CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

AN EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR FIRST TIME PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy

by

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ABSTRACT

An Educational Workshop for First Time Parents of High School Students

By

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Master of Science in Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy

This project is designed to be utilized by high school counselors to provide parents with information on the importance of being involved during their child’s middle to high school transition. “Research has found that as many as 40 percent of students fail to get promoted from ninth to tenth grade on time, and fewer than 20 percent of those students recover from failure and go on to graduate,” (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007, p. 10). There are new reasons why children are choosing to drop out or experience a lack of success in high school. This workshop will be used to address the high ninth grade dropout rate by educating parents on the social and technological changes and pressures their child will be dealing with at the high school level. It will also teach them the tools they need to properly address the challenges their child may face in high school.

This project will contribute to the field of school counseling by providing a one-day, two-part workshop that high school counselors can utilize to increase the success of the students at the high school level. Ideally, this workshop will result in more parents becoming aware of the challenges their teenagers will face in high school and learning strategies to help them prepare for and overcome such issues.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

“Research has found that as many as 40 percent of students fail to get promoted from ninth to tenth grade on time, and fewer than 20 percent of those students recover from failure and go on to graduate,” (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007, p. 10). Herlihy (2007) indicates that ninth grade is crucial to a student’s success in high school, but the transition from middle school is often distinguished as a time when students’ attendance and grades decline. The national graduation rate is estimated to be around 68 percent, with nearly one-third of all public high school students failing to graduate (Herlihy, 2007). As young adolescents make the move to high school, they experience a more competitive, grade-oriented environment, with greater pressures involving sex, drugs, alcohol, as well as an increase in bullying and difficulty in peer relationships (Herlihy, 2007). An unsuccessful transition to high school not only contributes to high dropout rates, but low on-time graduation rates in American high schools (2007). Therefore, it is essential to address this issue to ensure that all students have a smooth transition from a more supportive middle school environment to high schools where the social pressures and academic demands increase.

Many high school counselors and other school personnel have provided educational presentations to students who are going to make the transition from middle school to high school. In their study, Mizelle and Judith (2000) indicated there was a decrease in the number of students dropping out before graduation amongst those middle school students who experienced a high school transition program or presentation. Although programs geared toward students have shown a significant impact on the increase of being successful during this transitional period the dropout rate is still
considerably high. The element that schools may be missing is parental involvement in the success of their child (Mizelle and Judith, 2000). To address the quality of involvement of parents through this rough period in students’ lives it is necessary to create a workshop that can educate first-time parents of high school students about this transition period. The issues that their children are going to face in high school are significantly different than their generation’s high school experience because of the advances and use of technology and the increase in academic and social pressures. Parent involvement in young adolescent students’ transition is essential (Mizelle and Judith, 2000). Unless schools encourage parental involvement during this period in their child’s life, parents tend to decrease their involvement in their student’s school related activities and personal lives because of the increased independence of their child (Ouimette, Feldman, & Rosann, 2006).

**Statement of Problem**

There are many new social pressures students will encounter in high school such as, substance abuse, “sexting”, and academic pressures about which most parents are not aware (“Sex and Tech: Results from a Survey of Teens and Young Adults,” 2008). To help guarantee the success of their child, parents need to be aware of the issues their teenager will face. Mizelle and Judith (2000) indicated when parents are more involved in the transition from middle to high school their children have been found to achieve more, adjust better, and are less likely to drop out. The problem that this project is going to address is the lack of parental involvement in their child’s transition from middle to high school.
Purpose of Project

This project aims to lower the ninth-grade dropout rate by improving parental involvement during their child’s middle to high school transition. This project presents a workshop that is separated into two different sections. The first part of the workshop will inform parents on the importance of their child’s success academically in high school. The factors that contribute to high school dropout rate and retention will be discussed along with other academic pressures. The high school graduation requirements and college requirements will be clearly stated in this portion of the workshop.

The second part of the workshop will educate parents on the social and technological changes and pressures their child will be dealing with at the high school level. It will also teach them the tools they need to properly address the challenges their child may face at the high school level. There are new reasons why children are choosing to drop out or experience lack of success in high school.

This project will contribute to the field of school counseling by providing a one-day, two-part workshop that high school counselors can utilize to increase the success of the students at the high school level. The workshop will result in more parents becoming aware of the challenges their teenagers will face in high school and learning strategies to help them prepare for and overcome such issues.

Terminology

Parent Involvement is a term including both home and school based activities, such as talking with their children, setting boundaries, helping with homework, communicating with teachers, volunteering in classrooms, and attending school sponsored events (Ouimette, Feldman, & Rosann, 2006).
“Sexting” is a term that can be defined as sharing nude or semi-nude pictures and videos of oneself on social networking profiles, and via mobile phones (Boucek, 2009).

“Cyber-bullying” is defined as harassment and victimization over the Internet (Darden, 2009).

Middle school (Junior high school) refers to schools that have students in the 6th, 7th and 8th grade level.

**Summary**

In order to better understand the need for an educational parental workshop for first time parents of high school students on the transition from middle to high school, it is necessary to review previous studies and research. Chapter II will review information on the topics of high school dropout rate, the transitional period from middle to high school, importance of parental involvement, and statistics and information regarding new social, academic, and technological pressure students deal with in high school. It will also review high school graduation requirements and freshman admission requirements to a California State University for California residents and requirements for admissions to a California Community College. Programs that have already been incorporated to assist during this transition period will be discussed.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Although there is increasing acknowledgment that receiving a high school diploma is the minimum requirement for success in the work force, the dropout rate in the United States continues to rise (Allensworth & Easton, 2007). Nationally nearly one-third of students do not graduate from high school. In 2009 the California Department of Education completed a study that found that one out of every five high school students grade 9-12 is expected to drop out at some point during high school (California Department of Education, 2011). For African Americans and Hispanics the rates of dropout rise to fifty percent (Azzam, 2007).

There are many reasons why high school students drop out or take more than the typical four years to receive their high school diploma or their GED. Chapter two will first review factors that contribute to high school dropout and retention and the reasons for a lack of parental involvement. Next, the statistics and information about the new social and academic pressures and standards that high school students encounter will be reviewed. Then, the technological advances and pressures that high school students are faced with will be reviewed. The importance of parental involvement and implications for parents concerning each of the issues mentioned above will also be addressed.

Overview of Factors that Contribute to High School Dropout Rate and Retention

There is a range of reasons why students choose to drop out of high school such as family, school, neighborhood, peers, parental support, and ninth grade performance. According to a study done by Allensworth and Easton in 2007 there are a variety of freshman year indicators that can be used to predict high school graduation. These
factors include number of course failures among freshman, grade point average, course absences, and their educational experience prior to high school. Similarly, a study done by Civic Enterprises for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation examined the views of diverse youth, ages 16-25, who failed to complete high school (Azzam, 2007). They found that the top five reasons for dropout were students were a) bored with school b) had missed too many days and could not catch up c) spent time with people who were not interested in school d) were failing, and/or e) had too much freedom and not enough rules in their lives (Azzam, 2007).

Lack of Parental Involvement with Children in High School

Many schools in the United States in low-income areas with large populations report difficulty engaging high numbers of their parents in the school community (Moles, 1993). The lack of involvement can be attributed to a range of reasons, including parents not feeling welcomed and not having many opportunities to be involved. Miscommunication about what schools and parents believe is the appropriate form of parent involvement in their child’s education is often due to cultural and social differences among the parents and school staff (Moles, 1993). Parents who are not involved are often uninformed or unaware about the academic pressures their child will face in high school (Moles, 1993).

Academic Pressures

Academic material is more challenging in high school and many students struggle to adjust to the pace at which the class is taught and the advanced material they are responsible for learning. Phelan, Hanh and Davidson (1992) declared that excessive pressure to achieve academically could result in unintentional educational costs. Rise in
academic pressure on ninth grade students causes stressful thoughts about their future (Phelan et al., 1992). Academic pressure has also been found to cause competition among students that can hinder peer relationships, and may cause students to simply “learn how to play the game” by solely concentrating on achieving high grades rather than learning the material (Phelan et al., 1992).

In Chicago, it was found that inadequate credit accumulation in the freshman year, which usually results from course failures, is highly predictive of failing to graduate (Allensworth & Easton, 2007). Many students give up after the first semester or two because they are so behind in credits that it is too daunting to re-take and pass all of the failed courses.

Many students link academic achievement to long-range educational and personal goals. Phelan et al. (1992) documented a child who stated, “My entire future is riding on my grades,” and another who said, “It is not just my grades, it’s my future.” Many high school students solely attribute their academic achievement as the level of success they are going to have in their future and in many facets of their lives. Excessive pressure to achieve academically can result in increased stress levels and students ability to concentrate (Phelan et al., 1992). The researchers in the study conducted by Phelan et al. on navigating the psycho/social pressures of adolescence indicated that some first time high school students actually lose interest in learning in result of these pressures. This attitude can be attributed to a portion of the thirty percent dropout rate in ninth grade (1992).

High school is the first time that students earn credit for graduation over the course of four years and in middle school grades were not thought of comprehensively
Therefore, students are plunged into an environment where every grade in each class matters and may affect their future negatively or positively (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). Although it is true that a student’s grades may be the main deciding factor on whether or not a student gets accepted to a college of their choice, the excessive stress on this idea can cause a teenager to have an unhealthy level of anxiety. The idea that grades a student earns will make or break their entire future as a professional and as an individual causes feelings of insecurity and self-doubt. This way of thinking may also elicit more extreme feelings of depression, harming one’s self, or the people they may hold responsible (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010).

According to Phelan, Hanh and Davidson (1992), academic stress is also present when students become preoccupied with their grades, which in turn leads to competitive behavior with friends. While competition is not necessarily bad, when it becomes a driving force overriding relationships with friends, students are often left with feelings of loneliness and conflicting thoughts. Students struggle with whether their friendships or their grades are more important. Conflict arises among adolescents and their peers when they engage in this academic competitiveness, which can result in loss of friends, a support system, and decrease in social life. Biologically human beings long to feel connected with one another and a damaging level of competitiveness among peers can lead to instability and negative thoughts towards one’s self (Phelan et al., 1992).

The last significant academic cost that increased pressure can result in is when students try to simply “learn to play the game” and lose interest in learning (Phelan et al., 1992). Many adolescents lack the inclination to retain classroom material after their exams and learn the ins and outs on how to achieve a good grade without learning or
putting in a large effort. The No Child Left Behind law has contributed to students’ attitudes towards test taking (Azzam, 2007). Many students are now focusing on strategies to help them excel on standardized tests and have less interest in learning the material (Azzam, 2007). Students who once had a zest for math, writing, or learning a foreign language lose interest in the subject and concentrate on learning the system of how good grades can be earned. Once an adolescent develops this attitude on grades it is very hard to change their mindset (Azzam, 2007). They often struggle in college because they have failed to learn the pre-requisite material and do not have a solid foundation of knowledge (Azzam, 2007).

**Parental Involvement and Academic Success**

If parental involvement is shown to increase their student’s success parents should be educated on the standards their children are being held to (Mizelle and Judith, 2000). Too often parents are unaware of the high school standards their student needs to adhere by to receive a high school diploma. An article written by Robert Blum in 1997 states that even the best schools can’t succeed on their own because students need active and engaged parents. A case study done by Ouimette, Feldman and Rung at the Boston Arts Academy in 2006 concluded that nothing is more important than a child’s success in school than a parent’s direct involvement in his or her education and active participation (Ouimette, Feldman, & Rosann, 2006). Academic pressures to achieve in high school can create stresses or non-motivation for children making the transition between middle and high school. One of the most important influences in a student’s high school academic career is support and encouragement from his or her parents. In a study conducted in Canada, Rodgers, Theule, Ryan, Adams and Keating (2009), found that
encouraging learning-related behaviors with support and praise is typically associated with higher school achievement. On the other hand, parents need to be aware of what negative academic involvement entails so they are aware what not to do. For example, punishment or criticism of adolescent’s grades has been found to have very negative effects on a student’s academic achievement (Rodgers et al., 2009). Parents whose children are making the transition to high school need to be aware that participation with homework, active management of the learning environment, and encouragement make a large difference in the way that their child is going to adjust to the academic environment in ninth grade (Rodgers et al., 2009). Parental involvement is vital because it not only can enhance their child’s academic experience at high school and influence their future, but it can help their child avoid excessive stress or no motivation that results in their child dropping out (Rodgers et al., 2009). Along with the social and academic pressures there are many pressures that students face when it comes to the use of technology.

Requirements for Graduating High School

Many parents expect their children to graduate high school and move on to a higher education such as a state university or community college, but are uninformed about the grades and requirements their child needs to complete in high school to become eligible or competitively qualified for an institution of higher education (Rodgers et al., 2009). The standards for graduating high school in California and the requirements for becoming eligible for a California State University are different.

The California Department of Education states on their website that to receive a high school diploma in the state of California students must fulfill state and district graduation requirements (California Department of Education, 2011). State-mandated
graduation course requirements are as follows:

- Three years of English
- Two years of mathematics (Including Algebra 1)
- Students who successfully complete Algebra 1 in middle school must still complete a minimum of two years of mathematics in high school.
- Three years of social science (including U.S. history and geography; world history, culture and geography; one semester of American government; and one semester of economics)
- Two years of science (including biology and physical science)
- Two years of physical education
- One year of foreign language or visual performing arts
- Receive a passing score on the California High School Exit Examination

Requirements for Becoming Eligible for a California Community College

CaliforniaColleges.edu states that to be eligible for admission to any of California’s 112 community colleges you have to at least meet one of the following criteria:

- You are 18 of age or older, with or without a high school diploma
- You are a high school graduate
- You have the equivalent of a high school diploma

Requirements for Becoming Eligible for a California State University

CaliforniaColleges.edu states the admission requirements for freshman admission for California residents at the 23 campuses uses three factors to determine eligibility. These three factors are specific high school courses completed, the grades received in
those courses, and graduation from high school. The high school courses required for admission are as follows:

- History and Social Science (including 1 year of U.S history or 1 semester of U.S history and 1 semester of civics or American government AND 1 year of social science)
- English (4 years of college preparatory English composition and literature)
- Math (4 years recommended) including Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra II, or higher mathematics (take one each year)
- Laboratory Science (including 1 biological science and 1 physical science)
- Language Other than English (2 years of the same language; American Sign Language is applicable)
- Visual and Performing Arts (1 year of dance, drama, or theatre, music or visual art)
- College Preparatory Elective (additional year chosen from the University of California A-G list that can be found at CaliforniaColleges.edu).
- Test scores are required unless you have a grade point average of 3.0 or above
- Earn a C or higher in all of the required courses listed above.

**Social Pressures/Peer Pressure**

The dropout rate is not only attributed to the academic pressures but it is also attributed to the social pressures that students are faced with when they enter the ninth grade. Some of these social factors include parental support, socioeconomic status, a student’s peer group, pregnancy, and substance abuse (Allensworth & Easton, 2007). Too often parents lack knowledge of the new high school pressures their children will
face (Ouimette, Feldman, & Rosann, 2006). Parents often reduce their involvement in their students’ lives when they transition to high school because they feel it is necessary to give their offspring more freedom (Ouimette, Feldman, & Rosann, 2006). In reality it is one of the most crucial times in a child’s life when parental support is fundamental for them to be successful. The reasons for lack of parental involvement are numerous. Social pressures that students face when entering high school continue to increase and change year after year. Currently the leading social pressures that escalate when a child transitions from middle to high school are acceptance by peers, drugs/alcohol use, and sexuality (Santor, Masservey, & Kusumakar, 2000).

Peer pressure is present throughout the majority of a child’s life and can continue into adulthood but it is often times the most influential during high school. One of the primary tasks of adolescence is to become a member in a peer group. “Peer groups influence adolescent socialization and identity by allowing young persons to explore individual interests and uncertainties while retaining a sense of belonging and continuity within a group of friends,” (Santor, Masservey, & Kusumakar, 2000). Being a member of a peer group is crucial in high school and benefits an adolescent in multiple ways, but can be detrimental if a child becomes a member of a group who uses strong influence and pressure in a negative manner. A study conducted by Farrell in 1990 indicates that peers seem to have more immediate impact on the student’s life than family (Farrell, 1991). If members of a student’s peer group do not value success in school and choose to fail classes or dropout of school, that student is more likely to dropout (Gioncola, 2000). Association with peers who encourage risk taking can be severely hazardous to teenagers. A study done by Susan Gioncola (2000) found that peer influence greatly increased a
student’s risk for behavior problems, substance abuse, and dropout. Often substance abuse and sexual activity represent efforts to conform to the norms of the group and demonstrate loyalty and dedication to its members (2000).

Drugs and alcohol have been abused in high schools for generations and substance abuse continues to have a great impact on teenager health and well-being. Werner (1991) notes that among adolescents, the use of drugs and alcohol often result in accidents, homicides, suicides, and causes significant adverse effects on a student’s mental, physical, and social state. When adolescents transition in to high school they often find drugs and alcohol fairly accessible. The escalated stressors that high school creates for an adolescent can lead to them to turn to drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism for their heightened level of anxiety (Crockett, Rafaelli, & Shen, 2006). A comprehensive literature analysis conducted by Mensch and Kandel found that prior use of marijuana and other illicit drugs increases the propensity to drop out of high school (Mensch & Kandel, 2000). Buzy, McDonald, Swank, Rosenfeld, and Simkek (2004) conducted a survey which found that among female adolescence, overall levels of alcohol use have been linked to unwanted intercourse.

Peer pressure is the leading reason that students abuse alcohol and drugs and it also has a great influence over a student’s involvement in sexually risky activity (2004). “Thirty four percent of teenage girls in the U.S are becoming pregnant before the age of 20. The teen pregnancy rate in the U.S is ten times that of Japan, four times those of France and Germany, and near twice that of Great Britain,” (Justice & Democracy forum on the Leading Social Indicators in Nevada, 2004, p.1). A study conducted by Douglas Anderson in 1993 found that becoming pregnant in high school dramatically increases the
chances of dropout (Anderson, 1993). The aforementioned statistics are alarming and parental involvement in these issues can help decrease the percentages mentioned above.

*Parental Awareness of Social Pressures*

Many parents of first time high school students are not aware of the intensity of the social stresses involving peer pressure, sexuality, and substance abuse (Miller-Day 2008). Parental involvement and preparedness can have a positive effect on their student’s influences at school and the choices they make. Parents who have not yet had an adolescent, who has been up against relentless peer pressure to engage in sexual activity, or drink alcohol or do drugs, needs be educated about the issues with which their teenager will have to deal.

Also, it is imperative for parents to be aware of the positive difference they can make in their adolescent’s high school experience and in many ways their entire future. For a parent, discussing substance abuse and sexual behavior with their child may seem scary or intimidating, or they may feel it is unnecessary, but at the high school level it can make a great impact. Eisenberg, Sieving, Bearinger, Swain, and Resnik (2006) conducted a research study involving 1,069 telephone interviews with parents of adolescents, finding that parents often miss opportunities to influence their teen’s behavior and many of the parents thought initiating conversation about sexuality with their children was too early. The researchers also comment that a number of studies have indicated that if parents engage in conversation with their child about romantic relationships before they are romantically involved, their child will make better choices when it comes to engaging sexually with one’s partner (2006). In another study, Aspy, Vesley, Oman, Rodine, LaDonna, and McLeroy (2007) found that “youth were much less
likely to have initiated sexual intercourse if their parents taught them to set clear rules, talked about what is right and wrong, and about delaying sexual activity,” (2007, p. 460). A study by Miller-Day (2008) indicated that adolescents would make better decisions and be less likely to act on peer pressure if their parents are involved. It is imperative that parents have an opportunity to become educated about the pressure that their adolescent may be faced with and are taught lessons on how to deal with these issues if they arise. Miller-Day’s study researched the effects of parent-child communication on substance abuse. He found that it is important for prevention efforts to be geared towards parents and not just adolescents, so parental communication about substance abuse can be enhanced. This study also found adolescents who had open communication with their parents about their “no tolerance” rule towards drugs and alcohol drugs were less likely to abuse substances (2008).

Technological Advances/Pressures

Digital media, such as text messaging, blogs or chat rooms, Internet social networking sites and smartphones or MP3 players, have changed the landscape in which children interact (Mizelle & Irvin, 2000). The growth of digital media has been both beneficial and hazardous to adolescents (Mizelle & Irvin, 2000). Children have access to technology at a very young age and many new ways to misuse it have been created (Mizelle and Irvin, 2000). Mizelle and Irvin (2000) state that although technology is widely used by middle school students, their parents often regulate it more closely at this age. High school students make up the majority of children who abuse technology. This is attributed to a lower level of regulation from parents and increase in sexual nature and bullying at this age. Adolescents between the ages of 12-17 spend an average of 12.5
hours online per week, 77% of children 15-17 have a social networking profile, and over 75% of children between the ages of 14-17 have a cell phone, 58% of which have text messaging. Three widespread ways that adolescents abuse the use of technology is by “sexting,” “cyber bullying,” and attempts to form friendships and romantic relationships over the Internet (2000).

According to Boucek (2009), “Sexting” is a term that can be defined as sharing nude or semi-nude pictures and videos of oneself on social networking profiles and/or via mobile phones. According to the nationwide survey by the National Campaign to Support Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy roughly 20% of teens admit to participating in sexting (“Sex and Tech: Results from a Survey of Teens and Young Adults,” 2008). A main concern of sexting is that sexual content posted by teens may prompt the perception among teen viewers that sex is normal, risk-free, and even fashionable (Brown, Keller, & Stern, 2009). Often times the sexual content is forwarded or passed on to peers that were not intended to view the image, which results in damaged reputations, and broken friendships and relationships. Sex and Tech: Results from a Survey of Teens and Young Adults (2008) reported a specific example of the negative repercussions that sexting can bring about, in which three female adolescents at a high school in Pennsylvania sent nude pictures via their cell phones to three male fellow students. All six students are being charged with possessing child pornography. This new technological phenomenon is dangerous and students making the transition in to high school will most likely encounter sexting in one form or another.

“Cyber-bullying” is also a new technological phenomenon among adolescents. A study done by Berkman Center for Internet and Society defined cyber-bullying as
harassment and victimization over the Internet (Darden, 2009). There are many methods for cyber-bullying, including harassment by text message, voice mails, emails, chat rooms, social networking sites, and instant messaging. This study indicated that students on the receiving end of cyber-bullying report greater emotional anxiety, are more likely to abuse substances, and are more frequently depressed (2009). Bullying and harassment are the most frequent threats minors face and, now that it has shifted in to the online realm as well, the frequency is increasing. Many students who would be hesitant to bully a peer face to face now have a new and easy realm for bullying through the Internet. The student can remain anonymous, and harassment is easier over a technological medium, such as the Internet, than making threats or distasteful comments in person. Many parents give more technological freedom to students in high school than they do in middle school (Darden, 2009). Therefore, when students enter the ninth grade they have a new found independence with their use of technology and often find themselves the victim or perpetrator of cyber-bullying. With just the click of a mouse students can find themselves immersed in an online world of harassment (2009).

An article titled “Keeping Cyberteen Safe” written by Pack in 2006 explains that students have also found a new way to use technology to their advantage through making friends and entering in to romantic relationships over the Internet. Social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter make it possible for students to develop relationships without ever being in the same room. According to Pack (2006), social networking sites are places where students can make a personal profile of several details about themselves, share photos, write blogs, and send e-mails and instant message one another throughout an online community. There are some benefits to social networking
such as an environment for meeting friends and building relationships, keeping in touch with friends, and developing one’s communication skills (2006).

However, the benefits can be offset by the negative aspects of social networking and risks that come with online socializing. As mentioned above, social networking sites are the main channels by which cyber-bullying is conducted (Darden, 2006). Students who have been bullied on the Internet are more likely to fail classes due to not attending school because they are scared. Failing classes and feeling threatened in the school environment has been found to lead to dropout (Darden, 2006). Also, many predators use social networking sites to trick adolescents in to meeting up with them or luring them to engage in sexual acts. An example of this occurred in Middletown, Connecticut where seven teenage girls had consensual sex with men they met on MySpace, adult men who claimed to be younger online (Darden, 2006). Many students and parents are not aware of the dangers of social networking and they can easily fall in to a trap that could lead to harassment, dropout, rape, or even death.

**Parental Implications on Technological Advances/Pressures**

It is extremely risky for high school students to have unregulated access to the Internet with no parental control and many parents back off the computer regulation when their child makes the transition in to high school (Olagunju, 2008). Parents whose children are making the transition cannot underestimate the large role that technology plays in their child’s present and future as a high school student. Amos Olagunju (2008) states “parental involvement is crucial for raising children with healthy Internet access habits to social and educational materials,” (pg. 1). Parents need to be aware of current technology and continue regulation even after their child enters high school. Parental
involvement can mean the difference between their child’s mental, physical and social well-being. The social, academic, and technological pressures have been examined and the importance of parental involvement has shown to make a positive impact on an adolescent’s life.

**Review of Available Programs**

There are programs that have been developed, similar to the project that will be developed here. The purpose of the programs that have been developed is to educate parents about the important role that they should play in their high school students’ lives. Many of these also present how their involvement can positively or negatively affect their teenager’s high school experience.

Numerous attempts have been made to mandate parent involvement programs at the local, state, and national levels. An article written by Thornburg in 1981 stated that California mandated “comprehensive programs of parent involvement require schools to include parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles,” (Thornburg, 1981). A few of the requirements for these programs were to help parents develop skills and have conditions at home that support learning and to provide parents with techniques on how to support children academically. These mandated programs have been carried out in various areas of California and in all situations researchers found a positive correlation with parental education and involvement and student achievement (Thornburg, 1981).

Johnson, Jiang and Yoon (2000) conducted a study that consisted of 1,275 parents who lived in urban areas of Los Angeles to determine if a parent education workshop would change parent behaviors related to student achievement. They found that parents who attended the education workshop helped their child more often with homework and
attended their adolescent’s school activities more frequently. This in turn positively correlated with an increase in many of their children’s academic achievement and outlook on the importance of high school (2000).

**Summary**

The transitional period from middle to high school is a crucial time in a child’s lives and if parents are more involved it can increase the chance of their child success in high school and lessen the chances of them dropping out (Thornburg, 1981). There are many factors that contribute to the high school dropout rate and the most prevalent have been discussed in this chapter. These factors include social, academic, and technological pressures that are new to a student entering high school. High school graduation requirements and freshman admission requirements to a California State University for California residents and requirements for admissions to a California Community College were also mentioned. Programs similar to this workshop have been shown to be successful in increasing their child’s academic achievement (Johnson et al., 2000). The need for more parental workshops is clearly represented in this chapter. Chapter III will discuss the organization and details of this parent workshop.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis project is to develop a workshop curriculum for parents of students entering their freshman year in high schools. This workshop is specifically created to educate parents on the technological, academic, and social changes that their will face in high school and teach them how to become more involved in their children’s lives. Increased parental involvement has been shown to decrease dropout rates and increase student performance, which is what this program aims to accomplish (Johnson et al., 2000).

The workshop is broken up into two parts. The first part of the workshop is designed to be presented using a PowerPoint presentation. The first forty-five minutes of the workshop presentation will include an introduction of all of the school staff members who chose to attend the presentation, statistics on dropout rate and how parental involvement can improve the success of their incoming high school student. The first portion of the workshop will also go over the academic pressures and requirements to graduate high school and what is required to pursue higher education.

The second portion will address the social and technological pressures and changes that children will face once they enter high school. Parents will be educated on how to be aware of the new issues their child may encounter and become equipped with strategies on how to deal with them when and if their child faces these issues. The workshop was developed in an effort to provide a presentation for school counselors to utilize when educating the parents of the incoming freshman class each year.

This chapter will provide the reader with information regarding the development
of the project, the intended audience, personal qualifications for persons intended to provide the service, and environment and equipment that will be utilized. It will also discuss how feedback will be gathered and analyzed and the outline of the content of this workshop will be stated.

**Development of Project**

The beginning phase of development for this project consisted of a thorough review of current literature and educational websites to gather information for the parent presentation. The topics that were researched included reasons for high school dropout rates, academic, social, and technological advances and how they affect the dropout rate, and how parents can positively become involved in their child’s academic success at the high school level. Information on each one of these topics has been incorporated into the PowerPoint that will be presented.

**Intended Audience**

The proposed workshop is geared towards parents of the incoming freshman class of the school that the presentation is taking place to educate them about the various academics standards and social pressures their child will encounter in high school. It will also educate them on the new age of technology and how being positively involved in their child’s ninth grade educational experience can increase their student’s success. The parents may be from differing cultural and educational backgrounds but the workshop presentation will be given in English, as will the PowerPoint presentation and handouts.

Attendance of this workshop would be voluntary, so it is expected that parents who are already involved in their child’s life or more interested in this subject would be more likely to attend. As this workshop is intended to target those parents who are less
involved in their child’s lives or who are unsure about how to become more involved, it is important to also advertise by phone. School staff would call each incoming freshman’s parents and notify them of the date and time of the parent workshop. That way all parents, not just the involved ones, would receive the information about the workshop. All guardians of the student will be contacted whether it is a mother, father, legal guardian, or caregiver. This is because these are the people most responsible for their upbringing and often the most influential in their lives.

Formative Evaluation

After the project was developed and the PowerPoint was assembled I met with two high school counselors. I gave them a verbal explanation of the purpose of the project and its intended audience. I also gave them a questionnaire that included questions such as, “Would you use this presentation at your high school?” and “What areas of the presentation are the most important?” The questionnaire is in Appendix B. The results of this questionnaire will be explained in Chapter 4 titled Formative Project Evaluation.

Personal Qualifications

The ideal facilitator of this workshop is a high school counselor. The school counselor would have completed a master’s degree in counseling from an accredited university and have their pupil personnel services credential or marriage and family therapy license. The school counselor chosen should have excellent oral communication skills and be comfortable speaking in front of large groups of people. Ideally the school counselor would have knowledge of the beliefs, ideals, and socioeconomic status of the parent population they are presenting to and be sensitive and non-judgmental to their
values. The presenter must have a polite and hospitable attitude and be open to answering questions about the presentation once the information has been relayed. This school counselor should aim to build relationships with the parent community that last throughout their child’s educational experience at the high school and ideally would continue when the child moves on to graduate or pursue a higher education.

**Environment and Equipment**

This workshop would be presented at the high school that the parent’s children will be attending. It would be held in the school gym, which will be large enough to host the amount of parents that will be invited to attend. The school will provide the equipment that would be used during this presentation. The equipment needed would include a projector used to present the PowerPoint presentation and some tables from the cafeteria to set the food and drinks. The PowerPoint presentation that would be presented during the workshop can be found in Appendix A of this document.

**Project Outline**

The introduction to the workshop will entail an introduction of the school counselor and of any school staff that is present during the workshop. The dropout and retention statistics will be stated and the reasons for the dropout including parent involvement will be mentioned. The remainder of the first portion of the workshop will be spent informing parents on the importance of their child’s success academically in high school. The importance of parental involvement in the academic success of their child is going to be mentioned. The high school graduation requirements and college requirements will be clearly stated in this portion of the workshop so the parents are aware of the academic standards that their children are responsible for. Ways that parents
can be positively involved in their child’s academic life will be mentioned.

The second part of the workshop will present the social and technological changes and pressures that high school students may encounter. This portion of the workshop will talk about acceptance by peers, drugs/alcohol use, and sexuality. After the social pressures are discussed the technological advances will be addressed. Technology can be both beneficial and hazardous to teens and during this segment of the workshop the hazards will be discussed. The technological hazards include “cyberbullying,” “sexting,” the negative uses of social networks such as Facebook and MySpace and texting on cell phones. After the social and technological concerns are presented the implications for parents on these topics will be discussed. Parents will become educated on how to understand and recognize that their child is facing one of these issues and how they can go about addressing this concern with their child. To conclude the workshop there will be a summary of the social, academic, and technological concerns that high school students face and an emphasis will be made on the need for parent involvement. After the conclusion there will be extra time allotted when parents will be encouraged to ask questions.
CHAPTER IV: FORMATIVE PROJECT EVALUATION

Summary of Project

This project is a parent workshop that is geared toward first time parents of high school students. It will be offered before their children start high school. This project aims to lower the ninth-grade dropout rate by improving parental involvement during their child’s middle to high school transition. This workshop aims to inform parents on the importance of their child’s success academically in high school. The factors that contribute to high school dropout rate and retention are mentioned along with other academic pressures. The high school graduation requirements and college requirements are clearly stated in the first portion of the workshop.

The second part of the workshop will educate parents on the social and technological changes and pressures their child will be dealing with at the high school level. It will also teach them the tools they need to properly address the challenges their child may face at the high school level. There are new reasons why children are choosing to drop out or experience lack of success in high school.

The workshop will result in more parents becoming aware of the challenges their teenagers will face in high school and learning strategies to help them prepare for and overcome such issues. School counselors can utilize this workshop to increase the success of the students at the high school level.

Summary of Evaluation Results

Copies of the workshop curriculum were distributed to three professional school counselors to review and provide feedback about the overall effectiveness and quality of the proposed workshop. These professionals were asked to complete a brief evaluation.
form located in Appendix B about the workshop. This section will examine their reviews.

An e-mail explaining the purpose of why this project was developed, the intention of the curriculum, and the purpose of the survey was given to the reviewing professionals along with the curriculum. The first part of the survey included seven Likert scale questions with a rating from 1 to 5. The scale is one representing a rating of poor to five representing a rating of excellent. The following seven Likert scale questions were accompanied by a rating scale from 1 to 5:

- Applicability of this project to your school population/need
- The degree the presentation met its stated objectives
- The degree the presentation was clear/easy for intended audience to understand
- The extent the evaluator thinks the project will increase parental involvement
- The extend that the evaluator thinks the project will positively impact dropout rate
- Is the length of the presentation suitable for the target audience and the overall rating of the presentation

The following four open ended questions were also included in the survey:

- Would you use this presentation at your high school? If so, why? If not, why?
- Which areas of the presentation are the most important?
- What topics would you add to the presentation?
- What topics would you take out of the presentation?

There was also an area at the end of the form to add additional comments or suggestions.

Survey Feedback

The three school counseling professionals provided insightful and valuable
reviews about the parent education workshop. All three of the counselors reported that the workshop met its stated objectives and gave it an overall rating of excellent. Each counselor gave it a rating of 4 or higher for positively impacting the dropout rate and increasing parental involvement.

Two out of three of the school counselors reported that they would use this presentation at their school. The counselor who felt she would not use this project has a less than 1% dropout rate at her high school but mentioned that she feels it would be effective at high schools with a higher dropout rate and need.

Two of the school counselors mentioned that they felt some of the points might be too complex for the parents to understand. They suggested I should revise the language to reach a larger audience. I made many changes to the PowerPoint to make it easier to understand. After seeing the changes the school counselors approved it for all parent audiences.

One of the school counselors felt that this presentation should be in Spanish as well as English. They also mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a Spanish-speaking faculty member present during the presentation who can be available for those parents who do not speak English. I agree that this would be extremely beneficial and I hope to have the resources to make this presentation possible in more than one language in the future. I added a suggestion in the facilitator guide to have a person present who speaks the language that the majority of the population speaks if it is other than English.

It was suggested that the sources throughout the presentation may make the slides crowded and take away from the information. Therefore, the sources were moved to the end of each slide to the parents know where to refer for the information but would not be
bombarded with sources throughout the bullet points on each slides.

**Summary**

All of the suggestions and comments were taken in to consideration and the workshop was adjusted accordingly. The school counselors agreed that the information was structured well and all of the important points about dropout and parental involvement were mentioned. Overall, the reviews were positive and all three of the school counselors felt that this program would make a positive impact on the dropout rate.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Summary

An Educational Workshop for First Time Parents of High School Students is a presentation for school counselors or school-based marriage and family therapists to educate parents about the importance of their potential influence and support during their child’s transition from middle to high school. There are many new social and academic pressures students encounter in high school which many parents are not aware.

The problem that this project addresses is the lack of parental involvement in student’s transition from middle to high school. This project aims to show parents that being positively involved in their child’s lives can help their child achieve more, adjust better, and help prevent issues like substance abuse or dropout. The first portion of the workshop will inform parents on the importance of their child’s success academically in high school. Academic pressures and factors that contribute to high school dropout rate and retention will be discussed. The first portion of the workshop will also inform parents about the high school graduation requirements and qualifications to get in to a California State University or Community College.

The second part of the workshop will educate parents on the social and technological changes and pressures their child will be dealing with at the high school level. It will also teach them the skills they can utilize to properly address the challenges their child may face at the high school level.

This project aims to educate parents of the challenges their teenagers will face in high school and teach them strategies to help them prepare for and overcome such issues. The ultimate goal of this project is to lower the ninth grade dropout rate by encouraging
parents to be supportive and positively involved in their child’s transitional experience from middle to high school.

**Recommendations for Implementation**

The logistics of when the workshop is offered and the way advertising is carried out is crucial to the success of this workshop. It is ideal that this workshop be offered twice in one week, once in the evening and once over the weekend for those parents who cannot make it during the weekdays. It is suggested that one of the workshops be offered in Spanish. It is recommended that this workshop be offered within the first few weeks prior to the start of the school year. It is suggested that letters be sent out notifying first time parents of high school students of this workshop at least three weeks prior to the presentation date. It is recommended that phone calls or e-mail be made to all legal guardians of the incoming freshman to inform the parents about the workshop and answer any questions they have about it. Information can also be posted on the school’s website at least three weeks prior to the presentation so parents can access information on their computer as well.

**Finances and Incentives**

It is recommended that the workshop pay for bus fees to get to and from the workshop and will have a separate room for childcare of the younger children that will be provided by a volunteer school staff member and other high school student volunteers. Some suggested incentives for attending the workshop would be to offer free food and drinks, which can be paid for through a series of fundraisers that can be done previous to the workshop being presented. School counselors and other school staff can be responsible for putting on the fundraisers and can encourage students to be involved to
raise money for this cause.

Space Requirements

It is suggested that the workshop be held on the high school grounds in an indoor area large enough to comfortably seat audience members. The room provided should be technologically prepared for visual and audio presentations. If there is a large turnout it may be necessary for the facilitator to have a microphone and speakers.

Facilitator

It is suggested that the facilitator of the workshop be a school counselor and/or a licensed marriage and family therapist. The facilitator should encourage members of the school staff to attend so parents can meet the staff and become acquainted with the adults their children will be spending the next four years with.

Recommendations for Future Research

Many studies have shown that positive parental involvement during this difficult transition can lessen the chances of a student dropping out of high school. Further research could be done on the subject of parental involvement and its positive effects on students’ transition from middle to high school.

Research could be done to determine whether or not the students of the parents who attended this workshop have better outcomes. The students of the parents who attended the workshop could be compared to a group of students whose parents did not attend the workshop and items such as dropout rate, attendance, grades, and discipline records should be compared and analyzed. There could also be research done on the parents who attend the workshop and if the parents did in fact become more positively involved in their child’s life after attending the workshop. Surveys on amount and type of
parental involvement should be given to parents and children before and after the workshop and follow up surveys should be taken each year for the remainder of the students’ time at the high school. This would determine whether or not the workshop was successful in getting parents more positively involved in their child’s life and the longevity of the involvement.

Conclusion

As young adolescents make the move to high school, they experience a more competitive, grade-oriented environment, with greater pressures involving sex, drugs, alcohol, as well as an increase in bullying and difficulty in peer relationships (Herlihy, 2007). Mizelle and Judith (2000) indicated when parents are more involved in the transition from middle to high school their children have been found to achieve more, adjust better, and are less likely to drop out. Unless schools encourage parental involvement during this period in their child’s life, parents tend to decrease their involvement in their student’s school related activities and personal lives because of the increased independence of their child (Ouimette, Feldman, & Rosann, 2006).

This workshop curriculum was created for school counselors or a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) to implement as an intervention focused on parents. School counselors and school based LMFT’s are in an ideal position to educate parents on the issues that take place during this transition and how they can prevent their child from drop out, failing out of school, and developing mental health issues due to various new pressures and excessive amounts of stress. This parental workshop can help parents realize the significant effect they have on their children’s adjustment from middle to high school. This workshop hopes to result in making parents aware of the challenges
their teenagers will face in high school and to teach them strategies to help them prepare for and overcome such issues.
REFERENCES


Santor, A. D., Masservey, D., & Kusumakar, V. (2000, April). Measuring peer pressure, popularity, and conformity in adolescent boys and girls: predicting school


To the Facilitator of *An Educational Workshop for First Time Parents of High School Students*:

The focus of this workshop will be to encourage parents to stay active or become more involved in their child’s lives during their freshman year and throughout the remainder of their high school education. This workshop is also intended to educate parents on how they can become positively involved in their child’s lives and help them become aware of the issues their child may encounter. Strategies of how parents can address these issues are also discussed in this workshop.

*Timeline and Advertising*

It is ideal that this workshop be offered twice in one week, once in the evening and once over the weekend for those parents who cannot make it during the weekdays. It is suggested that this workshop be offered within the first few weeks prior to the start of the school year. It is also suggested that the workshop be done once in Spanish for those parents who do not speak English. Advertising will be done by phone, mail, and Internet. It is suggested that letters be sent out notifying first time parents of high school students of this workshop at least three weeks prior to the presentation date. It is recommended that phone calls or e-mail be made to all legal guardians of the incoming freshman to inform the parents about the workshop and answer any questions they have about it. Information can also be posted on the schools website at least three weeks prior to the presentation so parents can access information on their computer as well.

*Finances and Incentives*

It is recommended that if at all possible the workshop pay for bus fees to get to and from the workshop and will have a separate room for childcare of the younger
children that will be provided by a volunteer school staff member and other high school student volunteers. Some suggested incentives for attending the workshop would be to offer free food and drink which can be paid for through a series of fund raisers that can be done previous to the workshop being presented. School counselors and other school staff can be responsible for putting on the fundraisers and can encourage students to be involved to raise money for this cause. It is suggested that students receive volunteer hours that can be place on their college applications and that can count towards the volunteer hours required to graduate, if your high school requires this. Grants can also be written that can be used towards the childcare services, food, bus fees etc.

Space Requirements

It is suggested that the workshop be held on the high school grounds in an indoor area large enough to comfortably seat audience members. The room provided should be technologically prepared for visual and audio presentations. The workshop will require use of a projector and a screen large enough for all parents to see the information being displayed on the screen. If there is a large turnout it may be necessary for the facilitator to have a microphone and speakers.

Preparation

There should be a sign in sheet for all parents. Nametags and pens should be placed on a table near the sign-in sheets so each parent can create their own nametag. There should be paper and pens provided as the parents enter the presentation room so they can take notes throughout the presentation if desired.

Facilitator

It is suggested that the facilitator of the workshop be a school counselor and/or a
licensed marriage and family therapist. The facilitator should encourage members of the school staff to attend so parents can meet the staff and become acquainted with the adults their children will be spending the next four years with. It is recommended that there is a school staff member or volunteer who speaks the language of the majority of the population if it is a language other than English so they can translate information and be available for questions. It is recommended that the facilitator read over the PowerPoint slides multiple times to be prepared for the presentation.

**Organization of Workshop**

This workshop is divided into two separate parts. The first portion starts at the Introduction slide and goes until the A-G requirements. It is suggested that there be a fifteen minute break for people to use the restroom and ask questions. The last portion of the workshop will start by introducing the social pressures that high school students face and continue through the end of the presentation. After the presentation the facilitator and the school staff present should let parents know they are available to answer any questions the parents may have. Upon leaving parents should receive a handout of the printed out PowerPoint slides that they can refer back to if needed. The copies would be made at the school prior to the presentation. The facilitator is to follow the information on the slides and can add any additional information they see fit while going over the various subjects.
WELCOME!

- We are so glad that you are all here!
- We are excited to have our new class of ninth graders and are happy that you want to be involved in their time here.
- Introduction of staff and school counselors as well as presenters.
Purpose of Workshop

- We want your child to be successful in high school!
- There are many new social pressures your child will encounter.
  - Substance Abuse
  - Academic Pressure
- When parents are positively involved during this transition from middle to high school students
  - achieve more
  - adjust better
  - are less likely to drop out
- So it is a good thing you are here!
  - Source (Mizelle and Judith, 2000)

Agenda Part 1

- Dropout statistics and reasons for dropout.
- Academic pressures
- Requirements for graduating high school and becoming eligible for a CSU or Community College
Slide 5

**Dropout Rates**

- **Dropout Rates are on the Rise**
  - Although there is increasing acknowledgment that receiving a high school diploma is the minimum requirement for success in the work force, the dropout rate in the United States is continuing to rise.
  - Nationally nearly one-third (33%) of students do not graduate from high school.
    - Sources (Allensworth & Easton, 2007) and (California Department of Education, 2011)

Slide 6

**Top Five Reasons For Dropout**

- Bored with school
- Missed too many days
- Spent time with people who were not interested in school
- Currently failing
- To much freedom/not enough rules

Source (Azzam, 2007)
Reasons for Dropout That Will be Addressed Today

- To much freedom/not enough rules
  - How parents can be positively involved in their child’s life.
- Spending time with people who were not interested in school or who would be considered a bad influence
  - Academic Pressures
  - Peer Pressures
  - Social Pressures

Why are Parents Not Involved?

- They do not feel welcome
- They are not given opportunities to become involved
- Parents and schools have different ideas of what parent involvement requires
  - Source (Moles, 1993)
Academic Reasons for Dropout

- Academic material is more challenging in high school.
  - Students struggle to adjust to a faster pace curriculum
  - Responsible for learning more advanced material
- Excessive pressure to achieve academically could result in unintentional educational costs.

Responses to Academic Pressure

- Stressful thoughts about their future
- Unhealthy competition is developed
- Adopt a view that good grades is more important than learning the material.
- Overwhelming to re-take any failed classes
Some students feel that the grades they receive in high school determine the success of their future.

- This type of thinking results in feelings of insecurity and self-doubt.
- This type of thinking can also result in:
  - Unhealthy level of anxiety
  - Depression
  - Harming one's self
  - Harming others

Concern with grades can lead to competitive behavior.

If competition becomes more important than friends it can result in:

- Feelings of loneliness
- Conflicting thoughts
- Loss of friends
- Loss of support system
- Decrease in social life
- Negative thoughts of oneself
Parental Involvement and Academic Success

- What are the implications for you?
  - Nothing is more important than a child’s success in school than a parent’s direct involvement in his or her education and active participation.
  - Encouraging learning-related behaviors with support and praise is typically associated with higher school achievement.

Source: (Mizelle and Judith, 2000)

Types of Involvement

- Negative Involvement
  - What should parents NOT do?
    • Punish or criticize adolescent’s grades
    • Become overly involved or overly protective of student

Source: http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/PFIE/families.html
Types of Involvement

o Positive Involvement
  – What TO do
    • Homework assistance if possible
    • Establish a daily family routine with schedule homework time
    • Use TV wisely
    • Actively manage learning environment
    • Encourage students to do well
    • Instill values that learning and academics is important
    • Let them know it is OK to make mistakes
    • Be educated about high school graduation requirements and requirements to go on to higher institution of education so you can help your child get to where they want to be.

Academic Requirements

o Many parents expect their children to graduate high school and move on to a higher education such as a California State University or Community College.

o Many parents are not aware of the grades and requirements their child needs to complete in high school to become eligible or competitively qualified for an institution of higher education.

o Let’s start by changing the statement above!
Requirements for Graduating High School

- 3 years of English
- 2 years of mathematics (Including Algebra 1)
  - Students who successfully complete Algebra 1 in middle school must still complete a minimum of two years of mathematics in high school.
- 3 years of social science (including U.S history, geography; world history, culture and geography, one semester of American government; and one semester of economics)
- 2 years of science (including biology and physical science)
- 2 years of physical education (PE)
- 1 year of foreign language or visual performing arts
- Receive a passing score on the California High School Exit Examination

Community College Eligibility

- CaliforniaColleges.edu states that to be eligible for admission to any of California’s 112 community colleges you have to at least meet one of the following criteria:
  - 18 or older, with or without a high school diploma
  - High school graduate
  - Have the equivalent of high school diploma
    - Source CaliforniaColleges.edu
NOTE: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ARE DIFFERENT THAN THE REQUIREMENTS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR A CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY!

CaliforniaColleges.edu states the admission requirements for freshman admission for California residents at the 23 campuses uses three factors to determine eligibility.

- Completion of all A-G course requirements
- Grades received in all A-G courses
- Graduation from high school

A-G Requirements

A.) History and Social Science
   - 1 year of U.S history or 1 semester of U.S history and 1 semester of civics or American government AND 1 year of social science

B.) English
   - 4 years of college preparatory English composition and literature

C.) Math
   - 4 years recommended including Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra II, or higher mathematics (take one each year)

D.) Laboratory Science
   - 2 years including 1 biological science and 1 physical science

E.) Language Other than English
   - 2 years of the same language; American Sign Language is applicable

F.) Visual and Performing Arts
   - 1 year of dance, drama, or theatre, music or visual art

G.) College Preparatory Elective
   - additional year of an elective chosen from the University of California A-G list that can be found at CaliforniaColleges.edu
     - Test scores are required unless you have a grade point average of 3.0 or above
     - Earn a C or higher in all of the required courses listed above
Break for Questions

- Questions about:
  - Dropout
  - Academic pressures
  - Requirements for graduating high school
  - Eligibility for a CSU or Community College

Agenda Part 2

- Peer pressure
- Drugs and alcohol
- Depression and suicide
- Your child’s changing sexuality
- Technology
- What you can do to be involved in your child’s success in high school
Peer Pressure

- One of the primary tasks of adolescence is to become a member in a peer group.
- Peer groups can be harmful if a child becomes a member of a group who uses strong influence and pressure in a negative manner.

A study conducted by Farrell in 1990 shows that peers seem to have more immediate impact on the student’s life than family.
- If members of a student’s peer group do not value success in school and choose to fail classes or dropout of school, that student is more likely to dropout.
- Association with peers who encourage risk taking can be severely hazardous to teenagers.
- A study done by Susan Gioncola (2000) found that peer influence greatly increased a student’s risk for behavior problems, substance abuse, and dropout.

- Know who your child hangs out with.
- If you don’t approve of what their friends are doing it is probably a sign that they are not good influences on your child.
Drugs and alcohol have been abused in high schools for generations. Substance abuse continues to have a great impact on teenager health and well-being. Among adolescents, the use of drugs and alcohol often result in accidents, homicides, and suicides. Cause negative affects on a student’s mental and physical health. When adolescents transition into high school they often find drugs and alcohol fairly accessible.

The escalated stressors that high school creates for an adolescent can lead to them to turn to drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism. A comprehensive literature analysis conducted by Mensch and Kandel found that prior use of marijuana and other illicit drugs increases the propensity to drop out of high school. This analysis also found that among female adolescence, overall levels of alcohol use have been linked to unwanted intercourse.
Slide 27

**Signs of Drug Use in High School Students**

- **Behavioral Issues/Any Big Changes such as...**
  - Mood changes or emotional instability
  - Unusually clumsy, stumbling, lack of coordination, poor balance
  - Sullen, withdrawn, depressed
  - Unusually tired
  - Silent, uncommunicative
  - Hostile, angry, uncooperative
  - Deceitful or secretive
  - Makes endless excuses
  - Decreased motivation
  - Periods of sleeplessness or high energy, followed by long periods of "catch up" sleep

Slide 28

**Signs of Drug Use/Alcohol Use**

- **Personal Appearance**
  - Messy, careless appearance
  - Poor hygiene
  - Red, flushed cheeks
  - Red eyes

- **School Issues**
  - Truancy of loss of interest in schoolwork
  - Drop in grades
  - Loss of interest in extracurricular activities, hobbies or sports
  - Complaints from teachers

4/7/2012

Source: http://timetoact.drugfree.org/think-look-for-signs.html
Slide 29

**Signs of Mental Health Issues**

- Adjusting to high school can be difficult for some children especially if they face bullying or find it hard to fit in.
- Although there are many mental health issues that teenagers face depression is one of the most dangerous.
- Depression - a psychiatric disorder showing symptoms such as persistent feelings of hopelessness, dejection, poor concentration, lack of energy, inability to sleep, and, sometimes, suicidal tendencies.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds.


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Slide 30

**Signs of Depression**

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger, or hostility
- Tearfulness or frequent crying
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of interest and activities
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Restlessness and agitation
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Source: [http://helpguide.org/mental/depression_teen.htm](http://helpguide.org/mental/depression_teen.htm)
Slide 31

You Are The Expert!

- You are the expert on your child.
- You know what is normal and what is not.
- If you have any suspicions of drug/alcohol use, promiscuous behaviors, or signs of mental health issues such as depression or self harm act immediately by:
  - Contact suicide hotline
  - Contact school counselors
  - Contact community mental health agency
  - Take child to hospital if thoughts of self harm or harm of others exists

Source (Anderson, 1993)

Slide 32

Teens and Sexuality

- 34% of teenage girls in the U.S are becoming pregnant before the age of 20.
- The teen pregnancy rate in the U.S ten times that of
  - Japan
  - Four times those of France and Germany
  - Twice that of Great Britain.
- Pregnancy in high school
  - increases the chances of dropout.
- What can help decrease these percentages?
  - Parental Involvement

Source (Anderson, 1993)
What can you do to help your child?

- Talk to your children about
  - Substance abuse
  - Sexual behavior
- Children make better choices if parents:
  - Engage in conversation with them about romantic relationships before they are romantically involved
- Youth were much less likely to have initiated sexual intercourse if their parents taught them to:
  - set clear rules
  - talked about what is right and wrong, and about delaying sexual activity.
- Adolescents who had open communication with their parents about their “no tolerance” rule towards drugs and alcohol drugs were less likely to abuse substances.

Teenagers and Technology

- Mizelle and Irvin (2000) state that although technology is widely used by middle school students, their parents often regulate it more closely at this age.
- High school students make up the majority of children who abuse technology. This is attributed to a lower level of regulation from parents and increase in sexual nature and bullying at this age.
Teen Statistics on Technology Use

- Adolescents between the age of 12-17 spend an average of 12.5 hours online per week
- 77% of children 15-17 have a social networking profile.
- 75% of children between the ages of 14-17 have a cell phone.
- 58% of which have text messaging.
- Three widespread ways that adolescents abuse the use of technology is by “sexting,” “cyber bullying,” and attempts to form friendships and romantic relationships over the Internet (2000).

Sexuality and Technology

- According to Boucek (2009), “Sexting” is a term that can be defined as:
  - sharing nude or semi-nude pictures and videos of oneself on social networking profiles and/or via mobile phones.
- According to the nationwide survey by the National Campaign to Support Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy roughly 20% of teens admit to participating in sexting (“Sex and Tech: Results from a Survey of Teens and Young Adults,” 2008).
- Often times the sexual content is forwarded or passed on to peers that were not intended to view the image
  - This results in damaged reputations, and broken friendships and relationships (Brown, Keller, & Stern, 2009).
- This new technological phenomenon is dangerous and students making the transition in to high school will most likely encounter sexting in one form or another.
“Cyber-bullying” is also a new technological phenomenon among adolescents.

A study done by Berkman Center for Internet and Society defined cyber-bullying as harassment and victimization over the Internet.

This study indicated that students on the receiving end of cyber-bullying report:
- greater emotional anxiety
- are more likely to abuse substances
- are more frequently depressed

Methods of Cyber-bullying include
- harassment by text message
- voice mails
- Emails
- chat rooms
- social networking sites
- instant messaging.

Many students who would be hesitant to bully a peer face to face now have a new and easy realm for bullying through the Internet.

- The student can remain anonymous, and harassment is easier over a technological medium, such as the Internet, than making threats or distasteful comments in person.

Many parents give more technological freedom to students in high school than they do in middle school.

Therefore, when students enter the ninth grade they have a new found independence with their use of technology and often find themselves the victim or perpetrator of cyber-bullying.
Risks with Online Socializing

- Students who have been bullied on the Internet are more likely to fail classes due to not attending school because they are scared.
- Failing classes and feeling threatened in the school environment has been found to lead to dropout.

What can you do about all of this?

- Amos Olagunju (2008) states “parental involvement is crucial for raising children with healthy Internet access habits to social and educational materials,” (pg. 1).
- It is crucial that you are aware of current technology.
  - Continue to regulate your child’s internet and phone use even after your child enters high school (Olagunju, 2008)
  - Have access to all of your students passwords to their social networking sites.
  - Keep close regulation of what your child is doing on the internet.
  - Nothing that they write publically on the interest should not be able to be seen by your eyes!
- Your involvement can mean the difference between their child’s mental, physical and social well-being.
Parental Involvement is KEY!

- This presentation has been used to show you that the adjustment from middle to high school can be difficult and explain the negative effects it may have on your child.
- There have been many statistics presented and many signs to look for if you feel your child is dealing with any academic/social/technological pressures.
- Please stay involved and be aware of this hard transition in your child's life.
- Be empathetic and compassionate and know that school counselors are always here if you or your child needs help!

Positive Aspects

- Although this time in your child’s life can be hard it is a fun and exciting time too!
- Your child is going to continue the process of discovering their interests and strengths and how to use them.
- They will also be learning how to become more independent and self-sufficient.
- Stay positive and encourage your child to utilize their gifts and talents!
Conclusion

- We are so glad to have your children at our high school and will take great care of them.
- Thank you for coming and please continue to be involved!
- The school counselors are always here to answer questions and work with you to give your child the best high school experience we possibly can!
### APPENDIX B

#### Formative Expert Evaluation Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
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</table>

For each item identified below, circle the number to the right that best fits your judgment of its quality. Use the scale below to select the quality number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description/Identification of Survey Item</th>
<th>Scale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Applicability of this project to your school population/need</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Degree presentation met its stated objectives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Degree presentation was clear/easy for intended audience to understand</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To what extent do you think this project will increase parental involvement?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To what extent do you think this project will positively impact dropout rate?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Was the length of the presentation suitable for the target audience?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Overall rating of this presentation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Would you use this presentation at your high school? If so, why? If not, why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Which areas of the presentation are the most important?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What topics would you add to the presentation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. What topics would you take out of the presentation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Additional Comments/Suggestions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>