

Parent Tip Sheet

Student Suggestions to Parents for Helping with College/Post-High School Planning

By the second semester of junior year, family stress ramps up significantly as students try to balance schoolwork, study for SATS, look into colleges or other post-BHS options, which come with a lot of internal and external judgement. How can families be supportive without adding to the pressure? BHS Peer Leaders have put together some excellent tips to consider...

- There are many helpful resources at school -- guidance counselors, career counselors, social workers, and teachers can give advice or just to listen to students about their stress and concerns.
- Ask family members, relatives, and friends not to talk about what we are doing after high school or what school we are applying to. That feeds our anxiety.
- Looking into colleges is just more work and added time on our computer screens. We also need down time to relax. Encourage us to go outside, be with friends, watch TV, or do other activities.
- Cut us some slack over household chores -- it's hard for us to shift gears from homework to doing laundry.
- Don't take it personally when we are grouchy and snap at you or if we hide up in our room and need space.
- We may not let you know, but underneath we may be scared to leave home. There are a lot of mixed emotions around leaving for college -- a combination of excitement and being scared for what will come in the future. Stay positive but also make sure to give us permission to have a range of emotions and acknowledge being nervous.
- Small gestures can make a big difference -- when you bring me snack, give me a ride somewhere, or help me print something out, I feel loved and cared for, and a little less stressed out.
- Parents are our role models of how to deal with stress -- you create the climate in the home, and when you are stressing, we feel it!
- Ask how you can be supportive regarding standardized testing, test prep, college research/applications, etc. Consider setting up a time to check in once a week on this, and don't bring it up at other times.

- Help us keep things in perspective, to remember the big picture, that whatever the outcome we'll be fine. Try not to feed into our anxiety about grades or where we will get into school, but be frank about limiting factors, like finances. At BHS, the competitive culture values prestige schools. Encourage exploring schools that might interest for other reasons.
- The nuts and bolts of applying to college can be tricky. Be a partner in the process, but let us take the lead. You may be able to help us:
 - Define what we are looking for in a post-high school experience.
 - Make a varied list of possible schools with lots of options for different interests. (Naviance can help students scan through a range of colleges. Malcolm Gladwell's book "Outliers" is helpful.) Keep in mind transferring after a year or two is always an option.
 - Set realistic goals and expectations, keeping financial limitations in mind.
 - Set up a spread sheet laying out cost, location, acceptance rates, deadlines/important dates, pros and cons, etc.
 - Attend virtual info sessions and tours (encourage us to take notes, ask questions).
 - Get started early with filling out the Common App --resumé page, activities section, essay ideas, etc.
- Please don't burden us with your dreams -- let us find our own path.

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