

Navigating the Course Selection Process

*Naperville Central High School
Naperville, Illinois*

Selecting courses, resolving schedule conflicts, handling the stress of academics, and making time for extracurricular activities were all topics addressed in “Navigating the Course Selection Process,” a presentation for students and parents at Naperville Central High School. The School Family Community Partnership (SFCP) team established the program in response to surveyed parents’ requests for a better understanding of what courses students choose and how they make those selections.

“We are a comprehensive, high academic high school with 97 percent of our graduates going on to secondary education. It is important for students to select the courses that fit their ability and extracurricular plans,” said one of the SFCP team members. The SFCP also hoped to spark discussions between parents and students and between parents and the panel members.

Among the questions addressed were:

- What is a regular college preparatory curriculum?
- What are Advanced Placement (AP) courses?
- What electives should students take?
- What courses are best for students considering the military?
- How can students handle the stress of high school?

The presentation took place at two Parent Huddles, small-group events the school uses to get parents together with an expert or experts on a particular topic. There was a morning

get-together in the school district office and an evening gathering at the school. The panels consisted of students, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and community members.

At first, both eighth-grade and high school students and parents were invited to the huddles. Later, eighth-grade families had their own session, and nearly 350 parents and students attended.

In addition to fostering better communication, the program prompted students to think about the courses they would need and want over all four years, not just freshman year.

Parents reacted positively to the program, seeming to gain a better understanding of the scheduling and course selection processes. “I always learn something new at every event I attend. Thanks,” commented one parent.

*Pam Wilson, SFCP Chair
(630) 353-4165
pamela.wilson@resources-us.com*