



# INSIGHTS ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

FROM YOUR STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM



## HELLO!

Last year we introduced our *Insights on Adolescent Development* newsletter, and we are thrilled to bring it back this year as we continue to partner together to nurture each student's growth—academically, socially, and emotionally.

November leads us into the busy holiday season and before we know it, it will be time for 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade exams! Between worry about exams and readiness for a longer break, the few weeks between Thanksgiving and Winter Break can be tough ones for students. This month's newsletter offers study strategies as well as test stress/anxiety coping mechanisms.

*Lauren Garrett, Head of Student Support Team and High School Counselor*

## AT A GLANCE

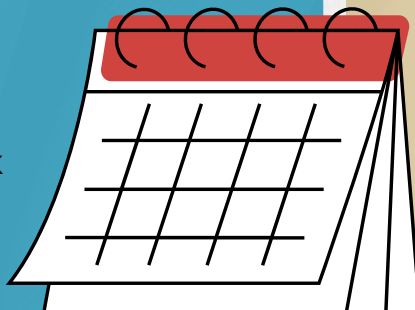
- 1) WELCOME
- 2) ARCHIVED NEWSLETTERS
- 3) PLANNING SESSIONS
- 4) EXAMS AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS
- 5) TEST ANXIETY TOOLS

## Planning Sessions

Planning is a huge part of exam success. Encourage your child to attend a planning session with Mrs. Garrett if they need help with this! **Planning sessions are Monday and Thursday afternoons from 3:30 - 4:00.**

Students are also welcome to email Mrs. Garrett for a 1-on-1 session at another time as exam planning can take a bit longer and is more in depth.

**Here** is an example of what an exam plan might look like and questions students should ask themselves to build their own.



If you missed any of our previous newsletters, not to worry! They are all archived and easily accessible through the Altamont website.

Follow this link to explore:

**Counseling and Support at Altamont**



# PREPPING FOR EXAMS WITH LESS STRESS AND MORE SUCCESS

## Time Management

### 1. Make (light) use of Thanksgiving Break

- Use this time to make a study schedule, make sure that you know what is coming up after break, and have a rough idea of how you will prepare for each of your exams.
- If there are small tasks that you know will take up some of your time after break (like outside reading or a Boomalang), go ahead and knock it out so you don't have to worry about it later!

### 2. Make a plan!

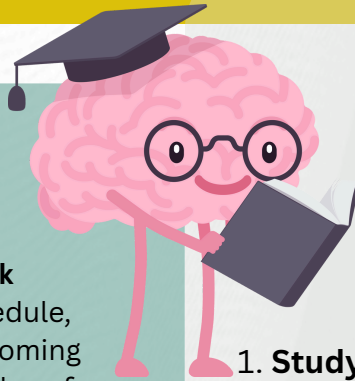
- Having a list of exams and what you need to do for them in your head can be overwhelming. Sit down with a calendar or to do list and decide when you are going to study for each different class. You may not follow it exactly, but it will give you a place to start.

### 3. Divide it up!

- Start studying early enough that you can divide up the work into small study sessions rather than hours-long study marathons the week before exams.
- Break the exam material into small tasks. Checking items off one by one makes studying feel more manageable – and keeps you organized.

### 4. Use the Pomodoro Technique

- If studying feels overwhelming or boring, try working for 20-30 minutes, taking a 5 minute break, then working for another 20-30 minutes and taking a 5 minute break. Focusing for the small portions of time is easier.



## Study Strategies

### 1. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

- Use 20–25 minute study blocks with 5-minute breaks. This keeps your brain fresh and prevents burnout.

### 2. Teach the Material to Someone Else

- Explaining the content (to a friend, parent, or even your dog!) helps you figure out what you truly understand – and what you need to review.

### 3. Use Active Study Tools

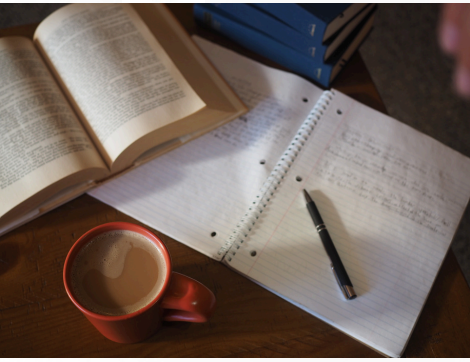
- Flashcards, practice questions, mind maps, and summary sheets are far more effective than just rereading notes.

### 4. Review old materials and rework practice problems.

- This will strengthen your memory and help you identify what you truly understand versus what you still need to practice.

### 5. Mix Up Your Study Locations

- Studying in different places (library, kitchen table, bedroom desk) helps your brain remember the information better.



# MANAGING TEST STRESS AND ANXIETY

While test anxiety is a common occurrence, it can be very frustrating for those who deal with it. Students may feel like they did everything they could to prepare for their exam and then entirely blank on the material when they sit down. Below you'll find some strategies that can help to combat this.

- **Preview and breathe** - Before starting a test, take 10–15 seconds to look over the sections and take two slow, deep breaths. This helps your brain shift from panic mode to problem-solving mode.
- **Use positive self-talk** - Replace thoughts like “I’m going to fail” with “I’ve prepared, and I can handle this.” Even if it feels cheesy, it helps calm the nervous system.
- **Put your thoughts on trial** - If your brain is saying “You don’t know this, you’re not prepared”, take a few minutes to think and ask yourself, “What facts tell me this is wrong?”. You might remind yourself that you attended help sessions, studied the material over an extended period of time, asked a lot of questions, and worked with a study group. All of these things can help disprove the feeling that “you are not prepared”. Anxiety is often made up of untruths, help your brain focus on the facts.
- **Break questions into smaller steps** - If a question feels overwhelming, underline key words and solve it one small piece at a time. Momentum reduces anxiety.
- **Have a plan for getting “unstuck.”** - If your mind freezes, skip the question, circle it, and move on. Coming back later often makes it feel easier—and prevents panic from spreading. Remind yourself that getting stuck on a question (or 2!) does not mean you do not know the material

