



INSIGHTS ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

FROM YOUR STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM



HELLO!

Welcome back to school! The year is off to a great start, and we are so excited for all of the learning, growth, and exploration that will occur this 2026-2027 school year.

This year we're going to kick off our monthly newsletters thinking about success - what is success and how do we achieve it? At Altamont we believe that success and the path to it looks different for every individual student. However, there are some common practices that can be helpful in that journey no matter the end goal!

As your children move through this school year, we encourage them (and your whole families!) to think about how *they* define success and how *they* can achieve it!

Lauren Garrett, Director of the Student Support Team and Counselor to the Upper School

AT A GLANCE

- 1) WELCOME
- 2) PLANNING SESSIONS
- 3) ARCHIVED NEWSLETTERS
- 4) SKILLS FOR SUCCESS & HIGHLIGHTED ARTICLES
- 5) HOW DO ALTAMONT TEACHERS DEFINE 'SUCCESS'?

#WinAtSocial



You may recall our partnership with The Social Institute from the previous two years. TSI is an organization working to empower students, families, and educators to navigate their learning and well-being- including A.I., social media, and devices - in healthy ways.

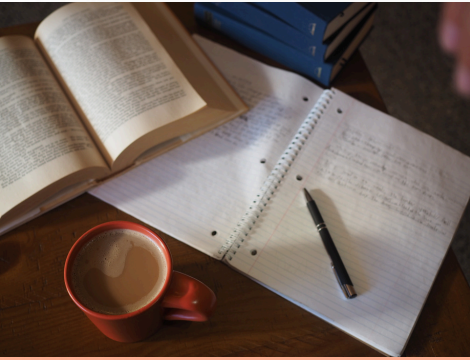
Follow [this link](#) to learn more and register your family for their Family Toolkit!



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](#)



Daily Skills for Success



Each student will find habits and skills that work for them, but here are some suggestions that we encourage students to explore as they try to find what works best for them!

- **Have a weekly planning day** - look at all academics, extracurriculars, and family commitments for the week. Take time to map out what is occurring when and how you will get your tasks!
- **Check your email throughout the day**
- **Use both Blackbaud and some form of a planner** - Blackbaud does not hold everything you have going on outside of school! And it might tell you what you have to get done, but not how you're going to accomplish it. A planner gives you a way to organize your tasks.
- **Spend 5-10 minutes looking over material covered in class** - even if you don't have homework! This is going to help encode material in your memory early on and make you less likely to have forgotten newly learned material two weeks later at test time!
- **Screens away** (at least) 30 minutes before bed - ideally, phones and computers can be charging overnight in a common family space. Not only does this help communicate to our brains and bodies that it is time to sleep, but also cuts down on the likelihood of either staying up too late studying or getting looped into drama on Snapchat at 2 AM.

HIGHLIGHTED ARTICLES ON SUCCESS

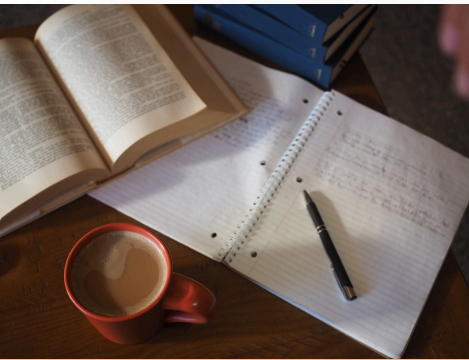
[Navigating Comparison Culture](#)

[Beyond Academics](#)

[Rethinking Youth Success](#)

[How Parents and Kids Define Success Differently](#)





Daily Skills for Success



Planning Sessions



Planning and thinking ahead is a huge part of academic success (and stress management!). Encourage your child to attend a planning session with Mrs. Garrett if they need help building this essential skill. **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.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE



Fostering independence (at an age appropriate level) in your child is an essential practice in building their skills for success. Follow the links below for resources on fostering independence at each grade level!

[Fostering Independence in your 5th/6th Grader](#)

[Fostering Independence in your 7th/8th Grader](#)

[Fostering Independence in your 9th/10th Grader](#)

[Fostering Independence in your 11th/12th Grader](#)



What defines “success” in the eyes of an Altamont teacher?

I often hear student fears that a teacher might think they don't care about a particular class because they do poorly on an assignment, ask too many questions, or ask for an extension on something when they have a lot going on. Through each of these concerns, the common thread that I see is a misunderstanding of what teachers see as successful in their classrooms. When I asked our teachers, here is how they say they define student success!

“In the context of our core values, a successful Altamont student is an active participant in his or her experiences. Success involves ownership and commitment, but it also involves self-reflection and understanding that as long as we do our best, the outcomes are excellent!”

“Success is valuing all the little incremental steps along the learning journey. Successful students show up each day with their homework completed thoughtfully and ready to be engaged in class. That daily commitment makes a world of difference!”

“Growth, big or little = success”

“I define success through resiliency. When a student initially fails at a process they've never tried in the art room, but then comes back to approach it in a different way, I see resilience helping them to succeed.”

“Success is when a player at the end of practice says, ‘thanks Coach, I can't wait for our next practice.’”



What defines “success” in the eyes of an Altamont teacher?

Success is not defined by grades alone. Success is also when a student can look at a situation or problem and see multiple sides and viewpoints, and understand or sympathize/empathize with each side. Success does not necessarily mean finding a solution immediately, but being open-minded to entertaining different answers and through collaboration or reflection, finding one that works. Working collaboratively, open-mindedly, and towards a common goal is also a measure of success.

For me, student success is reflected in how comfortable and engaged students feel in the classroom, how confident they become in what they know and can do, and, most importantly, in their growing curiosity and desire to keep learning.

“Our most successful and happiest students are the ones who ask for help and aren’t afraid to fail, they try new things and get involved across the school!”

“Success is not just what a student achieves but who they become along the way. “

“Success is when my students feel comfortable and safe in my classroom! “