

## E82

Speaker 1 0:00

Announcer, welcome to be evolved a podcast for parents and educators who prioritize developing possibility and expansion within the total educational process for themselves and their children or students. We invite you to listen to the podcast with your child or student in mind and with yourself at the center of the learning experience. Ultimately, our goal is to bridge the gap between educational expertise and research, translating it into practical action. Gaining knowledge plus taking action is what it means to be evolved.

Speaker 2 0:40

I'm Sarah Bergen, Director of College Consulting at evolved education company. And today, we are going to talk about the one year that causes probably the most stress, which is junior year. We are going to be talking about turning strategy into action. We want to think about rigor, and we also want to think about preventing burnout, which is a real thing. This is the year that colleges weigh most heavily. But stress is not the way to approach this. So we're going to talk a little bit about how to do this year, right? So what are colleges really caring about the most? In terms of junior year? Junior year is going to show academic readiness. You're that much closer to heading off to college. Your intellectual curiosity. Where are your interests lying? What are you focusing on? Academically, leadership and initiative and sustained commitment. So in freshman and sophomore year, we talk about building foundations, starting to hone in on what our interests are. Now we're really focusing on that sustained commitment. This is going to be the core of your application to show who you are as a person and as a student. So let's think first about grades and rigor. These are the obvious things that are at the top of all of our minds when we think about college junior year grades are critical. That being said, it doesn't mean ninth and 10th grade are not important, but these grades are critical. Colleges want to see strong performance. They want to see challenging coursework. They want to see that you're pushing yourself, and they don't want to see any drops in your grades without any explanation. Obviously, if there is something that happens and your grade drops, there is an opportunity to explain that, but if we don't have an explanation, that's not going to be helpful in this process. So we want to see that rigor. We want to see strong performance testing strategy. So testing, we start to dabble, potentially, a little bit in 10th grade, but testing strategy is really going to come into play in 11th grade. At evolved, we help support students understand which test will likely be a better fit for them, using our mind print Learning Assessment, which helps students understand how they learn and think, and that, in turn, helps us navigate which tests might be a better fit based on the structure of the test. So this is the year that if you are planning on testing, not everybody tests. Not everybody applies to schools that require testing. But if that's happening, this is the year that it is happening, you may think about test optional options. Okay, that may be an honest conversation that you have with your counselor, with your family, to really think about what is the best option for you as a student, what we want to avoid is just endless taking of the test over and over and over again. Testing is a tool. It is not a verdict. It is not going to be the end all be all. So we really want to be intentional about our testing strategy, and this is

something that I support a lot of students with, thinking about that testing strategy, because it does cause a lot of stress, and thinking about it next, we want to think about leadership and impact. Leadership is not just a title, okay? It shows initiative. It shows influence. It shows impact. Colleges really look at what kind of changed because you were involved in something. So what is the impact that you made by doing whatever it is that you're doing? What is that impact? How did you make a change? Okay, what are the things that we want to avoid this year? So every year I've talked about kind of, what are the things to avoid? What do we want to avoid? Burnout? Burnout is real. It can happen in any year of high school, but junior year in particular, we see many kids getting burned out, and that's where starting thinking about the college process in ninth and 10th grade year, and setting some of these really strong foundations and understanding of the process really helps with preventing burnout in junior year. We want to avoid that over testing. That's where having a really strong testing strategy and understanding. Understanding of what might be best for your student is ideal. We don't want to chase the most prestigious schools. Okay. Prestige chasing is not going to help anybody. We want to think about what is the best fit. Okay, one thing I mentioned all the time, I mentioned this to students, I mentioned this to parents, I mentioned this to colleagues, is balance. So one thing we do not want to do is ignore balance. We want to make sure we're taking appropriately rigorous classes and have an appropriately rigorous course load, but it needs to be balanced, and it should reflect your academic interests at this point in your academic career. Reminder, burnout helps no one, so that is what we really first and foremost want to avoid this year. What can you do as parents? This is a tough year for parents, just because of everything that is going on and where it lies in the general process of college. Help your student manage their stress, help them with that process, encourage that they sleep. Sleep is so important for so many things also help them understand and maintain and encourage balance and ultimately, keep perspective. Okay? Help them keep perspective. If you only do one thing this year, focus on that impact, not perfection. Next up, we will talk about senior year, where we really bring everything together and put a bow on everything. If you're a parent of a high schooler, we put together a free resource that goes hand in hand with everything we cover in this podcast, a complete college application checklist that breaks down all five parts of a standout application and exactly what you do year by year from freshman to senior year. Download it free at [evolvededucationcompany.com/college-consulting](http://evolvededucationcompany.com/college-consulting), or find the link in the show notes you.