

## SPAN Meeting, February 6, 2020

### Focus: Parent/Student Panel

#### Questions About What Comes Next?

##### Panelists:

Apryl – Is a parent of a Sophomore in College who was in SAGE, Band, National Honor Society and a parent of a Junior in High School who was in SAGE and currently in drama, speech, choir, soccer, job.

Heather Banas – Is a parent of a Sophomore in High School who was in SAGE and is in Band and Robotics and a parent of a 6<sup>th</sup> grader who was in SAGE and is in band and piano.

Linda – Is a parent of two 8<sup>th</sup> graders who were in SAGE and sports

Trevor Zwart – a current 6<sup>th</sup> grader who was in SAGE and plays hockey while taking 4 advanced classes.

CAEL – 8<sup>th</sup> grader in sports

Maddie – Is a current Junior in HS who was in Synergy and currently does Cross Country, ski, track, and NHS.

Ellen – Is a current Senior in HS who was in Synergy and currently does band, golf, NHS.

##### **Audience Question: SAGE/Synergy – How well did they prepare you?**

Word Masters pushed students.

SAGE prepared and helped me to study more for advanced classes. Helps a student manage the workload.

##### **Audience Question: Was 6<sup>th</sup> grade easier?**

##### Middle School

- 6<sup>th</sup> grade is the easiest. Which was ok as it is guiding you into Middle School.
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade was the hardest. Life Science was a lot more studying.
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade was between the two in difficulty level.

##### High School

- Freshman Year gets you into it.
- Junior year was the hardest. You need to study to pass the tests and homework does get harder.

##### **Audience Question: Did you add in video learning (in class or on your own)?**

Yes, but (student) prefers in class learning and interacting. Videos are better for renewing your knowledge base versus learning the lesson. Example, Khan Academy. Face to face collaborations with friends also helps the learning process.

##### **Audience Question: What did you like about SAGE?**

\*Nothing but good things to say about the program. Faster paced learning was appreciated and the writing helped prepare students. The Science Fair was good experience but the students didn't enjoy doing it.

**Audience Question: Should you push the child or avoid adding pressure?**

The personality of the child matters the most. What do they take on, on their own? Do they recognize when and what to study? Are they organized? Do they have time management skills? Let the student take ownership as much as possible. Focus on executive functioning skills. DON'T rescue out of the consequence...small, not earth shattering consequences. (In Middle School, retakes allow for this as well.)

Avoid being a helicopter parent on Infinite Campus. Let the student figure it out and trust their plan and for them to fix mistakes. That allows for when they are older to handle things themselves and learn to prioritize.

Online tools allow for good cooperation between parents/teachers/students. These help remind the student to check grades and set up the retake and fix issues that arise.

**Audience Question: What does the School Support look like for Scheduling High School Courses?**

The students often rely on older friends to know what to take more than the School Counselor. They use the Handbook of Courses as well. The Counselor tries to be helpful but it's not always helpful. Sometimes you need to choose between credits to graduate or the right credits to go to the U of M.

AP versus Honors – Teachers are more helpful here. Talk to them about you and your own plan. Your current teachers can help and they may send you to another teacher too. Students want the person advising them to know them and their interests before taking any advice.

As a freshman, you can start with Naviance which provides quizzes on interests, career choices and resumes.

**Audience Question: What is Naviance?**

The Guidance Counselor in 9<sup>th</sup> grade introduces a program, Naviance Counts. It is supposed to help guide students on potential careers based on their interests.

Naviance is a pay \$5 and get a transcript and isn't reliable and the students feel it's hard to use and not helpful.

Naviance is available to all high school students to help them to determine interests, potential colleges, and organizing college application materials.

**Audience Question– Are there any career speakers or career path opportunities? Any opportunities to job shadow? Any volunteer opportunities? Does the counselor help to line up anything like that?**

There is a student designed STEM Club that helps guide club participants in these types of opportunities.

There is a job fair once a year that invites local businesses in to meet and chat with students.

Specific electives sometimes offer special opportunities.

National Honor Society helps find volunteer opportunities.

**Audience Question: What is MNCAPS?**

If you want to do MNCAPS you need to know that you want to do it toward the beginning of high school because you need to have certain courses accomplished so that you can qualify. There is a specific pathway. It is currently offsite in Lakeville and it's ½ the day. It is hands-on project-based work experience in conjunction with a business or medical facility.

**Audience Question: Are there school worries that you had that you would go back and change? What should you be concerned about?**

- Which AP courses should I be taking to be on the correct pathway. You don't need all AP, just certain pathways.
- Going back and forth between the Middle Schools for classes. Get the Backpack Pass – lets you carry a bag to class so you can make it on time to classes.
- Getting to class on time. Running isn't necessary. Teachers are understanding.
- Finding classes at middle school and knowing what Day of school it was. Just go to the guidance office and ask. Don't worry about it, just ask someone.
- Don't worry about small daily busy work homework.
- Worried about being on the right track, but it's ok because you can always rearrange if needed.
- Build your study habits earlier and find the ways that work for you.
- Put in effort instead of gliding.

**Audience Question – How many AP classes is too much?**

This depends completely on the student. Most of the panel qualified for all 4 advanced classes in middle school. Sometimes they took all or a combination of some. At times it was too easy and at times it was just right. The benefit of taking all is that you tend to be with the same cohort of students and can build relationships with each other. At times the workload can be a lot but it's worth it to be with people you can collaborate with and studying things you are interested in. Challenges are good too and sometimes not being challenged can drive you crazy too.

In high school, it also depends on the student. Some students can handle all honors/AP classes. Others choose to take one or 2 that are NOT honors/AP so as not to be overwhelmed with time required for homework and studying.

**Audience Question – When you are bored in class can you bump up to AP?**

It's easier to bump down than bump up. The workload would be impossible to catch up on by the time you realized you wanted to move up in high school to an AP if you decide after classes have started. Most AP classes require summer homework.

**Audience Question – A person or book – anyone/thing that inspired you to become a better student? Take ownership of your academic career vs. parental control. When did that realization occur?**

- S2S Chemistry as a Junior – The teacher gives a test on the first day that everyone failed. The teacher said everyone had either 2 weeks to drop or you will get a poor grade and get poor

financial aid for college or stay in and commit to the work. The teacher was good on building your confidence. Teachers have the power to motivate or demotivate.

- Forgot a big assignment in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Realized the importance of a planner and that everything is now the student's responsibility.
- Getting to choose classes based on the student's interests.

**Audience question – How to prepare for an AP test?**

Freshman year AP Human Geography is a good introduction to the testing. Doing your in class work helps and additional study books are available for purchase. AP tests are the first 2 weeks in May. Tests are 3 hour. Throughout the year they practice test writing.

**Audience Question: PSAT, ACT, SAT – did you feel prepared?**

Once you learn the test methods you feel prepared. AP courses have similar testing methods to these tests. Pretesting is important to feel prepared. Certain score on PSAT makes you eligible for scholarships.

**Audience Question: is there prep for those tests available through school?**

There is one prep course offered in the fall and spring through community ed for a fee, but you are really on your own. There are a few practice tests on Saturdays that students can take. You can always find additional tutors and testing courses for pay outside the school as well.

**Audience Question – any electives you don't enjoy?**

Not a lot of extra time for electives. Many of the students on the panel took courses over the summer and during zero hour to free up time so they could do band, choir, languages and fit an elective or two in. The students found extra curriculars were the areas they found their "fun" opportunities.

**Audience Question – How to determine if advanced courses or grade acceleration was the best option?**

It depends on the individual student. If academically a student is at the top, they might be fine to accelerate. You need to consider if the student will be fine socially as well, not just the next year, but the next few years. Preview classes before making a decision. Ask current teachers how the student's executive functioning skills are and can they manage the work load and changing classrooms (if entering middle school early).

UMTYMP – U of MN Talented Youth Mathematics Program: accelerated math program at the U of MN.