A common myth is that high school students should take the most challenging courses to ensure they keep educational and career options open. This is not true. Students are far more successful when they demonstrate previous skills and interest in courses they’re considering. This builds confidence, enhances self esteem and leads to further success.

The important thing is that teens take the right high school courses to be able to achieve their goals for the future, and these will be different for each individual.

As a parent, you play an important role in this planning process as a ‘guide on the side’. By working with your teen, you can help ensure that the choices she makes now are the right ones for her and at the same time provide flexibility in future course selections.

Every December, Peel students in grade 8 and high school receive a copy of Chart Your Course, a helpful book that provides information needed to select courses. Inside you will find:

- course descriptions and prerequisites
- descriptions of specialized and regional programs
- diploma requirements

- individual school course offering charts
- school profiles
- information relating to secondary education in Peel

There are various types of courses available to address individual needs and to prepare teens for their intended post-secondary destinations, whether that is apprenticeship, college, university or work. Students can choose a combination of course types based on their interests and plans for the future. More information about the course types is available in an article entitled Parent’s Guide to Types of High School Courses.

When selecting courses, teens should be encouraged to focus on those subjects where they have:

**Experienced previous success.**
You and your teen can review school report information, EQAO results, the Individual Education Plan and talk with teachers.

**Interest in the subject.**
If your teen is motivated by an interest a subject, she is more likely to learn.
Personal goals and know what is required to achieve them.

Students should have clear goals, be aware of what it will take for them to achieve them and have an understanding of how their courses help them to achieve their goals.

Here are some tips for your teen to keep in mind as she chooses high school courses and develops her plans:

- Focus on planning, learn about the career/life planning process
- Use your head, but listen to your heart
- Recognize that there are many pathways to destinations
- Select a pathway that suits you best
- Look to future trends, not the past
- Be flexible and revise your plans as needed
- Find out about and access resources
- Realize that learning is a lifelong process

Guidance counsellors and teachers can help your teen to select courses. All Peel middle and high school students are introduced to resources available on the Peel District School Board’s virtual guidance and career education centre site, www.makingmyway.ca and on www.myBlueprint.ca. Please encourage your teen to check out these resources and to use them as she develops her plan for future success.