

Feb 29th

Hello Parents! This email is the first in a 7 part series titled “High School Decision-Making for Parents”. The series’ objective is to provide relevant information on school-related decision-making and encourage parent-student discussions on the same. Emails will be sent daily (on school days) from Feb. 29th through to March 9th. The series will culminate with the Salisbury Counsellors/Administrators hosting a Secondary School Survival/Information Session on the evening of Parent Teacher Interviews, March 10, 2015 from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Cafeteria.

Each email will provide a piece of “parent homework”, which will provide you with information to ensure your student is making the most of his/her High School experience and preparing for the future the best they can.

Here is your first assignment parents: review the “Welcome to Salisbury Composite High” PowerPoint located on the Salisbury website (www.salcomp.ca) Students page. The PowerPoint provides the fundamental framework of a High School education: students complete 8 classes per year divided over two semesters. There are different scheduling ‘streams’ that lead to various post-secondary opportunities upon completion of High School. The appropriate stream for a student is best determined by a consideration of their grades, teacher recommendations, and the student’s own vision, ambition and commitment to High School achievement. A discussion on picking the appropriate stream will be tomorrow’s email topic.

Happy reading!

March 1st

For many students, Grade 10 is the turning point in their commitment to education; up until this point in their education, many students may have been able to achieve satisfactorily by attending and working in class, without having to expend much of their personal time on “homework”. However, High School signifies a shift in workload and expectations: it is the first time that many students will have to make a personal value choice regarding the amount of their personal or out of school time they want to devote to school.

A students’ commitment to academic rigor is very important in selecting their ‘stream’ and should reflect the amount of work they have been doing and/or are prepared to do upon entering High School. Movement between streams is possible throughout High School, but requires careful planning and even greater commitment down the road. Instead, students should conduct an honest self-assessment and acknowledge the level of effort they are willing to expend to reach academic goals. This self-assessment is very helpful in selecting the appropriate stream upon entering High School.

After completing Grade 10 and gaining some experience with High School courses, students are then able to re-evaluate how much effort they had to expend to earn the grades they did and whether they are able and/or willing to do more. It is important to acknowledge that higher-level courses and/or striving for higher grades takes more effort and planning.

Here is your second piece of homework parents! On the Salisbury website near the bottom of the Guidance page, there is a “Learning Equation” document (visit <http://salcomp.ca/programs/guidance>) that further explains the components of overall performance. It is a useful starting point for discussion as you and your student determine the best starting point of course work or if a student is considering a change in scheduling streams.

March 2nd

To recap, the series has covered: the structure of High School semesters, the considerations and self-assessments required to select the appropriate stream upon entering High School, and the commitment and grades required to lead to 10-1, 20-2 or 30-3 levels of course work.

The next step is becoming aware of the registration process and a timeline for making such decisions.

Since January, Salisbury has been actively involved with our Junior High feeder schools. By meeting with Junior High counsellors and visiting Grade 9 classrooms, we have reinforced students' knowledge of the basic High School courses, the general registration process, and answered any preliminary questions. Students have been made aware that they must complete certain core courses (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Physical Education) and have their choice of certain 'option' courses. Option courses typically tend to be of most interest to prospective Grade 10 students, as they are able to choose classes that reflect their own interests, skills and abilities and of course, what their friends are choosing! Grade 11 students are increasingly motivated to select courses and options for more individual reasons including: Independent Study, Registered Apprenticeship Programming, or requesting a 30-level course; Grade 11 is the time to realize high school course selections are part of a career decision making process; diverse experiences provide a foundation for future school/work options. Grade 12 students are intent on ensuring graduation; as well as post-secondary requirements are met. Grade 12 is the execution of sound high school planning.

Pre-registration or practice planning with students takes place throughout the school year with March being registration month. Registration officially closes on April 30th every year.

The 2016-2017 Course Handbook found on the Salisbury website (www.salcomp.ca) under the Students heading, describes the courses offered. Building on yesterday's message regarding an honest self-assessment of personal performance, the same considerations should factor into your students' selection of courses for their High School years.

Your reading assignment for today is to review the Handbook. Specific questions will be answered by your student's counsellor, which is assigned according to their grade, Mr. Funk for current Grade 10 & 11 and Mrs. Wiltse for current Grade 9 and ISP students.

March 3rd

After we close registrations, Salisbury aims to complete all students scheduling by June 30th. Although we register students for courses on a yearly basis (meaning that a Grade 9 student will select and register only for their Grade 10 courses), it is important to understand that High School is a cumulative 3-year program. As much as we stress to incoming Grade 9 students that they need to be aware of what they want to do after high school, post-secondary choices change throughout High School. This is particularly true as High School students mature and as grades are earned, an awareness of post-secondary opportunities increases, learning strengthens, work ethic develops, and interests expand.

Up until this point in the series, you may have thought only about next year's courses or of a specific post-secondary program. Now is the time to build a plan for the remaining years of

your student's high school not only for the requisite courses remaining to secure a High School diploma, but also for future career planning. To start, your student should list the progression of core courses they wish to complete as well as the remaining required courses they need to complete to secure their diploma.

Reading for today: the High School diploma requirements are accessible on the Salisbury website (<http://salcomp.ca/guidance>). They should be looked at as a starting point in planning your student's course selection plan.

Changes to course choices may only be made for Grade 9 students through their Junior High Counsellor and for continuing High School students, through their respective Salisbury Grade Counsellor. Late course changes are usually based on the student improving their grade in a pre-requisite course. Courses completed through summer school are managed during the confirmation of registration days in late August.

March 7th

With a high school schedule planned, we now turn our focus to the role that certain significant players have in ensuring a student successfully executes that plan. These players include school personnel, parents and the students themselves.

Teachers at Salisbury take great pride in delivering course material so students are engaged in their learning. Teachers recognize that communication is key to fostering a healthy and active learning environment and students are encouraged to ask questions in class, engage in class discussions, and if necessary, arrange for extra help outside of class time.

Your assignment for today is to become informed about the tools that Salisbury teachers use to support our students, in and out of the classroom. First is the Salisbury Learning Resource Directory (<http://salcomp.ca/guidance>), which details a small sampling of available opportunities and references for students who may need extra assistance outside of the classroom. PowerSchool is a tool that teachers continually update so that both students and parents can keep informed of a student's current progress. E-teacher links on the Salisbury website (www.salcomp.ca) provide useful course information as well as a means to connect with your student's teacher via email.

Salisbury Counsellors are also an available resource for students. They meet with students to overcome individual learning problems, social problems that may be affecting their learning, as well as personal issues that may be hampering a student at school.

Administrator's work to ensure student behavior is appropriate and leads to achievement. At Salisbury, all teachers, counsellors and administrators work cooperatively to ensure our students have every opportunity to succeed in the classroom.

March 8th

Parents play a vital role in a student's achievement throughout the formative High School years. Contrary to popular belief, High School students need to be guided in their school based decision-making. This extends to being held accountable for attendance, completing all assigned work, managing personal time effectively, and ensuring consistent studying is part of their everyday routine. Keeping students focused on how they are learning will ensure the course of best fit is taken and provide for optimal achievement.

We strongly encourage parents to be mindful of their attitudes towards schooling and be informed about their students' progress in school by regularly discussing their student's

attendance record, progress, and planning. We have found that students who receive the same messages at home as they do at school tend to achieve better at school!

Parent PowerSchool portals located on the Homepage of the Salisbury website provide parents with that essential connection to their student's school, course progress, attendance and teachers. Let's take a uniform stance and get on the same page about your student's academic success!

March 9th

To conclude our High School Decision Making Series, we wish to leave you with some of the skills that Salisbury Composite High School's best students have taken away from their Salisbury experience:

1. Time Management – an ability to achieve a balanced personal and academic life
2. Commitment – an ability to set attainable learning goals and achieve them
3. Practical Study Habits – engaging in meaningful self-evaluation to find what works best
4. Planned Approach to Learning – setting goals and achieving them!

We encourage parents to appraise their students' approach to learning and continuously engage with both them and their school. Continual cooperative communication between Salisbury staff, our parents and our students emphasizing the skills required to achieve at school will provide greater assurance our students will achieve after school. Parent-teacher-student interviews are scheduled for March 10th and April 21st. You can book time with teachers at the following site: ____

Be reminded that Salisbury Counsellors/Administrators will be hosting a Secondary School Survival session for parents from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in Salisbury's Cafeteria. We look forward to continued communications with you and hope we can work together to encourage your student's continued growth and achievement in High School!