

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Parent Connection – October 2017

After focusing on career goals during the month of September, the SEL program now turns its focus to how our students' current actions can affect their long-term goals. This concept can be hard to grasp for teens, and psychologists have discovered a biological reason why. The teen brain has an immature frontal cortex, the area that controls decision-making and long-range planning. Until this part of the brain matures (around age 25), teens are more likely to act on impulse and less likely to consider the consequences of their actions. However, this doesn't "mean that young people can't make good decisions or tell the difference between right and wrong...or be held responsible for their actions. But an awareness of these differences can help parents and teachers understand, anticipate, and manage the behavior of adolescents" (American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry).

To assist our students and protect them from the potential negative consequences of their immaturity, we as parents and teachers can help educate them in certain areas. Two areas related to career goals include our students' internet presence and their high school grade point average (GPA). Sadly, some studies suggest that 20% of teen girls aged 13-16 have "electronically sent, or posted online, nude or semi-nude images of themselves" (National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy). Talking to both female and male teens about their presence online can prevent these kinds of behaviors; it is suggested that parents inform their children that anything they post online or send electronically will last forever, even if they attempt to delete it. College admissions officers and future employers are very savvy at finding such information.

Another area of teens' lives that will affect their future careers is their GPA. According to Peterson's, which provides career and college planning resources, "Many colleges set a 3.0 as a baseline for freshman and transfer admission, though they might still consider students with lower GPAs. What you need to realize is that nationally, maintaining a B average has become routine. As you climb up the college selectivity ladder, you will find colleges expecting the B as a minimum GPA, and then evaluating thousands of applications from students with B+, A-, and A averages." Teens need to be reminded of the future impact of their current study habits and decisions related to schoolwork, and sharing this type of information during a calm, non-confrontational conversation can be a great start. Until next month, stay healthy!

For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/studentssel> or contact Melissa To at to@fenton100.org