



Year 6

# The High School Years: Transitioning to Adulthood

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## Dear Parent:

Welcome to the UCLA High School Project, a continuation of the three-year UCLA Middle School Diversity Project in which you and your child participated. As a parent or guardian of a student who completed their third year in one of our high schools in California, you have given us continued permission to include your son or daughter in the extension of this important project. Our newsletter, *The High School Years: Transitioning to Adulthood*, will keep you informed about the study.

As Principal Investigators, allow us to first reintroduce ourselves. Sandra Graham is a Professor in the Department of Education at UCLA. Jaana Juvonen is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at UCLA. Our collaborators in northern California are Frank C. Worrell, a Professor in the Graduate School of Education at UC Berkeley, and Brett Johnson Solomon, an Associate Professor in the Department of Liberal Studies at Santa Clara University. We are devoting our careers to the study of adolescent development in school. We have a particular interest in adolescents' social development – their relationships with peers, their friendship networks, whether they feel accepted or rejected, their desires to be engaged in their communities, their mind-sets regarding the future, and how these feelings affect their adjustment and academic performance in high school. Based on what we have learned about adolescent development, we believe that healthy social relationships and academic success go hand-in-hand. Our long-term goal is to use the information obtained from our research to develop school programs that are sensitive to the needs of all adolescents. In the high school phase of this project, we are especially interested in how both the past middle school experiences and the students' current feelings about their new school, their classmates, and themselves influence their academic performance and healthy development in schools that range in ethnic diversity. With the most ethnically diverse population of any state in the nation, California remains the perfect setting for this study.

As a participant in this study, your son or daughter will be followed over their four years of high school and the first year following graduation. In each of these five years, your teen will complete a written and confidential survey that asks about the social and academic experiences, challenges, and successes of high school. The 11<sup>th</sup> grade Spring assessment will have already been completed by the time you receive this Newsletter. We are pleased to inform you that the great majority of students found the survey to be interesting and the use of iPads to be particularly enjoyable. They were also happy to receive a cash honorarium for completing the survey.

Published once per year, our Newsletter will provide updates about the progress in the study. Each issue will also include informative essays on topics important to adolescent development and performance in high school and descriptions of recent research on timely topics of concern to you as parents of teenagers. These articles will be written by us and our talented team of undergraduate and graduate students. This third issue reports our findings on how sleep might be related to mental and physical health and on feelings of belonging in 9th grade math. We also include two informational articles on college entrance exams and differs types of colleges and universities in the United States. Our goal is to share with you our knowledge about development during the teen years based on our own research and the work of other leading scholars.

If you have any questions about the study or other information contained in this Newsletter, please feel free to call (661) 889-0559. Manpreet Dhillon, our Project Manager, will be happy to speak with you. If you prefer, she will arrange for you to speak to one of the Principal Investigators.

We are grateful to you, as parents, and to the staff and teachers at your teen's high school.

*Enjoy the Newsletter!*

**Visit our website:**

[www.uclaschooldiversityproject.com](http://www.uclaschooldiversityproject.com)

# Sleep and Health Across the High School Transition

By Dr. Sandra Graham and Hannah Schacter

As your teen transitioned from middle school to high school, you may have noticed that he or she wanted to stay up later at night. This change in sleep preference is very normal. Hormonal changes during adolescence – primarily a hormone called *melatonin* – allow teens to stay up later before they feel sleepy. Studies show that if teens were allowed to regulate their own sleep schedules they would probably stay up until about 1AM and sleep until about 10AM the next morning. Because these sleep preferences compete with school start times, students can be sleep deprived and quite sleepy during the school day. Inadequate sleep seems to be linked to more health problems in some teens.

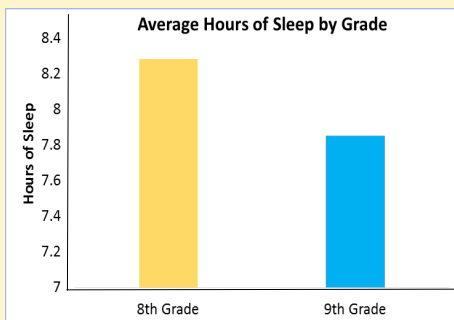


Figure 1: Average Hours of Sleep by Grade

In the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade surveys, we asked your son or daughter what time they usually went to bed during the week and what time they got up in the morning. From these responses we calculated how many hours of sleep students were getting each night. Figure 1 shows a significant drop in the nightly hours of sleep between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Research suggests that adolescents probably need about 9 hours of sleep per night. Our findings agree with other studies showing that less than 10% of high school students get at least 9 hours of sleep a night.

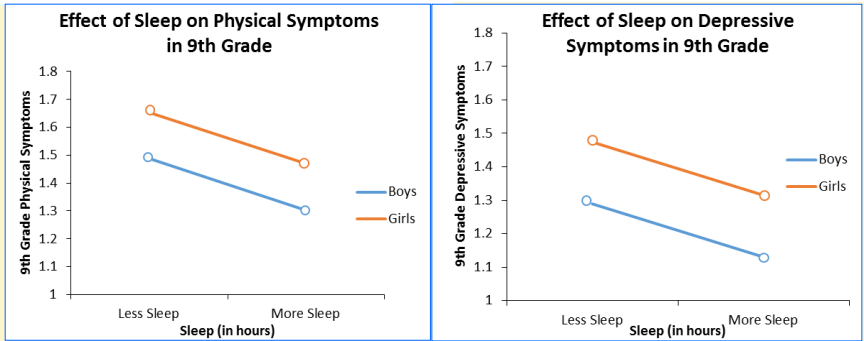


Figure 2: Effect of Sleep on Physical and Depressive Symptoms in 9th Grade

Can less sleep have an effect on mental and physical health?

Figure 2 shows the effect of weekday sleep on students' reports of physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, stomachaches) and depressive symptoms (e.g., feeling sad) during 9<sup>th</sup> grade. You can see that less sleep is related to more of each symptom type. These effects were somewhat stronger for girls than boys.

It is not just changes in hormones that keep teens up at night. The 24-hour availability of television, the Internet, cell phones, and other technologies suggest that later sleep times for teens may be a combination of both biology and their media environment. When your son or daughter was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, we asked on the survey how much time they used various technologies such as their computers and cell phones. We then examined whether technology use in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade was related to 9<sup>th</sup> grade sleep and depressive and physical symptoms.

Figure 3 displays what we found. The arrows show predicted relationships. Students' reported use of technology in 8<sup>th</sup> grade predicted less sleep in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Fewer hours of sleep per night then predicted more mental and physical health symptoms in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Students seem to be getting less hours of sleep per night from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade, yet school start times are just as early in high school (maybe earlier). As the academic demands of high school increase, some students may find that they are getting even less sleep than they need. These demands might be especially challenging for teens who spend a lot of time on their cell phones and computers late at night. Given that less sleep can be related to health challenges, parents should do what they can to monitor their teen's bedtime and educate them about the importance of adequate sleep for healthy development.

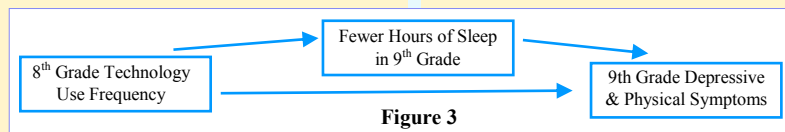


Figure 3

## College Entrance Exams

By Jessica Chicas-Morales

College entrance exams are often required when applying to college. Most students take the SAT and/or the ACT during their 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade year in high school. However, some students also take SAT Subject tests, AP tests, or a practice exam called the PSAT (a practice version of the SAT) during 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. **Below is a chart providing more detailed information regarding the type of exams typically required for college admissions.** It is important to check with each college of interest for more information on what exams are required. Each exam also has a fee, students should talk to their college counselor to see if they are eligible for a fee waiver.

<p><b>PSAT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary version of the SAT</li> <li>• Students with high scores become eligible for National Merit Scholarships. For more information visit: <a href="http://www.nationalmerit.org/entering.php">http://www.nationalmerit.org/entering.php</a></li> <li>• A total of 2 hours and 45 minutes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 minutes Evidence-based reading, 25 minutes writing and language, 25 minutes with no calculator, and 45 minutes with calculator</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Highest possible score is 1520</li> </ul>	<p><b>SAT subject</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject based exam: science (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics), history (e.g., US World, World History), foreign language (e.g., Spanish, French), Literature, etc.</li> <li>• Test takers can take up to 3 exams on a single day</li> <li>• Scored from 200-800 points</li> <li>• A total of 1 hour test</li> </ul>
<p><b>SAT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offered 7 times per year starting January and ending in December</li> <li>• Each section is scored between 200-800 points</li> <li>• Test takers lose a 1/4 of a point for incorrect answers</li> <li>• A total of 3 hours and 45 minutes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 minute essay, six 25 minute sections (math, critical reading &amp; writing), two 20 minute sections (math, critical reading, &amp; writing), and a 10 minute multiple choice writing section</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>ACT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content-based exam</li> <li>• Offered only 6 times per year starting February and ending in December</li> <li>• No point lose for incorrect answers</li> <li>• Each section is scored between 1-36 points</li> <li>• A total of 2 hours and 55 minutes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45 minute English section, 60 minute math section, 35 minute reading section, 35 minute science section, and 30 minute option writing test</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For more information visit: <a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>AP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject based: Based on knowledge acquired from AP course</li> <li>• A total of 36 exams available, each with their own requirements</li> <li>• Scored from 1-5 but only a 3 or above provides college credit</li> <li>• Two sections (a total of 3 hours)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple choice and free response</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# The Ethnic Context and Feelings of Belonging in 9th Grade Math

By Dr. Sandra Graham and Jessica Morales-Chicas

Ninth grade math is often described as a “gatekeeper” course. For example, students who do not pass Algebra I by the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade are less likely to take more advanced math courses in high school that make them college-ready. We are interested in students’ attitudes about 9<sup>th</sup> grade math, in particular their feelings of *belonging* in that class. By belonging we mean the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, and connected to other students in their math class. On the 9<sup>th</sup> grade survey, we asked your son or daughter to tell us how much they agreed with statements such as “I feel respected in my math class”, “I feel like I fit in with the other students” and “I feel comfortable in my math class”. This was our measure of feelings of belonging in 9<sup>th</sup> grade math.

Given our multiethnic sample, we were also interested in whether two ethnic context variables influenced math belonging. The first variable was the perceived representation of one’s ethnic group in math class. For example, when a 9<sup>th</sup> grader looks around their math class, do they see few or many students of their ethnic group? We hypothesized that students might feel greater math belonging as the number of same-ethnicity peers increased. Our second ethnic context variable was the perceived ethnic climate, or the extent to which students believe their school promotes a culture where all ethnic groups are treated fairly and equally and where

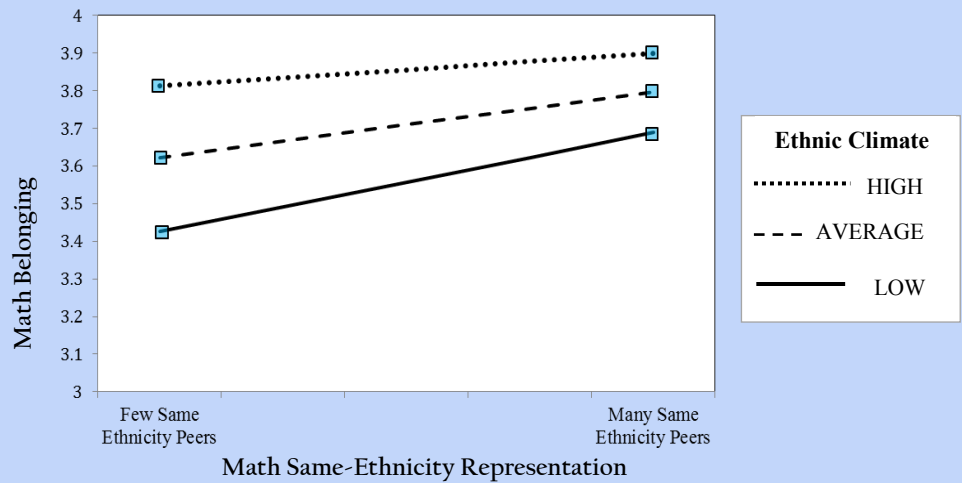


Figure 1: Effects of Ethnic Climate and Same-Ethnic Peers on 9<sup>th</sup> Math Belonging

positive interactions between students from different ethnic groups are encouraged. We expected that a positive ethnic climate would also be related to stronger feelings of belonging in 9<sup>th</sup> grade math.

Figure 1 shows that our hypotheses were supported. Students of all ethnic groups reported greater math belonging when there were more classmates of their same ethnic group and when there was a positive ethnic climate at school. Even when there were few classmates of one’s own ethnic group in math (left part of Figure 1), students felt more like they belonged when the ethnic climate promoted equal status and cooperation among all groups. Thus, a positive ethnic climate can

help boost feelings of belonging regardless of the ethnic composition of a student’s math class.

What 9<sup>th</sup> math class students get assigned to will be based on many factors including their 8<sup>th</sup> grade math, test scores, schedule conflicts, or other complex decisions. For all of these reasons, students may be in a math class where there are not many classmates from their own ethnic group (they are a minority). One of the best ways to promote high 9<sup>th</sup> math belonging *for all students* is for teachers, staff, and students themselves to help create a school climate where everyone feels that they are respected and connected.

## College Entrance Exams (continued)

### How to Prepare for these Exams

#### Practice Makes Perfect: Tips for Test Success

- The more students study the more they will be prepared.
- Test preparation books, in person courses, and online courses are available for a variable fee, depending on the program
- Some test preparation businesses offer temporary free practice tests or strategy sessions at no cost
- Some high schools may offer free or reduced test preparation, check with your college counselor for more information
- Making and reviewing flashcards with test information provides a great strategy to help retain information
- Checking time during practice exams provides good time management practice for the real exam
- Keeping track of weak areas and strengthening them through practice is key.

For more details visit: <http://www.princetonreview.com/> or <http://www.kaptest.com/>

#### The Day of the Exam: What to bring:

- A good night’s rest
- Snack and water
- Photo identification
- No. 2 pencil and soft eraser
- Your admission ticket
- An “acceptable” calculator (make sure to read the calculator policy)
- A watch to track time
- Comfortable clothes



# Different Types of Colleges and Universities

By Kara Kogachi

As you probably already suspect, all colleges are not the same. In fact, there are several different types of colleges. The first step in determining which college you want to attend is to decide what type of college appeals to you. Below are the basic types of colleges you'll find in the United States.

With over 3,000 college options in the U.S., choosing the school that is right for you is important. You can start by asking yourself some questions that help most students find the right fit.

Use this guide to:

1. Learn about some key college search categories.
2. Answer questions to discover what's important to you.
3. Get advice from college students and educators.

Here are the basic types of colleges:

Is a college the same thing as a university?

What does "liberal arts" mean?

Why are some colleges called public and others private?

## Four-year Colleges

Four-year colleges offer programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These include universities and liberal arts colleges.

### Liberal Arts Colleges

These colleges offer a broad base of courses in the liberal arts, which includes areas such as literature, history, languages, mathematics and life sciences. Most are private and offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

### Universities

Universities often are larger and offer more majors and degree options—bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees—than colleges. Most universities contain several smaller colleges, such as colleges of liberal arts, engineering or health sciences. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

## Colleges with a Specific Focus

Some colleges focus on a specific interest or student population. These include:

### Single-sex Colleges

All four-year public colleges, and most private colleges, are coed. But there are some private colleges that are specifically for men or for women.

### Arts Colleges

Art colleges and conservatories focus on the arts. In addition to regular course work, these colleges provide training in areas such as photography, music, theater or fashion design. Most of these colleges offer associate or bachelor's degrees in the fine arts or a specialized field.

### Religiously affiliated Colleges

Some private colleges are connected to a religious faith. The connection may be historic only, or it may affect day-to-day student life.

### Specialized-mission Colleges

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) focus on educating African American students. Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) are colleges where at least 25 percent of the full-time undergraduate students are Hispanic. HBCUs and HSIs may offer programs, services and activities targeted to the underrepresented students they serve.

## Two-year Colleges

Two-year colleges offer programs that lead to a certificate or an associate's degree. These include community colleges, vocational-technical colleges and career colleges.

### Community Colleges

[Community colleges](#) offer two-year associate degrees that prepare you to transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree. They also offer other associate degrees and certificates that focus on preparing you for a certain career. Community colleges are often an affordable option with relatively low tuition.

### Vocational-technical and Career Arts Colleges

[Vocational-technical and career colleges](#) offer specialized training in a particular industry or career. Possible programs of study include the culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene and medical-records technology. These colleges usually offer certificates or associate degrees.

**Public colleges** are funded by local and state governments and usually offer lower tuition rates than private colleges, especially for students who are residents of the state where a college is located.

**Private colleges** rely mainly on tuition, fees and private sources of funding. Private donations can sometimes provide generous financial aid packages for students.

For more information and help figuring out the right kinds of colleges, check out the tools available at College Board:

(1)Types of Colleges <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/college-101/types-of-colleges-the-basics>

(2)College Search <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>

(3)Finding a College that Fits <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/how-to-find-your-college-fit/college-search-step-by-step>

(4)College Majors & Careers <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/majors-careers>

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