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selecting the  
right school,  
supporting  
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success

# PRIVATE SCHOOLS PRIMER



The Eagle-Tribune  
The Salem News  
The Daily News of Newburyport  
Gloucester Daily Times

Thursday, October 3, 2019



# Choosing the right high school: 8 things to consider

Planning ahead for the future often involves having a strong educational foundation upon which a secure and financially rewarding career can be built. While many students and families give ample thought to where they will attend college, taking such an approach to high school can be beneficial as well.

High school is a critical time in a child's life. Many students simply attend their local public high schools, even if that school may not be the best fit for the student. It behooves families to investigate other possibilities they have to ensure teenagers end up in the right academic environment during high school.

Public schools, private/religious institutions, and specialty and vocational schools may have different assets that set them apart. Therefore, students and their parents can look at various factors to determine which school will present them with the right

environment and tools for success.

**1. Identify needs and wants.**

Have a frank discussion as a family regarding what the student is looking to get out of the high school experience, as well as which settings help him or her learn the best.

**2. Look at programs offered.**

Schools vary in their offerings. Comprehensive high schools offer a smorgasbord of courses to appeal to as many students as possible. Magnet or specialty schools may have specialized focuses, such as STEM, communications, business or art.

**3. How much college prep is desired?**

While most schools offer advanced-placement courses that can translate into college credit, some offer specialty tracks that enable high school students to earn a high school diploma and associate's degree concurrently.

**4. Check out campus size.** The number of students on campus and teacher-to-student ratio

can affect how some students learn. Social kids may like big schools, while an intimate setting may bring others out of their shells.

**5. Consider religious affiliations.**

Many families like a faith-based program, and religious schools often blend faith into their curriculum.

**6. Pay attention to finances.**

Tuition costs can impact which school a student attends.

**7. Map the school location.** Decisions also can be based on how close a school may be. Long commutes can eat into extracurricular activities or family time.

**8. What clubs and activities are offered?** School decisions also can be based on the activities that help develop well-rounded students. Athletes, for example, may seek schools with strong sports programs.

Students can explore all possibilities in their local areas and beyond when determining where to attend high school.



Academics, college preparation, campus size, athletics and extracurricular activities are among the factors that should be considered when choosing a high school that's the best fit for a student.



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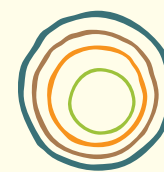
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# Adding it up: Private schools at a glance

Here are some key findings of the 2015-16 Private School Universe Survey, the most recent survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics:

- In the fall of 2015, there were 34,576 private elementary and secondary schools with 4,903,596 students and 481,558 full-time-equivalent teachers in the U.S.

- 67% of private schools had a religious orientation or purpose. Collectively, they enrolled 78% of all private school students and employed 70% of private school full-time-equivalent teachers in 2015-16.

- 68% of private schools in 2015-16 emphasized a regular elementary/secondary program, 10% emphasized a Montessori program,

another 10% emphasized an early childhood program, 5% emphasized special education, 3% emphasized a special interest and another 3% emphasized an alternative program,

- More private school students in 2015-16 were enrolled in kindergarten (466,475) than in any other grade level.

- The average school size across all private schools in 2015-16 was 142 students. Private school size differed by instructional level. On average, elementary schools had 100 students, secondary schools had 263 students, and combined schools had 199 students.

- 46% of all private schools in 2015-16 enrolled fewer than 50 students.

- 96% of all private schools in 2015-16 were coeducational, while

2% enrolled all girls and 2% enrolled all boys.

- 78% of private school teachers in 2015-16 were full-time teachers, while another 14% taught at least half-time and the remainder taught at least one-quarter time.

- The average pupil/teacher ratio in 2015-16 was 10.2 across all private schools. Private school pupil/teacher ratios differed by instructional level. On average, the pupil/teacher ratio was 11.1 in secondary schools, 10.8 in elementary schools and 9.3 in combined schools.

- 97% of 12th-graders enrolled in private schools around Oct. 1, 2014, graduated in 2014-15.

- Of the 343,252 private high school graduates in 2014-15, some 65% attended four-year colleges by the fall of 2015.

*Source: National Center for Education Statistics*



**FENWICK**

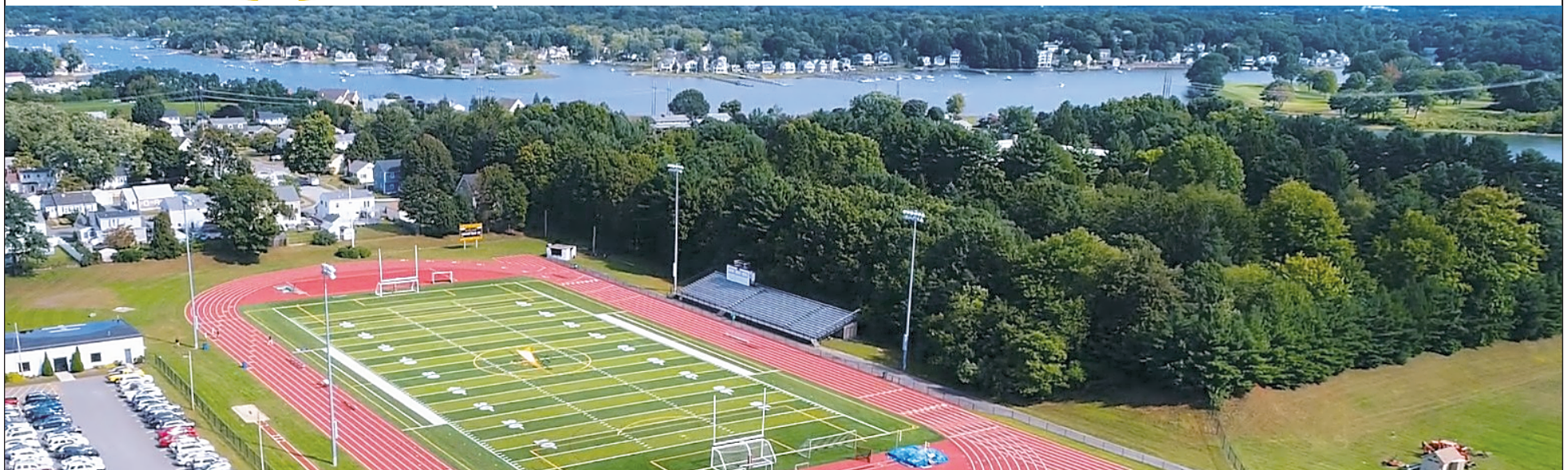


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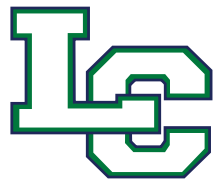


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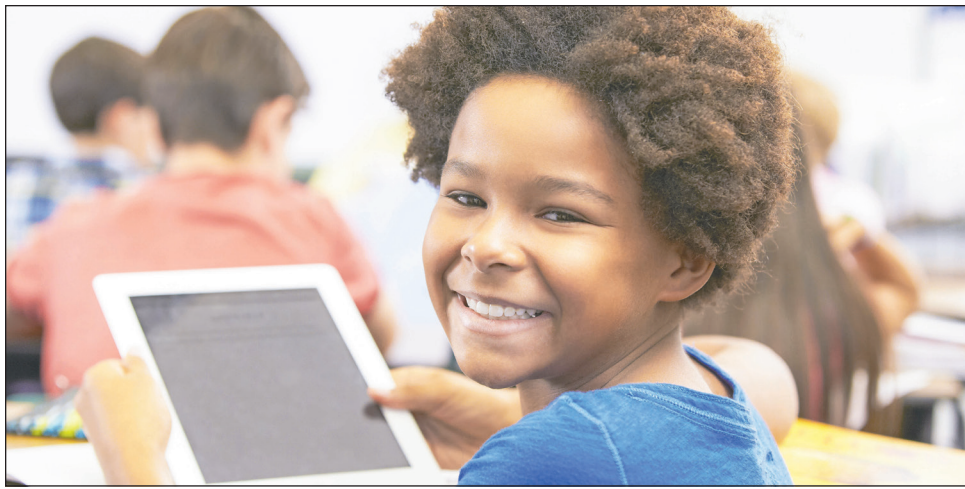
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Many believe technology is changing the education landscape in beneficial ways.

## Embracing technology in the lesson plans of today

Technology in and out of the classroom can be a polarizing subject. Proponents of tech in schools contend that students must be skilled in the ways of the world, which is increasingly being governed by technology. Detractors of tablets and smartbooks in the classroom may say their use contributes to excessive time in front of screens and can prove more distracting than other means of learning.

It is hard to deny the ways that technology has helped shape and improve education. Students who may not excel with the traditional tools of learning might benefit from applications geared toward offering assistance for their particular needs. Furthermore, technology, through its globalization, can put educators and students in touch with a wealth of resources — all at their fingertips. The following are the myriad ways that technology can enhance lessons in the classroom.

### Inexpensive resources

Technology can provide various online resources that go beyond the study guides and other materials offered by textbooks. These resources can be very low-cost or even free, helping educators save money. For parents who need to

reinforce lessons at home, the internet can help them collaborate with other parents and teachers and find fun ways to help their children learn.

### Quantifiable results

Technology can process data more quickly and efficiently than humans. Algorithms can be developed to help students learn faster. Tech can be customized in unique ways to help students learn. Not every student learns the same way. Technology provides for a multimedia approach that can combine visual and auditory tools to better teach students.

### Connect more

Teachers can embrace technology, such as YouTube-powered guides to show students how to complete assignments or to go over information in the classroom. Students who missed class or need a little reinforcement can benefit from a second look at lessons in online videos available at all times on the internet.

Some teachers employ QR codes on assignments that students (and parents) can scan to access further information or support materials. This can help kids further explore topics after school hours.

### Transcend location

Technology can connect people by voice, text or video, which means that learning is not limited to geographic location. Notes and materials can be shared with teachers or study groups through digital connections around the world in real time.

### Get feedback

Students can go beyond their school districts or communities to discover how others learn. High school or college students can rely on internet communities to provide a second set of eyes on papers to proofread for grammar or spelling mistakes or even to assist in brainstorming sessions.

### Reinforce STEM

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says employment in occupations related to STEM — science, technology, engineering and mathematics — is projected to grow to more than nine million by 2022.

Technology plays a strong role in STEM careers. Honing these skills in the classroom can prepare students for professional arenas in which technology figures to play a sizable role.



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# The power of meaningful student-teacher relationships

**Jan Healy**

The Academy at Penguin Hall



When you think about your high school experience, which teachers had the most positive impact on your learning? The teacher who focused primarily on delivering course content or the teacher who spent extra time ensuring you fully understood the material? The teacher who knew you only as “a student” in his or her classroom or the teacher who knew your other interests and passions in and outside of school, like your performance in athletics, the arts or clubs? The teacher who was frustrated

with your sleepiness in class or the teacher who knew you juggled your academic work with a part-time job or struggled with self-doubt?

Research into social-emotional learning — a buzz phrase now in existence for more than 20 years — continues to reinforce that schools and classrooms with strong teacher-student relationships foster the environment necessary for deep learning and social competencies, such as perseverance, resilience, empathy and self-awareness. Students who feel comfortable with their teachers and peers are more willing to grapple with challenging material and persist at difficult learning tasks. (*Merritt, 2012*)

Strong relationships with teachers are born out of deliberate structures within a school to facilitate



The Academy at Penguin Hall photo

**With rare exception, class sizes at The Academy at Penguin Hall are capped at 15 students and advisory groups are no larger than six students. Classes meet every other day, with no more than four each day, so that there is room in the schedule for structured advisory meetings, teacher conference time, grade-level meetings to address life skills and decision-making, and club and activity meetings to promote student engagement and leadership.**

meaningful exchanges between teachers and students. These structures

include advisory programs with a developed curriculum and teachers who make it a priority to get to know students and their families; small class sizes that make it possible for students to not only learn, but to be seen as individuals; and grade-level mentoring to explore developmentally appropriate milestones and decision-making. These structures provide the context necessary for students to not only succeed, but to thrive.

Within these structures, students acquire and apply the knowledge and skills to understand and manage their emotions, develop empathy for others, establish and achieve positive goals, develop and maintain positive relationships with both teachers and peers, and gain the tools to make responsible decisions. The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning defines the five core competencies as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

But what can a student do

to build strong relationships with his or her teachers? Here are some tips:

- Maintain a strong attendance record.
- Participate fully during in-class activities. Ask questions to ensure understanding of the presented material and to demonstrate a commitment to learning the material. Don't be afraid to speak up and ask for help if necessary.
- Use teacher office hours or resource periods to review class notes and prepare for upcoming assessments. These one-on-one interactions allow the student and teacher to get to know one another better.
- Make use of support structures at school like school counselors or learning specialists. If making connections with peers or teachers is hard, enlist their support and ask for strategies.
- Participate in the life of the school by joining clubs, athletic teams or performing arts groups to build relationships outside of the classroom.
- Take advantage of opportunities to serve on student councils,

committees or advisory panels to facilitate a proactive working relationship with teachers and administrators.

■ Participate in school-sponsored community service activities that allow for working alongside teachers and getting to know them in a different context.

The key to building strong student-teacher relationships is to see the relationship as more than transactional or a means to an end. Working together with teachers to form deeper connections in and out of the classroom gives students greater confidence in their abilities and helps teachers better meet the needs of the students they teach.

A well-thought-out learning context anchored in the belief that academic success and social-emotional awareness go hand in hand — whether designed by the school or initiated by students asking for what they need — is fundamental to the success of students in an increasingly complex world.

*Jan Healy is dean of academics at The Academy at Penguin Hall in Wenham.*

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# Avid advocates

## Parents play role in students' success

Schools are an important cornerstone of children's development, both academically and socially. And whether students are part of the general education curriculum or require accommodations for physical or developmental challenges, their parents are their staunchest advocates for their success in the classroom.

Parents can represent their children in the educational climate more effectively if they understand how schools operate. As with any official government or municipal organization, there are policies and regulations in place. Parents who can navigate effectively will have a greater chance of having their voices heard.

Develop a positive image in the school. Parents can ingratiate themselves to

school personnel in various ways. This includes participation in parent-teacher organizations, volunteering for school-led activities and taking time to get to know all staff, including office secretaries, paraprofessionals and student teachers. Consider heading up an activity. Being a positive presence on campus will set the tone for how others view you.

Educate yourself on policies. Read up on the issues you support. If your child has a particular learning disability, research it and the tools that have helped other students in similar situations achieve success. Attend workshops and investigate what your school district offers by way of individualized education modifications so you can present a well-researched argument. In addition, if

necessary, learn about children's rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Stay organized. Keep a folder of test scores, homework assignments, report cards and other pertinent documents in one place so you can document and track your child's progress and performance.

Be positive, calm and firm. The advocacy organization Understood says parents can learn strategies and phrases to redirect conversations and defuse tense situations. Parents are equal members of the education team. Be receptive to staff ideas, but don't feel pressured to agree with them all.

Communicate regularly. The notion that "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" is largely true. Speak with teachers,

therapists and the principal as necessary to ensure that lines of communication are kept open at all times. Continue to do so with tact and

decorum. Remember to follow hierarchy protocol, first speaking with a teacher directly instead of going straight to an administrator.

Parents are their children's first and most avid advocates. They can help ensure students get the education they deserve.



Courtesy photo

**By staying informed, parents can help their children excel in the classroom.**

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Beyond the physical benefits, playing a team sport offers students lessons and skills that will carry them into adulthood.

## Beyond the game: The value of playing sports

Children can benefit in various ways by participating in sports. These benefits, both physical and mental, can help kids in all aspects of life, and even lay the groundwork for a successful transition into adulthood.

The fitness organization PhitAmerica says that playing sports goes beyond just being physically active. Important lessons are learned on the court, field and pitch. Kids who participate in sports can learn about discipline, how to handle winning and losing with grace, and the importance of setting and achieving goals.

University of Missouri Health Care encourages all children to participate in sports. These activities are good for the mind and spirit. They help teach children accountability, dedication, leadership and

many other skills. These are all traits that can be used throughout life, helping people cope with the demands of the day that seemingly have little to do with sports.

Sports also can help students in the classroom. Sports require learning and remembering the rules of the game. These are skills that are relevant to class work or even on the job when children become adults in the workforce.

Of course, a discussion of the benefits of sports play would not be complete without addressing the enormous physical benefits of participating in sports. According to the Journal of the Public Library of Science, the health benefits of playing sports include an increase in lean body mass, an increase in basal metabolic rate and an increase in bone density,

which promotes healthy body composition. Physical activity by way of sports participation may help the body strengthen over time, increase endurance, help control cholesterol levels, improve blood circulation, and even lower stress levels.

Scholastic sports also are a great catalyst for making friends and encouraging positive behavior. Sports give kids an outlet for energy and a gathering place after school. Children can find like-minded individuals who have the same interests, which may help solidify years-long relationships.

Parents, educators and coaches can encourage children to become involved with sports. The benefits of doing so are numerous and can lay the foundation for them to be successful in life.



# The surprising benefits of being bilingual

Being bilingual is a necessity for millions of people across the globe. While many United States citizens may never need to speak any language other than English, that's not the case for people who reside in other parts of the world. Even some citizens of America's neighbor to the north, Canada, may need to learn both French and English depending on where they live.

Fluency in more than one language can produce some surprising benefits. For example, a 2017 study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* found that lifelong bilingualism may help to delay the onset of dementia by as much as five years. In addition, numerous studies, including one conducted by an economist at MIT, found

that people fluent in more than one language can earn tens of thousands of dollars more than their monolingual peers over the course of their careers.

Perhaps in recognition of the benefits of bilingualism in an increasingly global world, foreign language programs are now part of the curriculum at many daycare facilities and preschools. That might come as a surprise to parents who did not begin studying foreign languages until junior high or even high school. But the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services notes that the following are some of the ways that being bilingual can benefit kids.

## Cognitive development

The DHHS notes that a nearly 20-year-old study from the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education found that bilingual



Courtesy photo

**Many preschools and daycares now teach foreign languages, which is proving to have benefits for students in multiple arenas.**

students had an easier time understanding math concepts and solving word problems than their peers

who were not bilingual. The DHHS also notes that researchers have uncovered numerous additional

cognitive benefits to being bilingual as opposed to monolingual. These benefits include a greater ability to

use logic, focus, remember and make decisions.

## Social-emotional development

Researchers with the National Academy of Science found that children who grow up in bilingual households exhibit better self-control than those who grow up in monolingual households. That's an important benefit, as the DHHS notes that self-control is a key indicator of academic success. The DHHS adds that bilingual children benefit socially from being bilingual because they are capable of making new friends and building strong relationships using their second language as well as their first.

The ability to speak more than one language fluently can produce some surprising benefits that children can use to their advantage in school and throughout adulthood.

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# A 'Roadmap' to the school selection process

PRNEWSWIRE

Need help searching for a new school for your child? A new book by Andrew Campanella, "The School Choice Roadmap: 7 Steps to Finding the Right School for Your Child," will likely provide jargon-free answers to many of your questions.

Published by Beaufort Books and scheduled for release in January, "The School Choice Roadmap" is a practical guide to helping parents understand the different types of kindergarten through grade 12 education options available in their states.

The book provides seven steps that parents can use to find schools where their children will learn, succeed and be happy — along with worksheets, exercises and evaluations that parents can utilize to help guide their search process.

"What might be a perfect school for one student might not be a good fit for a child who lives right next door," Campanella says. "Actively choosing a school or

learning environment for your child allows you to select an education setting that best meets your child's unique interests."

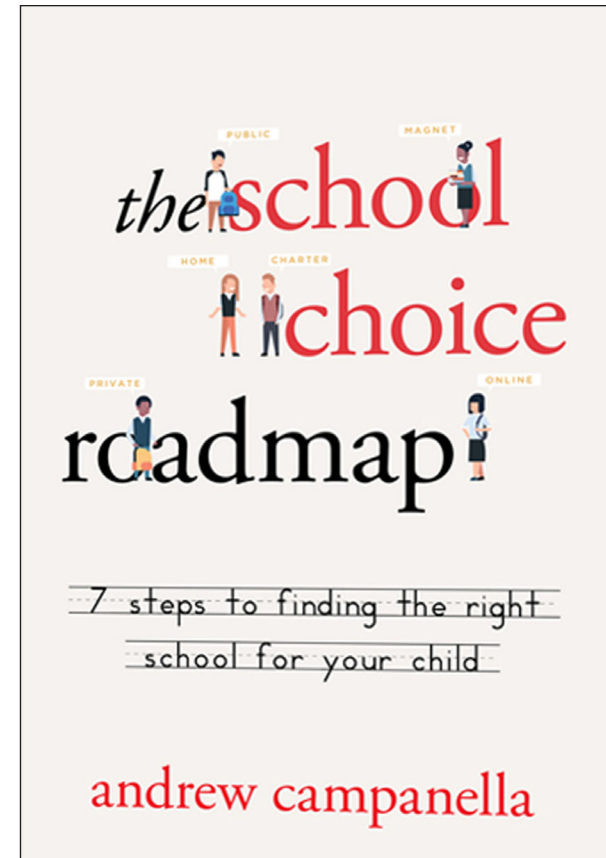
According to Campanella, more parents in the United States today are actively choosing schools or learning environments for their children than at any other time in history. Approximately one-third of parents now decide among traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, online public schools, private schools and homeschooling. "The School Choice Roadmap" aims to provide an objective look at all of these options and does not encourage parents to choose one type of school over another.

"Parents know their children better than anyone else, and yet parents are often told to ignore their own instincts and expertise when thinking about K-12 education," Campanella says. "My goal with 'The School Choice Roadmap' is to encourage moms and dads across America to harness the power of their own intuition when choosing their children's education."

"Too often parents do not believe they have a choice when it comes to the school their child attends," says Eric Kampmann, publisher of Beaufort Books. "The 'School Choice Roadmap' opens up new horizons of possibilities for parents and children to get the best education so that learning becomes a journey, not a chore."

Andrew Campanella is president of National School Choice Week, the largest annual celebration of opportunity in kindergarten through grade 12 education. In 2019, NSCW featured more than 40,000 events and activities designed to raise awareness of the education options parents have for their children.

Prior to his work with National School Choice Week, Campanella worked in senior-level positions at the American Federation for Children and the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence. He grew up in New Jersey, graduated from American University in Washington, D.C., and currently lives in Florida. Learn more at [www.schoolchoiceroadmap.com](http://www.schoolchoiceroadmap.com).



"The School Choice Roadmap," due out in January, is a guide to helping parents understand the different types of education options for their children.

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# Ask Mr. Dad: Taming teen chaos and tackling homework

BY ARMIN BROTT  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**Dear Mr. Dad:** Help! I have a 14-year-old high-school freshman whose room looks like the aftermath of a hurricane. But as unpleasant as that is, it's not what I'm writing about.

The real issue is that she is completely disorganized and can't keep track of her homework, school assignments and project due dates. Up through middle school, she was almost always able to get by waiting until the last second to get her work done. But she's already falling behind — and we're still in the first month of school.

I worry that if this pattern continues, she'll never be able to get good enough grades to go to college. What can I do to help her get more organized?

**A:** Having been through this with two of my three kids, I know exactly what you're going through and I feel your pain — and your frustration.

Here's the deal: Some children are born with seemingly prewired organization skills. From the time my oldest daughter was able to dress herself, she laid out the next day's clothes the night before. And throughout school, she voluntarily got a calendar and was always on top of her homework and projects. Most kids, however (including your daughter, my two youngest and millions of others), aren't like that.

The good news is that organization can be learned. The slightly less good news is that you're going to have to help, which means investing time, effort and maybe even some money.

The following strategies will get you and your daughter pointed in the right direction.

■ **Get her tested.** You want



Courtesy photo

**Parents can guide their teens into getting organized and developing solid homework habits.**

to rule out any underlying medical conditions that might be contributing to the problem, such as ADHD, a learning disability, vision problems or something else.

■ **Get connected.** Ask your daughter's teachers to keep you up to date on her assignments and grades (my daughter's adviser used to send us a report every week). If the school uses an online system (Schoology is one of several), insist that your daughter give you her login info and check the system every day. This will help you keep track of what's due, when it's due and when each assignment has been completed.

■ **Organize.** Keep assignments on a shareable calendar app and help your daughter organize her binders so that completed assignments are always in the same place. And make sure pencils, erasers, printer paper, flash drives and anything else your daughter needs to do her work are readily available.

■ **Think small.** Help her break large projects into smaller, easier-to-manage chunks.

■ **Encourage breaks.** If your daughter finishes one of those chunks or stays focused for 15 or 20 minutes, have her take a five-minute break to text, check email, listen to some music or whatever.

■ **Think backwards.** Starting with the due date, how long will it take to research and complete each step? Then set a completion date target for each one.

■ **Prioritize.** Encourage your daughter to complete the most difficult or time-consuming assignments first.

■ **Remind.** If you're like me, you want your child to do all of this on her own. Eventually she will, but for now, she needs your help. Since you know what's due and when, check on her progress and remind her as necessary.

■ **Establish routines.** If possible, homework should be done at the same time and in the same place.

■ **Be there.** Have your daughter sit next to you while she does her homework. Knowing that you're going to be looking at her screen may keep her from getting quite so distracted.

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- Full Day Options for Nursery, PreK and Kindergarten Programs
- Morning and Afterschool Extended Day Program
- Basketball, Volleyball and Ski Teams
- Orchestra and Band
- Variety of afterschool clubs
- Accredited by NEASC

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# THE ACADEMY AT PENGUIN HALL

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**Sunday, October 20 @ 2 pm**

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