g., Powerpoint presentation software and desktop publishing) currently used in the workplace.

This type of learning takes dedication. And, unlike simple memorizations of facts, which can be done just about anywhere, teens need to be at school and on-task each day to get the most from hands-on learning.

Unfortunately, a lot of teens have yet to get this message.

School administrators say that many teens are not making regular attendance a priority. And, unless teens are at school and ready to learn, there's not much that teachers can do to help prepare them for the world they are moving toward.

During the 2006 Union Pacific/Principals' Partnership summer leadership institute, nearly 350 public high school principals were asked, "As the 2006-07 school year begins, what are

the three most important actions a family should take to assure success for its high school student?" School attendance was one of the most important factors in school success that respondents noted.

"Attendance is directly related to successfully completing high school. You can't drop in occasionally and think that you can keep up," said one high school principal. "Families need to get students to school. We'll take responsibility for educating them once they're here," said another.

Helping teens make school their TOP priority

Along with strong reading, writing, mathematics and thinking skills, employers say they value work habits such as attendance, timeliness and dedication. Regular school attendance — especially when they'd rather not make the effort — is one means of teaching teens these all-important life skills.

Even though teens are moving toward young adulthood, parents still have the ability to influence their attitudes and behaviors. Here are some ways you can help instill an ethic for attendance and school performance:

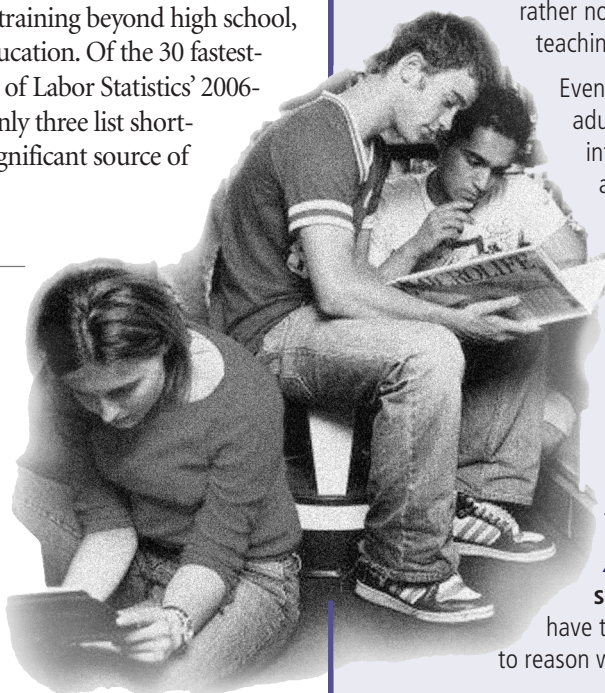
▲ Help teens understand that the attitudes they develop now are the ones they will carry into adulthood and can limit or expand their personal and professional options (e.g., If they repeatedly skip classes in college they'll fail out and waste a lot of your family's money. In a competitive workforce, frequently skipping work can cost them their jobs.)

▲ **Familiarize yourself with the high school attendance policy.** It can help to have the letter of the law on your side when trying to reason with teens.

▲ **Institute a work first/play later policy.** School attendance and schoolwork need to come before friends, extracurriculars and part-time jobs. Sometimes, the real reason teens are reluctant to go to school is that they haven't finished assignments or presentations or prepared well for tests.

▲ **Encourage reasonable bedtimes.** On average, teens need eight to nine hours of sleep to be healthy and alert. As they move into the high school years, teens' brains begin to signal them to stay up later—and to sleep in later the next day. Also the draw of the Internet and online conversations with friends can have teens burning the midnight oil, making early morning wake-ups and school start times difficult.

▲ **Schedule medical and other appointments during non-school hours whenever possible.** Arrange family vacations during school holidays or the summer recess so that students aren't missing important lessons and struggling to make up for lost time.





Good attendance counts!

Understanding the importance of going to school

You have to be in it to win it, the old adage goes. That same philosophy applies to doing well in school and passing important exams. In most cases, the ticket to success for many high school students is simply coming to school on a daily basis.

One recent study showed that students who attend school 93 percent of the time or better scored 85-100 on their exams. Students with a 91 percent attendance rate scored 65-84 on their exams, and students with attendance of 85 percent or less scored 0-54.

There are many reasons why a student might skip school or cut a class – even when penalties are attached. It might be personal, such as a failed relationship with another student or fear of being bullied. Or it might be academic, such as a conflict with a teacher or fear of failing a test.

Whatever it is, parents are encouraged

to ask the principal or guidance counselor for help. The one thing parents can be sure of is that Colonie Central High School teachers and administrators share the desire to make sure students are in school.

In some cases, parents themselves will sanction an illegal absence - e.g., to take a family vacation or to care for a sibling. There are also times when parents allow their children to “take a day off” in the belief that an absence here and there won’t hurt.

Not true. Even the occasional absence increases the risk of missing that one critical class that will make a difference in a student’s grades. And once a student starts to fall behind, it becomes easier to miss more classes, producing a pattern that’s detrimental to success.

Educators stress that good attendance brings better test scores and leads to better learning every day!



CCHS Attendance Review Committee insures students come to school

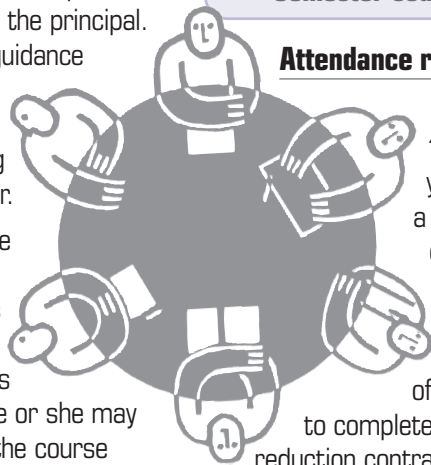
One of the most important responsibilities of any student is regular attendance in school. Colonie Central High School has an Attendance Review Committee that monitors student attendance. The committee evaluates student attendance problems and recommends actions to the principal. These actions may include guidance counseling, referral to outside agencies, filing P.I.N.S. petitions or involving the school attendance officer.

In addition, the committee may recommend that a student be denied academic credit. This means that unless the student maintains a certain attendance level he or she may be denied school credit for the course whether or not the student has a passing average in that course.

Students who do not attend a minimum number of scheduled classes, regardless of the reason for the absence, may be denied academic credit. Students whose absences exceed the following guidelines may lose credit for the course:

- Semester course - 10 absences
- Full year course - 20 absences

Attendance reduction contract



If a student reaches 10 absences in a half-year or 20 absences in a full-year course the committee will offer parents an opportunity for a hearing. The student will be offered the opportunity

to complete an attendance reduction contract. This contract consists of a two-day reduction from the

absence total of the student.

To fulfill the contract the student must meet with the teacher and complete course work that is equivalent to two class periods. The teacher will be notified in writing of the contract. When the contract between the teacher and student is completed, the grade level principal will be notified.

This attendance reduction contract will be offered only once during each course.