

Scheduling Dilemma

Having already seen the juniors and the freshmen over the past month, this week counselors meet with the sophomores to plan their courses for next year. We recognize that scheduling can bring up a real dilemma for parents:

- 1) How much should I push to ensure that my child takes the most demanding course load that he can?
- 2) Will my child be in over her head if we override her teacher's recommendation?
- 3) Do colleges prefer to see a B in an AP class or an A in a college prep level class?
- 4) Will my child get into a "good" college if he doesn't have x number of honors and/or AP classes on his transcript?
- 5) What do I do if my child insists on a course load that is too heavy for her?

(See answer key below)

These are *hard* questions. It's a given that parents want healthy, happy, well-adjusted children. At the same time, we also want them to be successful and to achieve all that they are capable of. Try as we might to fight it, we may also have come to believe that an Ivy League education is the "golden ticket." And, maybe, we even—in our deepest, darkest recesses—feel that our children's successes are our own successes and a reflection on our parenting ability. If you recognize yourself in this description, you aren't alone.

The timing of these two entries from the [New York Times' Motherlode](#) blog couldn't be more timely and relevant. (And we are grateful to a Staples parent for bringing them to our attention!) Together, they honestly reflect on this struggle to find the right balance, something that so many parents grapple with. Here are a couple of teasers:

"I had to face that I can be overbearing. I can't understand why I obsess over the super-successful, when what is truly important is for each of us to find a thing we feel fulfilled doing, and that thing may be a very quiet, private thing. Yet it is very hard to let go of the idea that an Ivy League degree is a magic ticket." --[Hope Perlman](#)

"Passion and drive are transferable from topic to topic and place to place, but not from person to person. My ambition can't substitute for theirs." --[KJ Dell Antonia](#)

Answer Key: 1) Let your child take the lead. He or she is the one walking the hallways and is more likely to understand the work entailed. 2) It happens. Some students override and do well; many do not and find themselves stuck in a class that is far too difficult to them and unable to easily move to the level that is truly appropriate for their learning style. 3) There's no magic formula and nobody really knows, but many colleges will say that they want to see all A's in AP classes, even when—according to all of our data and experience—that doesn't accurately represent the academic records of their admitted students. 4) Yes, but much of that depends on how narrowly you define "good." In fact, there are *many hundreds* of good colleges in the U.S. Great educations are achieved by millions outside of the most highly selective colleges. The Staples Guidance Dept. is committed to helping your child find the right match. 5) You are the guardian of your child's health and wellbeing. The academic portion of their life has to leave space for their physical, social and emotional development. Your child still needs time to sleep, to relax, to have fun with their friends, and to connect with you (over anything but school)!

The Staples Resilience Project is an ongoing endeavor by the Staples Guidance Department aimed to promote the well-being of our students and foster a positive, inclusive school community.

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