



THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL for SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Prospective Student Pipeline Newsletter #6 *December 15, 2021*

The Prospective Student Pipeline is a virtual community for families who want to learn more about The Governor's School for Science and Technology (GSST). By subscribing to this newsletter, you'll get information about what's happening at GSST plus notifications of upcoming events for prospective students.

Director's Notes: Ms. Vikki Wismer

GSST is More Than Advanced Courses

If the mission of GSST could be boiled down to one sentence, it would be igniting a passion for STEM fields and providing students with the skills to succeed in them. Rigorous course work and superlative faculty are two important pillars of this mission, but GSST is much more than that.

A Community of Learners:

Our student body - drawn from nineteen high schools, constitutes one of the greatest strengths of our program. Collaboration is embedded in all our courses, enriching the classroom experience. Equally important, students often comment that they have "found their people" at GSST, and they routinely cite the social and academic interactions with their peers as one of the most rewarding aspects of their GSST experience.



Extracurricular Activities:

- Scientific competitions: CNU Math contest; Coding competitions at VCU & UVA, Great Computer Challenge, and Code Quest Lockheed Martin; Science Bowl; Conrad Innovation Challenge in Aerospace & Aviation; SIMIODE Math Modeling Competition; Many science fairs
- STEM career interests: Girls Who Code, FIRST Robotics, Engineering Club, Py Club (Python Programming)
- Clubs centered on life at the school: Student Advisory Board, Yearbook

Guest Speakers:

- Community and academic professionals: Head of Computational Modeling and Data Analytics major at Virginia Tech
- GSST Alumnae in college/graduate school or engaged in STEM careers

Wrapping it Up: Why Attend Governor's School?

- [Top Five Reasons to Attend Governor's School](#)
- [Video: Why Attend Gov School? Hear from Students!](#)

College Planning Corner with Dr. Ellen Fithian:



Building Time Management Skills:

Students who are considering GSST are typically those who have been able to master academic subjects quickly and easily. In general, this is a blessing, but a potential downside can be that such students aren't required to develop time management skills until 10th or 11th grade, when they are taking several challenging courses. At this point they may face a steep learning curve.

Teachers and students alike agree that GSST students need good time management skills to be successful, so I encourage you to pass along these strategies to your teen so he/she can begin building those skills now.

Keep Up With School Work

The first tip is simple; learn the content of each course as it's covered in class. At best, time spent in class can advance a student's learning and decrease study time after school, but at worst it can be a complete waste of time. Unlike the writers of soap operas, teachers do not write lesson plans intended to allow someone tuning in for the first time to quickly grasp what's happening. Today's conversation exercise in

Spanish assumes that you learned last week's vocabulary words. If you did, the exercise serves as an excellent review. If you didn't, it may serve no purpose at all. Moreover, learning course material as it's presented makes it far easier to review later for a quiz or test.

Use Small Blocks of Time Productively

When a math teacher gives students ten minutes at the end of class to start on homework, some students do just that while others try to unobtrusively text a friend, surf the internet, or catch a few winks. It's tempting for busy students to while away brief interludes of down time, and sometimes a short nap really does do more good than completing the first five problems of a homework assignment. In general, however, efficient students use their ten or fifteen minute breaks during their day to polish off uncomplicated tasks – defining vocabulary words for English or labeling countries on a map for geography. The reward for these efforts can be larger blocks of free time at the end of the day to relax or get a few more hours of sleep.

Divide Large Projects into Smaller Chunks

Another time management strategy that becomes critically important in college is breaking large projects into more manageable chunks. Rather than attempting to write a ten page paper on the night before it's due, a savvy student will divide the components of the task into smaller chunks and devise a timeline to accomplish them – i.e. gather references the first week, do the research the second week, complete the rough draft the third week, and finish the revision two or three days before the due date.

This last point is an important one. One of the biggest failings of procrastinators is that they tend to not only leave tasks to the last minute, but to underestimate how long they will take. Projects often turn out to be more complicated and time consuming than we expect, so it's a good idea to build in a comfort zone.

Beyond Resolutions

Many teens, particularly those who've recently been humbled by a disappointing report card, swear they've seen the light of righteousness and are ready to become born again students. Under such circumstances, they may earnestly agree to adopt the foregoing recommendations. However, as we all discover every January, it's far easier to make heartfelt resolutions than to follow through with them, and resolutions that are not acted upon are powerless. Nobody ever got abs of steel by simply signing up for a gym membership.

So how do you motivate your teen to muster the gumption to turn off the television on Sunday afternoon and actually follow through on his plan to get started on the project due in three weeks? Try telling him what I used to tell my kids - that if you can't learn to take orders from yourself, you'll always be taking them from someone else – first your parents and teachers, and later on your bosses. Being able to manage yourself is the price of independence.

Parent Prescription: Sympathy and Patience

I earnestly believe that the foregoing recommendations will help your high schooler get a better control of her life. But let's be honest; even a master of time management would have difficulty handling the challenges faced by today's busy teens. They have scores of adults - teachers, coaches, choir directors, and the like - making demands on their time, and many are issued on the spur of the moment. An extra soccer scrimmage is suddenly scheduled for tomorrow night or an unexpected quiz announced for Friday. Teens can't entirely control their schedule, so encourage

them to adopt strategies to improve their time management, but also let them know that you sympathize with the difficulties they face. Finally, be patient. Building time management skills takes time and effort, but with perseverance it could make your teen's life – and yours – a whole lot more pleasant.

Happy Holidays!



Tell a Friend About the PSP! Everyone is Welcome!

If you know someone who might be interested in learning about The Governor's School, or who would benefit from any of the more general information provided here, please encourage him/her to subscribe by signing up on the [Prospective Student Pipeline](#) tab of our website.

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