

# Preparing students with more than just academics

by David Wilson

There is a perception that June and July are slow times in public school districts, but that's not altogether accurate. There is actually much planning and coordinating behind the scenes as educators prepare for the coming school year.



In a high school setting, for instance, much thought is put in to issues such as student parking, tardiness, appropriate student dress, and the use of electronic devices in school.

Now keep in mind that schools can't only be focused on some hard and fast expectations. In fact, if we think that schools are only about the rules and the guidelines, then we are missing the point.

Schools are in the business of helping young people learn and to help them get prepared for all of life.

And even buried deeply within the details of the code of conduct we find that there are several teaching opportunities.

A printed or digital copy of how students must handle a vehicle on campus is not simply rules, rules, and more rules. It also comes with an emphasis on responsibility. Just because you are 16 and driving your own car, it doesn't mean that you can pour all of your happy emotions in to the gas pedal and recklessly leave campus.

No, the truth is, if you aren't careful, someone could get hurt like that, whether you are 16 or 60.

Being on time for school and dressing appropriately for school isn't just about rules either, because there is something much deeper in play in both cases. Dressing appropriately and being punctual are both vital ingredients to success in work and in life. At schools if we are just laying down the law but never teaching students how to be successful, then we are failing to do all we can to prepare them for their own future.

We need to help them develop in to valuable employees, no matter where they work.

There are three prominent reasons why a person might get fired from a job. One is not being on time. Another is not dressing appropriately for the customers or clients. And a third is not being able to work well with others. Rarely is someone dismissed because he or she just doesn't know how to do the job or doesn't have the skills that are needed.

A person can also have a solid academic background and still not do well on the job.

To be clear, however, schools must have a serious academic focus on math, science, English, and social studies. But schools must also help students understand how to dress right, talk right, act right, and be on time.

We all know that the parents are supposed to be teaching those things at home, but we also know that it doesn't always happen within every family.

If there are any gaps in a child's development, it is up to the school to fill the void, or it may never be filled at all.

Schools must also be in the business of teaching students how to appropriately use electronic devices (with the emphasis on the word appropriately).

Young people know how to text and Skype and snap and chat and all of that stuff. They are also extremely proficient with video games and a variety of forms of technology.

But do they know how to use all of those tools responsibly? And do they know how to use them in such a way that it isn't rude to others in the room? And do they know that there are certain meetings and certain settings and certain venues in which it is most appropriate to turn off the electronic device altogether?

No. No. And no. They don't.

It's not that students don't know how to use the technology; it's that they don't know how to responsibly use the technology.

They may be sharp in understanding how to download a file but can come up way too short in their understanding of good citizenship, good character, and having consideration for others.

Again, parents could and should be teaching those things, but not all of them do.

So it is up to schools in America, not only to provide a rigorous and academically sound education, and not only to enforce the rules, but to help students to simply be responsible and considerate in all that they do.

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<https://www.amazon.com/author/dwilsonnotes>

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