



# Deerfield Parent Network

## “Network Notes”

### “Insider’s Guide to Junior Year”

April 9, 2013

Panelists: 6 current juniors (3 boys/3 girls), 2 junior parents, Beth Gilfillan (DHS college counselor) and Brian Verisario (DHS student activities director)

Highlights of the panel presentation included:

#### **Junior year challenges:**

Some of the challenges unique to junior year include stepped up academics, a first introduction to the demands of varsity athletics and an increase in social pressures. All of the students agreed that learning to balance and time management skills are really important. It’s not easy at times, and they aren’t afraid to say no to a Friday/Saturday night party in order to catch up/regroup from the week. From a parent perspective, it’s important to follow the graduated driving laws (only one other friend in the car until 17). Be aware of parents who allow their kids to drive more than one. The students said their friends respect them when they tell them they can only take one friend. Same goes for curfew... It is the law after all! Curfew is one hour earlier if you’re driving. As juniors the kids know where the opportunities for drugs are but they also know how to avoid them. The key is to be involved in extracurriculars, outside job, etc. and to realize getting involved in alcohol and drugs is not worth the consequences (zero tolerance policy)! If you’re in sports, other clubs etc. it would let your coaches and teammates down. Junior year tests your group of friends! The students said it’s reassuring when their parents trust them and to know if anything happens and they find themselves in a bad situation, their parents will come get them, no questions asked. Sometimes it’s nice to have a secret code word indicating they need a pick up. It’s important to call the parents who are hosting a get together and ask questions, including what can my child bring? Will you be home? You’ll find out quickly if the host parents are aware of the gathering!

#### **Never too late to join in DHS activities:**

It’s a myth that it’s too late for juniors to join clubs, sports teams, etc. It’s never too late to pursue your interests. There are opportunities for juniors to get involved through clubs and no cut sports like track. As far as the college application goes, a few activities are fine. It’s more important to show your passions than to be overly involved. Colleges look beyond academics to find out about you, how well you can balance academics with activities and whether you have held any leadership roles. There is no set equation as to how much time you devoted to school, extracurriculars, community service, etc. Just find your passion!

#### **Working as a junior:**

Ideal if you can find a job with flexible hours. It forces you to manage your time/prioritize. Can look good on a college application as it reflects responsibility, another piece of the puzzle.

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### **Creating a balance junior year:**

Important to take it one step at a time and to keep everything in perspective. It may help to set alerts on your phone, follow/color code assignment notebook, and set goals. Do whatever works for you so the process is broken down and less stressful. It is a lot of sacrifice at times, but if you keep in mind your priorities and reach out to your teachers for help, it becomes more manageable. Teachers are on your side and more understanding than you might think. They want you to succeed in their classes. Also work ahead and take advantage of getting ahead in a class that may not meet the next day, but you have a meet, game, etc. the next night. It's nice when parents check in with their kids but better if they don't hover/ask too many questions. That just increases the stress levels. Be proud of your kids and expect their personal best. Praise is great! Always encourage when your kids work really hard at something and show improvement all the time. Even if your kid fails, positive energy/support is best. They need your guidance! Know your child and what he or she can handle. The ARC (Academic Resource Center) becomes a study hall from 3:15-5 p.m. and is a nice place to go, free of distractions. Friends and family are the biggest support systems for kids.

### **College planning/resources:**

The ACT is accepted at all colleges and is one piece of the overall college application puzzle. You can take it as many times as you want but the recommendation is 2-3 times. After that, not much change in score and anxiety levels go up. Colleges only see your best scores. A great time to take it is at the end of junior year since it's based on coursework they have had through junior year. DHS offers Study Strategies for juniors which is a one semester course designed to help them practice for the ACT. It helps with pacing/repetition as the idea is to practice by going over old tests. Tutoring is not necessary, but many around here take advantage of it. Think of a tutor like a personal trainer; it may help in some cases depending on your child. Know your student and what will help him/her and don't force tutoring on them. If you do hire a tutor, make sure it's a good match with your student or anxiety levels will rise if not. ACT is one piece of the puzzle, but grades are the most important factor. Be careful not to compare yourself to kids scoring in the 30s. Next year the CCRC will offer morning meetings for junior parents. Look for schedule to be posted online but most meetings start at 7:45 a.m. Next year counselors visit junior homerooms to meet with their students. Deerfield Honor Society replaced National Honor Society and again is one piece of the overall college app puzzle. Must be recommended/accepted into it and much of it is based on character. Again there is no set equation but many qualifiers/external pieces to the college application puzzle. It's best to know your child and what he or she can handle!

***Come learn more on Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> from 7-8 p.m. in the DHS auditorium when Beth Gilfillan leads the program “Anticipating College Planning for Sophomore Parents”***