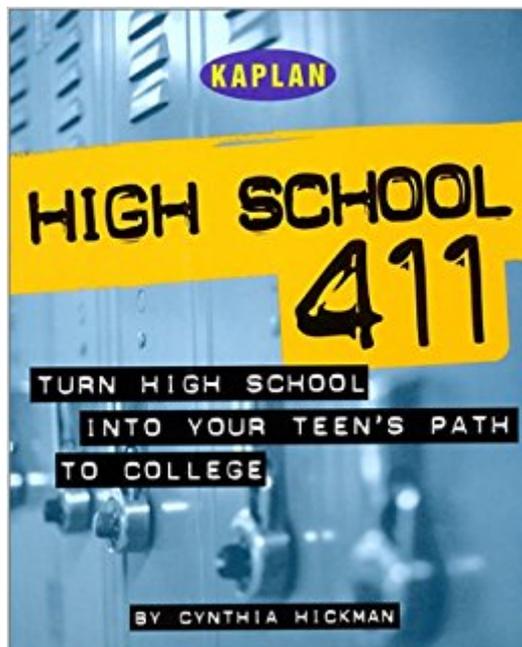


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# Kaplan High School 411



## Synopsis

Everything you need to know to make your teen's high school years rewarding, fun, and successful. High school is one of life's most challenging and rewarding times. Your teen has to balance school, homework, extracurricular activities, and, in many cases, an after school job -- not to mention the college admissions process. But before calling 911, you and your college bound student should read Kaplan's High School 411. This insightful guide takes you and your teen from freshman year to the college admissions process. Loaded with practical advice, a comprehensive study plan, an academic calendar, plus helpful internet resources. High School 411 provides information and direction on the most common concerns facing high school teens and their parents, including: \* What are the right classes to take -- and when? \* How do you balance extracurricular activities with an after-school job? \* When is the best time to start the college admissions process? \* What do colleges look for in an applicant? High School 411 is your all-in-one information source on how to help your teen get the most out of high school and successfully lay the groundwork for college. Over the last 60 years, more than 3 million students have reached out to Kaplan for help in meeting their educational and professional goals.

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## Customer Reviews

Cynthia Hickman attended public schools in New York City and earned an A.B., M.B.A., and J.D. from Harvard University. She is a former student recruiter for Harvard/Radcliffe Colleges. Cynthia has been admitted to practice law in the State of New York and, in recent years, has launched

top-rated educational sites on the Internet and America Online<sup>153</sup>; while developing study skills, career, test-prep, admissions, and financial aid software on CD-ROM for an educational publisher.

Chapter 1 Classes WHAT STUDENTS ASK What classes should I take? What programs are available for motivated students? Are there alternatives to my local high school? Your child is going to be spending the majority of his high school hours sitting in class. That's why the classes he chooses have such a huge impact on his experience of high school, as well as on his chances of getting into the college of his choice. Your son's choice of classes (and his performance in them) reveals whether he is academically prepared, intellectually curious, and up to the challenge of taking progressively harder courses or participating in innovative school programs -- all important criteria to college admissions committees. As he plans his high school classes, your teenager's focus should be on meeting high school graduation requirements as well as college admissions requirements. But he should also concentrate on taking courses that stimulate him and that he'll enjoy. And the best way to do this is to create a study plan for his high school years. For your child, creating a study plan means taking some control of the high school experience, setting goals, and finding a practical way of meeting them. As a parent, you can, and should, help your child choose classes that will stimulate him, and help him increase his chances of getting in to the colleges of his choice. You can help him look at the big picture, and with him, plan the course of his high school years. Your child's guidance counselor can help make you aware of the courses offered, those best suited to your child, and the requirements for graduation as well as for college admission.

CREATING A STUDY PLAN A study plan is a schedule of all the classes your son wants and needs to take while in high school. These classes include basic subjects like science, math, English, and social studies, as well as other subjects like foreign language, music, and art. Developing a study plan helps him to identify the course requirements for graduation and college admissions, as well as what classes are available at his school to meet them. But it also helps him -- and you -- understand his interests a little better, and can lend a hand in figuring out what direction he wants to take in college and beyond. Consider the following five factors when developing a study plan: graduation requirements college admissions requirements class availability academic interests creating a sequence

By thoroughly investigating these issues, your child will be able to start on the best possible academic plan for his high school years.

Graduation Requirements It may seem obvious, but you can't go to college until you get out of high school. During your daughter's freshman year, she should schedule a meeting with her guidance counselor to find out about her school's academic requirements for graduation by subject area, years of study, and classes to be completed. Most high schools have

the following requirements for graduation: How does your daughter's school's graduation requirements match up to this example? Tracking Sheet 1.1 at the end of this chapter can help you compare. College Admissions Requirements High school graduation requirements aren't all that students have to contend with: Top colleges and universities have admissions requirements for classes to be completed in high school. These requirements vary by college, but all are there to represent those classes the college or university believes best prepares a student for success at their school. If your child plans to attend a top college, her admission requirements will probably look like this: Clearly, if your child is thinking about applying to a competitive college or university, satisfying graduation requirements might not be enough to meet the admissions criteria. She can find out what courses her target colleges require by writing away for an admissions booklet, or by consulting one of the comprehensive guides to colleges in her school library or local bookstore. There are other reasons your child should take tougher courses. More advanced classes help develop key skills like writing, critical reading, and problem solving -- basic skills needed in college, as well as later on at work. Also, most of the highest scorers on the college entrance exams like the SAT I are students who have completed or exceeded admissions requirements. Give her every possible advantage for college admissions and build a study plan that includes the most challenging admissions requirements that you find when researching her target schools. Practical Stuff There are other, more practical courses a student should take aside from those required for graduation and admission. All college-bound students should learn to use a personal computer; this includes gaining a working knowledge of both word processing and database software programs. Using a personal computer will help when writing and editing papers and conducting research from online databases or encyclopedias on CD-ROM. And students should consider taking a typing course. The arrangement of the keyboard for both machines is similar -- your computer will work only as fast as you can click and type. Finally, students should take a class on how to conduct research if such a class is available; it could help them learn how to develop an outline for research and writing, how to use the library and other sources to gather data, how to structure arguments and write logically, and how to use footnotes and bibliographies. STARTING THE PLAN He's gotten graduation requirements from his guidance counselor and knows his target colleges' admissions requirements. Armed with these, it's time to start forming a study plan. Your first step: Together, look at both sets of requirements and note the set of requirements that is greater in areas of study (e.g., adding physical education), requires a higher number of years of study (e.g., three years of math instead of two), and has the greater class requirements (e.g., two years of composition instead of one). Since juggling two sets of requirements can be confusing, use the tracking sheet at the end of this chapter

to help you figure out how to meet your child's needs. **Class Availability** Next, you'll need to find out what classes your son's school offers. His school's guidance office should be able to help you here. What does he need to take? Will he be able to take the classes he needs when he'd like to take them? Competition for seats in popular courses can be fierce; in some schools, spaces for advanced courses often go to upperclassmen first, leaving motivated underclassmen to wait several semesters or years before they can get in. Then there's a scheduling problem: AP Physics and French 3 may both be offered at the same time, forcing him to choose between the two. This means that he'll have to develop a flexible study plan with several ways to meet his critical requirements while taking courses that interest him. Remind him that it's better to be safe than to assume that he'll get into a specific class or section when he wants or needs to.

**Academic Interests** Seventy-five to 90 percent of your daughter's classes in high school will be used to meet the requirements for graduation and college admissions. The remaining 10-25 percent of classes are electives. How to choose classes in required subjects? How do you decide which electives to take? For example, do you take economics, government, U.S. history, or something else to satisfy your social studies requirement? Do you take French, Spanish, or Latin to satisfy a language requirement? A common sense rule of thumb: Let your child's interests be her guide. Below are two exercises to help your daughter find those subject areas and classes that interest her the most. Remember that she'll do best in classes that interest her -- if she enjoys her classes, chances are she'll study longer and get better grades. So don't suggest that she take advanced accounting if the mere thought of it makes her queasy: She'll probably bomb the class, and hate the whole experience. Here's how to start. If your child is so inclined do the exercises together. For the first exercise, answer the following questions.

**Exercise 1 -- Define Your Interests** What do you like to do in your free time? What books do you like to read? What parts of the world (or universe) interest you the most? If you had to choose a career today, what would it be? Why? For example, a student who likes to read science fiction, keep an aquarium, and watch The X-Files, and is considering a career in marine biology is pretty clearly science oriented, and should focus on sciences in her study plan. Though your child's interests may be more diverse and less easy to read, they should give you a strong sense as to where her interests congregate and what she'd be happiest studying.

**Exercise 2 -- Academic Areas of Interest** In this exercise you and your child identify his academic interests by subject area. On a scale of 0 to 5, rank each subject area. A zero represents no interest, while a five indicates great interest. Find out the average rating of each area by adding the scores by category, then dividing the total by the number of subjects rated in each category. This exercise tells you two things about your child's interests: first, the subject areas in which she has the strongest interest, indicated by an

average score of four or five. For these areas, she should take more, or advanced, classes. Second, the subject areas ranked zero, one, or two are areas in which she has the lowest level of interest. She should avoid these areas, if possible, once she's completed the minimum requirements for graduation and admissions. Try to find classes that are somehow related to those areas that she likes a lot; for example, she might be able to take geography instead of postindustrial Europe for her social studies requirement if she is science minded. After you've done both exercises, look for similarities in the results; you should see some consistency.

**Creating a Sequence** A sequence of classes usually begins with an introductory class followed by advanced courses that cover more complex principles. In your child's study plan, choose classes that begin at a level at which she can follow and appreciate the materials being taught. She shouldn't choose courses that are too easy; she might be bored out of her mind, and won't do nearly as well as expected. On the other hand, she shouldn't jump right into impressive-sounding advanced courses she's not prepared for. As she completes each course, she should ask herself if she's up to taking a more advanced course that builds on what she's just learned. If she can and it's an area in which she has some interest, tell her to go for it -- demonstrate her ability to do more difficult work. If she can't (and the course isn't needed to satisfy a requirement), she should move on to another class or subject area that will provide her with both a new and a greater challenge. Your child should try to complete most of his class requirements by the end of his junior year. This timing helps to meet several goals: First, he can show academic achievement and preparedness when he applies to college in the fall of his senior year. Second, he can give himself a good shot at doing well on the standardized exams (e.g., SAT I and ACT) because the math and verbal skills tested can be developed in these classes. These tests need to be taken tests by the first semester of senior year.

**PROGRAM ALTERNATIVES** Does your child go to a great high school that offers a wide range of challenging courses? Consider yourself lucky. But what if his school isn't quite up to snuff? What if you can't find the range of courses (breadth), the number of advanced classes (depth), or the variety of special interest programs (reach) you want or need in your child's school's schedule of classes? He may have to work a little harder to get the classes he's after by looking into alternative academic programs inside and outside of his high school. If the gaps in his study plan are small, participating in an Advanced Placement (AP) program may be enough. If, however, the gaps are substantial, you may want to consider cross-registering him at a nearby "magnet" school, or attending other special programs to add to or replace his school's offerings. Few students have to "make do" with the classes that are available at their local high schools. There are alternative programs all over the country. However, these opportunities often depend on your seeking them

out. Your child might be able to supplement his plan through another nearby high school or community college. He might want to consider switching schools, going to boarding school, or taking summer classes.

**WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL OFFER?** High schools in the United States offer a dizzying array of diploma options, including comprehensive, general, vocational, regents, honors, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate (IB). Which diploma programs are offered at your son's or daughter's high school? This is something you should investigate early in his or her high school career. It can give you a clue as to the school's breath, depth, and reach of its schedule of classes. Below are some of the more common diploma options available. See how your child's school matches up:

- **General/Comprehensive** Most high schools offer this course of study. It's standard fare, with few exceptions made for students with special needs and interests; these schools may also offer a limited number of advanced programs. Students are likely to be given a few "comprehensive" statewide exams with the remaining exams presented as finals and taken in class at the end of each school term.
- **Vocational/Arts** These are programs offered by select high schools. They're likely to offer a general/comprehensive program of study with additional courses available for specific vocations and/or the arts. Entrance into these programs is often based on a special application, audition, or presentation of a portfolio of work. Likewise, graduation is often based on completing the general program of study and a project, portfolio, or other performance piece.
- **Regents, Honors, AP, and/or IB** Schools offering these diplomas are likely to have a range of advanced courses in a number of subject areas. Students often take special statewide exams at the end of each advanced course and may also take nationally and internationally administered exams. Although participation in many honors programs is voluntary, it often requires proof of academic accomplishment in preliminary courses. Admission into some of these programs (or the schools offering them) is sometimes competitive and based on test scores and other admissions criteria. Upon successfully completing an honors program, students receive an honors diploma (e.g., Regents Diploma or IB Diploma) instead of the general degree received by all other students. Your daughter may find that the programs her school offers meet her needs, perhaps with a bit of fine tuning. But she may be motivated to achieve more than what a general program can offer. If this is the case, below are some alternatives to consider as she builds her academic plan.

**INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE** One of the most comprehensive and challenging programs available to college-bound high school students is the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma program, an honors program adopted by more than 500 high schools in over 71 countries around the world. The IB program consists of required courses, exams, and related activities during a student's last two years of high school. It represents one of the higher hurdles that thousands of

students in the United States clear each year in order to complete an advanced study plan. Students completing the IB program and its qualifying exams receive an IB diploma that is recognized by schools as proof of academic readiness for college-level work. Receiving an IB diploma also often qualifies these students for college credit and advanced standing at elite colleges and universities. The IB's curriculum is not based on any specific high school's graduation requirements or the graduation requirements of any one country. Instead, it is an advanced program for "students of the world" who want to participate in a program that gives them a global perspective on people, cultures, history, and events while meeting the academic requirements for admission to top colleges in almost every country around the world. It's an ambitious and rewarding program of study for students who want to get an early start on learning how to compete more effectively in our global work and living place.

### IB Program Requirements

The subjects that make up the IB program fall into six groups. For American students, these groups are English (language and literature), a foreign language, social studies, science, math, and electives that range from art to computers to religion. All IB diploma candidates must study at least three areas at an advanced level, and may pursue up to four of them at this advanced level depending on their completion of preliminary courses. The IB program has additional requirements. All students must complete a course called the Theory of Knowledge, a course that represents the philosophical backbone of the IB program and that focuses on integrating learning inside and outside of the classroom into a personal philosophy and approach to thinking critically and reaching sound conclusions; in other words, it teaches you how to think for yourself. Unlike the other courses in the IB program, the grade in this class is not determined by an internationally administered exam, but is determined and given by the class' teacher. For all other courses, students take annual exams in May and/or November of each year. Another requirement for IB diploma candidates is the completion of an Extended Essay, or research paper, on a subject covered in the IB curriculum. This is similar to the senior research paper requirement found in some competitive colleges and universities. This paper must be the original work of the student, and should demonstrate (in under 4,000 words) an ability to think logically and present a well-reasoned argument. While the focus on the IB program is primarily academic, it also requires students to participate in community-service projects. The program encourages its students to provide a useful service to their communities, interact with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures, and engage in activities in which they can learn more about IB academic areas and pursue other interests outside of the classroom.

### Getting into an IB Program

To participate in the IB program, you must attend an IB- member high school. More than 250 high schools in the United States currently offer the IB diploma program. Is your son's school a member?

Ask his guidance counselor about availability and program requirements. If his high school doesn't offer the IB diploma, look into finding a school that does. To start, contact the other high schools in your area and ask whether they offer the IB diploma -- one of them just might. You can also contact the North American office of the IB program and ask for a list of participating high schools. The IB's North American office can send you general information on the IB program and a booklet on the IB college credit and advanced standing policies of colleges and universities in the United States. You can contact them at International Baccalaureate North America, 200 Madison Avenue, Suite 2007, New York, New York, 10016-3903; telephone (212) 696-4464; fax (212) 889-9242. If your child is interested in participating in an IB program, he'll need to make a decision no later than his freshman year of high school. Since IB students take college-level courses, he'll have to take the necessary preliminary courses early in his high school career to be eligible for admission into the program. Also, if he decides to pursue an IB program but it is not offered through his current high school, he'll have to transfer to a school that does.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES** Unlike the IB program, which offers an integrated course of study, the Advanced Placement program, or AP, is a series of stand-alone, content-based exams sponsored by The College Board. Through the AP program, your child can pursue college-level work and earn college credit while still in high school. Students can take one AP class or many, depending on their interests. Each AP program is based on a single national syllabus that is equal to a first-year college course. According to data released by the College Board, about fifteen per cent of all college-bound students (not just seniors) enroll in an AP course. More than 400,000 students take an AP exam each year, each student taking an estimated 1.5 exams. That's not even a quarter of the more than 2 million students applying to college each year, which means that if you take an AP course, you're in a select group. Since the AP course is taught at the college level, your daughter may want to take courses in those subject areas in which she plans advanced college study. This way she can begin to address college requirements while in high school. Enrollment in an AP course is voluntary in most schools. However, most schools won't allow you to enroll in an AP course unless you've taken all the prerequisites in that particular subject area. For this reason alone it is key that she identifies which AP courses she would like to take early in high school and build these foundation courses into her study plan.

**Taking AP Exams** The AP exams are given in May each year. In any year, a student may take as many AP exams as he or she likes, with the following exceptions: Computer Science A with Computer Science B, Calculus AB with Calculus BC, or Drawing with General Portfolio Art. AP exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being (in the College Board's terms) "extremely well qualified" and 1 being "no recommendation." A 3 or better on the AP exam is usually needed to skip

entry-level college courses. Some colleges, including Ivy League universities, will grant sophomore status to students passing enough AP exams with sufficiently high scores; obviously, this is a very effective way to cut college costs. Policies on accepting AP credit and granting sophomore standing based on AP scores vary from school to school, so contact your selected colleges to determine their policy for granting AP credit. For more information on the Advanced Placement Program, including course descriptions, sample questions, colleges accepting AP scores, fees and exam schedules, contact: the Advanced Placement Program, P.O. Box 6670, Princeton, New Jersey 08541-6670; phone (609) 771-7300.

**AP Versus IB Programs** Although both AP and IB programs offer advanced levels of study, there are differences between the two. The AP program is more focused on U.S. educational standards and is larger and more flexible than the IB program. The AP curriculum is developed nationally and based on the content covered by most U.S. colleges and universities in their first-year courses. The IB curriculum, on the other hand, does not focus on the educational requirements of any one nation. Another difference is the relative flexibility in taking an AP course. Students can take an AP course at their high school or at any other school (e.g., high school, college, or summer program) that offers it. To participate in the IB program, a student must attend an IB-member school. While thousands of high schools, colleges, and other programs offer AP courses, only a couple of hundred high schools offer the IB program in the United States. Finally, the IB program offers an intensive and integrated curriculum in which students must complete courses, exams, and related activity over a two-year period to be eligible to receive an IB diploma. In contrast, the AP program consists of a series of classes that students can pick and choose from. A student may take one or several AP courses during his or her high school career. If your son is in an IB program, should he still take AP exams? If he is fortunate to attend a school that uses the AP curriculum for its IB program, he should definitely take advantage of it and take AP exams. More U.S. colleges and universities accept AP exam scores than IB program credits. Combining IB program participation with AP credit gives students the best of both worlds. They can pursue a challenging, integrated, and global plan of study in high school while meeting many U.S. college and university requirements for advanced standing and placement.

**MAGNET SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS** An alternative your child might consider is attending a special "magnet" school or program full or part time. Magnet high schools have a specific academic, special interest, or career focus to them. These special schools often take one of two forms. The first is a single high school that houses several smaller "academies." Each academy is built around a theme like science or the arts. They typically occupy a part of the building and have their own classrooms (and instructors) where classes that revolve around the theme are taught. The academy's teachers also supervise

field trips and other projects that are theme related. For the many key academic areas like math, English, and science, the academy's students share classrooms and teachers with the rest of the building's student population. The academy programs allow students to have a "normal" high school experience with access to a wide range of classes in the traditional subject areas and a diverse student body while also allowing them to pursue key interests, in-depth, through exposure to special courses and activities. The other form that the magnet school takes is a single-themed school for all of the students attending it. In New York City, for example, students can choose among high schools with the following themes: Automotive, Aviation, Art and Design, Business, Environment, Fashion and Design, Humanities, Law and Social Justice, Mathematics and Science, Performing Arts, and others. They range from schools with specific career interests (e.g., automotive and business), to special interests (e.g., the environment and performing arts), to academic interests (e.g., humanities and mathematics and science). Some schools require test scores or an audition for entrance, while other require only that student decides to attend it. Keep in mind that there's a difference between a magnet school and a magnet program. In a magnet school, almost all of the students attend that school full time, while a magnet program often accepts students who attend other schools for their academic classes. The author of this book attended a magnet program while she was in high school. During the mornings, she attended one high school where she took her academic classes (e.g., math, science, English, and social studies). During the afternoon, she attended a magnet program in the performing arts at another high school where she took her special-interest classes (e.g., drama, dance, voice, and music theory). Each semester she received grades from the magnet program that were included on her report card with the grades from her academic classes. The credit for the courses taken at the magnet program also counted towards her graduation requirements. She found this to be the ideal way to have the best of both worlds: advanced, college-prep courses in the key academic areas and special instruction in the arts. Whether your child has a special interest or not, it's a good idea to look into the magnet schools and programs offered in your area. Visit your school's guidance office and ask about these options. Some school districts keep a clearinghouse of information on school programs; see if one is available in your area. Also keep a lookout for school fairs that showcase the different alternatives. Like the author, your child too can find a way to meet admissions requirements while pursuing her special interests for graduation credit.

#### EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Colleges and universities across the United States now offer college-level courses through continuing education and extension programs. Some of these programs allow high school students to enroll in courses for high school and, in most instances, college-level credit. If your son needs one or a few college-level courses to

prepare for the college-level exams, or if he would like to pursue advanced studies in subject areas of interest to him, this is another option open to him. These courses are generally offered during the evening and are held year-round. To find out about available courses and admissions requirements and fees, contact your local college or university.

### SUMMER PROGRAMS

Many colleges hold summer sessions specifically for high school students. These sessions range from rigorous academic programs for gifted students to those that are more like summer camp; they range in length from a couple of days to several weeks. Summer programs are a great way to expose yourself to life on a college campus. From choosing classes and living in dorm rooms to learning to complete assignments independently and on time, these programs provide students with a slice of college life while earning college credits. Although most courses offered in these programs are identical to the ones given to college students during the academic year, many programs are also specifically designed for high school students looking to polish their basic skills or prepare for upcoming admissions tests. Northwestern University, for example, sponsors one of the oldest and largest summer programs for high school students through its National High School Institute (NHSI). Each summer at NU, more than 900 students participate in the NHSI's ten divisions. These schools include Creative Media Writing, Dance, Debate, Engineering Science, Journalism, Leadership, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Music, Radio/TV/Film Production, and Theater Arts (Performance and Design/Technical). Students attending NHSI live on campus and participate in programs that introduce them to college-level study while gaining practical, hands-on experience in their areas of interest. Fees for the NHSI include tuition, room, board, health services, field trips, group events, and other activities. The total cost runs up to several thousands of dollars and it does not include transportation to and from the campus in Evanston, Illinois. However, as is true with most summer programs, scholarships and other forms of financial assistance are available and are awarded on the basis of financial need and academic merit. Apply for financial aid if you need it to attend this or any other summer program. In recent years close to 40 percent of all students attending NHSI received some form of financial assistance. For more information about the National High School Institute at Northwestern University, its admissions requirements, academic programs, scholarships, and more, contact: Northwestern University Office of Summer Session, 2115 North Campus Drive, Evanston, IL 60208-2650; telephone (800) 346-3768; e-mail [summer@nwu.edu](mailto:summer@nwu.edu). If the summer program alternative is of interest to your son, he needs to decide what kind of experience he is interested in. Does he want to experience campus life? Look for a program at one of your target schools. This is a great way to get a birds-eye view of life on campus and a test drive of the food, courses, facilities, and the surrounding area. Does he want to prepare for college entrance exams?

Choose a school offering test-prep programs. Is he interested in earning college credit? Be sure that his target schools are accepting credits earned at his summer program. Although hundreds of colleges and universities accept test scores (e.g., ACT, SAT, and AP) for placement in courses and eligibility for special programs (e.g., sophomore standing), many do not accept "credits" as a substitute for taking classes at their schools. Finally, does he just want to hang out and make friends? That's OK too, but beware: Some of these programs are pretty intense (classes and assignments six days a week). Make sure your child does his homework; his goals for summer and the objectives of his target summer program should be in synch.

First Steps To participate in a college or university summer program, contact your child's target school to see if they sponsor programs for high school students. Ask for information on the application process (including the form, application fees, and academic requirements), the program (size, length, age requirements, living accommodations, and courses offered), and the availability of financial aid. There are hundreds of summer programs that high school students can participate in. On the next page is a list of 100 top colleges, universities and institutes in the United States offering summer programs for high school students.

**STUDY FOR GIFTED STUDENTS** Your daughter can also pursue additional study through one of the many programs for gifted students. Often these programs allow students to take advanced courses in a wide range of subjects through computer-based instruction during the school year and in a classroom setting during the summer months. An example of one of these programs for gifted students is the CTY/EPGY Distance Learning Project (DLP). The DLP is a program sponsored jointly by two organizations for gifted students: The John Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY) and the Stanford University Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY). This partnership provides advanced courses to students in their homes and combines computer-based instruction through the use of CD-ROMs with individual tutoring through e-mail and over the phone. The DLP courses are offered four times a year; students who take a DLP course receive a software package and printed materials through the mail. The DLP then links each student to a tutor at Stanford University. Each course covers standard of the many programs for gifted students. Often these programs allow students to take advanced courses in a wide range of subjects through computer-based instruction during the school year and in a classroom setting during the summer months. An example of one of these programs for gifted students is the CTY/EPGY Distance Learning Project (DLP). The DLP is a program sponsored jointly by two organizations for gifted students: The John Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY) and the Stanford University Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY). This partnership provides advanced courses to students in their homes and combines computer-based instruction through the

use of CD-ROMs with individual tutoring through e-mail and over the phone. The DLP courses are offered four times a year; students who take a DLP course receive a software package and printed materials through the mail. The DLP then links each student to a tutor at Stanford University. Each course covers standard high school math, science, and writing subjects. Advanced Placement courses are also offered (including Calculus, Physics -- Mechanics, Physics -- Electricity and Magnetism, and Expository Writing). To be eligible, you must be in the seventh grade or higher, apply and be accepted, pay the quarterly tuition (around \$400), and have the necessary equipment and Internet access. Students who successfully complete a DLP course receive credit from Stanford's School of Continuing Studies and may also qualify for AP credit. For more information on the CTY/EPGY DLP, including a free catalog and application material, contact: CTY/DLP, CTY -- Johns Hopkins, 3400 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD, 21218; fax at (410) 516-0804; or e-mail at [dlpcty@jhu.edu](mailto:dlpcty@jhu.edu). You can also write to EPGY: The Education Program for Gifted Youth at EPGY, Ventura Hall, Stanford, CT 94305-4115; telephone (415) 329-9920; or fax (415) 329-9924. Several top universities participate in a national Talent Identification Program (TIP) for gifted students. TIP consists of four regional talent-search programs for students in middle and high school who are recruited for TIP mostly on the basis of ACT and SAT I scores. The four regional programs are located at Duke University in North Carolina, Johns Hopkins in Maryland, Northwestern University in Illinois, and the University of Denver in Colorado. Each TIP sponsor provides school-year and summer programs for its students. The summer programs include intensive classes. At Duke, for example, the summer students in the TIP program take one class per three week session in which they complete the equivalent of a year of high school or a semester of college-level work. Each class meets six days a week, Monday through Saturday. TIP sponsors also provide other programs like weekend classes during the school year and opportunities for study and travel abroad. For more information on TIP and its university sponsors, contact the following organizations: Duke University Talent Identification Program Box 90747 Durham, NC 27708-0747 (919) 684-3847 Center for Talented Youth Johns Hopkins University 3400 North Charles Street Baltimore, MD 21218 (410) 516-0337 Center for Talent Development Northwestern University 2003 Sheridan Road Evanston, IL 60208 (847) 491-3782 Rocky Mountain Talent Search University of Denver Wesley Hall, Room 200 Denver, CO 80208 (303) 871-2983 Other programs for academically gifted and talented students (offering programs in conjunction with Duke University): Center for Gifted Studies University of Southern Mississippi Southern Station Box 8207 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-8207 (601) 266-5236 Center for Gifted Studies Western Kentucky University Bowling Green, KY 42101 (502) 745-6323 Programs for the Gifted and Talented Northwestern State University 124 Russell Hall

Natchitoches, LA 71457 (318) 357-4500 Gifted Students Institute Southern Methodist University Box 382 Dallas, TX 75275-0382 (214) 768-5437 or SMU-KIDS For additional information on programs for gifted students you can also contact the American Association for Gifted Children at 112 West Main Street, Suite 100, Durham, NC, 27701; phone (919) 683-1400. As these programs illustrate, your child can study at home, part time, taking classes that are not available at her high school. For more long-distance learning and gifted-student program options, see the Internet site listings at the end of this chapter.

**SWITCHING SCHOOLS** After investigating the programs the local high school offers and exploring her own particular interests, your daughter might decide that her high school simply doesn't offer the program she needs, and that the gaps are too wide to fill by taking summer courses or extension courses. Switching schools is a big decision, but one that many students face each year. It's a decision that can have financial implications for the entire family. Ultimately, going to a school that meets her needs will make your child's high school experience much more positive, and will boost her chances of getting into the college of choice. We've already discussed finding a local magnet school or school that offers an IB program. Another option is switching to a prep school. The decision to attend a prep school is often a clear one. The local high school may be academically lacking, or your daughter may want to participate in a sports or arts program that isn't offered. Prep schools provide a wide range of classes and activities for students who are almost uniformly college bound. Admission to prep schools is often competitive, and students generally take an entrance exam. Prep schools fall into three categories: nonsectarian (or not affiliated with a religious group), religious, and, in a few rare cases, public. The chief distinction between nonsectarian and religious prep schools is that students at religious schools are often required to meet class -- and in some instances extracurricular -- requirements in religion. Prep schools are often further divided into day and boarding schools. Students attending day schools live at home and commute to school, while boarding school students generally live on campus throughout the school year. The decision to attend a boarding school versus a day school is often driven as much by student preference as it is by cost. The annual costs of attending a prep school can run from nothing at most public schools to more than \$20,000 a year for tuition, room, board, and supplies at exclusive, private prep schools. Why should you consider private prep schools as a viable option when most parents would not pay this much money for a college education? Like many competitive colleges, private preparatory schools are often looking for interesting and motivated students of different backgrounds (including economically challenged) to round out their student population. As a result, these schools offer scholarships and other forms of financial aid to help admitted students meet their expenses. However, most high school students

(and their parents) don't aggressively pursue these financial aid opportunities; as a result, many private schools do not exhaust their fund of scholarships each year. There is also a national movement underway to encourage financially strapped families to look into preparatory programs for their students. Many states now offer school choice programs supported by state-funded and independent scholarships. Although many of these programs don't pay full tuition costs, they offer grants and scholarships to cover many school expenses. With the help of state aid, more students are choosing to take advantage of the better academic and extracurricular programs available at prep schools. Contact your regional school board or related school choice programs for more information on financial aid programs. A few of these organizations are listed below: Center for School Change Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs University of Minnesota 301 19th Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55455 (612) 626-1834 Choice in Education Foundation, Inc. 365 South Griggs Midway Building 1821 University Avenue West St. Paul, MN 55401-2801 (612) 644-8547 Coalition for Educational Choice 43K Stoney Run Maple Shade, NJ 08052 (609) 742-1170 The Manhattan Institute/Center for Education Innovation 52 Vanderbilt Avenue New York, NY 10017 (212) 599-7000 Partners Advancing Values in Education (PAVE) 1434 West State Street Milwaukee, WI 53233 (414) 342-1505 For additional information on private and alternative schools contact the National Association of Independent Schools Access Hotline at (800) 343-9138; the Boarding Schools Answerline at (800) 541-5908; or one of the following organizations: The Association of Boarding Schools 1620 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20036 (800) 541-5908 The Federation of American and International Schools 1620 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20036 International Coalition of Boys' Schools c/o Dr. Richard Hawley 2785 S. O. M. Center Road Hunting Valley, OH 44022 (216) 831-2200 Junior Boarding Schools c/o Tom Army 528 Pomfret Street Pomfret, CT 06258 National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) 1620 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20036 (202) 973-9700 National Coalition of Girls' Schools 228 Main Street Concord, MA 01742 (508) 287-4485 Programs Assisting Minority Students: A Better Chance 419 Boylston Street Boston, MA 02116 (617) 421-0950 American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) 1630 30th Street, Suite 301 Boulder, CO 80301-1014 (303) 939-0023 ASPIRA of America, Inc. 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 340 Washington, DC 20036 (202) 835-3600 (For Latino youth) You can also write to NAIS for a copy of their guide Choosing the Right School. This guide provides information and advice on school selection, school visits and interviews, the admissions process, and school costs. For information on financial aid for private schools request the free guide Financial Aid at Elementary and Secondary Schools from NAIS. HOME SCHOOLING Thousands of parents across the country choose to educate their children outside of the traditional school

structure. Reasons for home schooling include inadequate local schools, religious beliefs, and an attempt to better serve children who would thrive in a more personal environment. Some parents do all the teaching themselves, while others join a network of home-schooling families. Home-schooling curricula can include trips to museums, volunteering, and extensive research projects, as well as more traditional lessons. Also, some home-schooled students participate in athletic or other extracurricular activities through their local high schools. There are plenty of opportunities to seek out challenging and varied programs to meet your academic interests and requirements. However, it's up to your child to seek them out. Finding the right program for him can make the difference between snoring through dull classes and learning what really interests him.

**SUMMARY** To build a challenging study plan that will meet both admissions requirements and your teenager's needs for interesting courses, her choices lie both within your local high school and outside of it. From local AP and IB programs to magnet schools, summer programs, and prep schools, there are many options available for students looking to get the most out of their high school years. Building a study plan will help your child get on the path to enjoying high school while preparing to get into the college she wants. We've included some tracking sheets to help you and your child start a study plan. On the next page is a sample study plan to guide you. (This schedule assumes the student takes 6 classes per semester, not including physical and health education.) This is just one example of a study plan. There are thousands of potentially effective study plans, one or more of which is right for your child. Help him develop his own unique plan, letting his requirements, interests, and the availability of classes and special programs guide you. You'll also find a helpful quiz about preparing for college.

**INTERNET RESOURCES** Alternative Programs and Schools International Baccalaureate. National Coalition of Girls' Schools. Online Boarding School Directory. Preview school catalogs, photographs, and application and admissions procedures along with a search application that lets you match your criteria to hundreds of schools. Independent-Study and Other Online Long-Distance Learning Programs Barrington U. Chrysalis School. CyberEd. Cyber High School. Instruction takes place over the Internet using curriculum specifically designed for students who are motivated to work independently. Distance Learning Resource Network. Indiana U -- Bloomington, Division of Extended Studies. Knowledge Online<sup>®</sup>. Novanet. U. of Missouri Center for Independent Study. U. of Wisconsin, Independent Learning. Programs for Gifted Students The Center for Talent Development, Northwestern University (CTD). The Center for Excellence in Education. The Center for Talented Youth (CTY), Johns Hopkins University. Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY). TIP, The Talent Identification Program, Duke University. Home Schooling Home School Legal Defense Association.

National Home Education Research Institute. Home Education. Kaleidoscapes. Academic Summer Programs Barnard College.of the Arts. E-mail to: pcuarts@netaxs.com Smith College. Stanford Summer Session.of Pennsylvania.

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