What does it mean to be organized?
It means being able to make time for work – AND fun!! Students who are well organized:

- Set goals – and plan ways to reach them
- Make schedules – for finishing assignments and other projects on time
- Have time for fun – friends and favorite activities
- Being organized is a skill everyone can learn and use in school and for life!!

Why is being organized important?
Because being organized can help you:
- Be a better student – Instead of “cramming” for tests or writing papers at the last minute, you’ll be able to take the time to do your best.
- Reduce stress – By learning to pace yourself, you won’t feel rushed all the time.
- Feel good about yourself – Once you have learned to manage your time, you will feel confident about how much you can accomplish.
- Succeed in the future – Many of the skills that help you succeed in school will help you in future jobs, too.

Your time is valuable – being organized can help you use it well.

Set goals for yourself.
Setting goals is an important step toward becoming a better, more organized student. When you know your goals, you can plan ways to reach them.

- Long-term goals may include:
  - Making the honor roll this semester
  - Graduating from high school in the top 50% of your class
  - Getting into the college of your choice
  - Making the varsity team next year
  - Finding a good summer job

- Short-term goals may include:
  - Getting this week’s assignments done on time
  - Doing well on a test
  - Apply to 5 colleges before the Nov 1 deadline
  - Making it to practice on time every day
  - Helping more with chores

When setting short-term goals, consider ones that will help you meet long-term goals.

Remember -
- Be realistic. Don’t set goals you probably can’t reach.
- Challenge yourself. Don’t set goals that are too easy.
- Keep a positive attitude.
- Set reasonable deadlines.
- Reward yourself when you reach a goal.
Learn how to prioritize.
If you have lots of goals and responsibilities, it’s important to set priorities. Follow these steps:

- Make a list – of all your long and short time goals and responsibilities. These are your “priorities.”
- Decide what is most important – number each goal and responsibility in the order you think they should be met. This is what it means to “prioritize.”
- Map out plans – to meet each one. Break large projects into smaller ones to make them more manageable. For example, to do well on a test, plan to study one hour every night for a week before the test.
- Include fun things too – like going out with friends. A break from studying can be a good way to regain energy.

Prioritizing can help keep things from becoming too overwhelming – not just in school, but in future jobs, too.

Balance – school, work and social activities
Start by paying attention to where you are putting your energy now.

- Keep a time log. For one week, write down – or enter into a spreadsheet - everything you do in your free time. Keep track of how long each activity took. Note how you spend your time on weekends too.
- Examine how you spend your time. At the end of the week ask yourself:
  - What tasks do I spend the most time on? Why?
  - What activities do I enjoy the most?
  - What can I change to make room for more important activities and goals?

A good schedule makes all the difference.
Creating and sticking to a reasonable schedule will help you stay on track to meet your goals. Follow these tips:

- Use your daily planner or assignment notebook. Schedule time to study, work, have fun and rest.
- Be realistic.
  - Set aside enough time for each activity.
  - Be careful not to over-schedule.
  - Include time to get from one activity to another.
- Don’t procrastinate.
  - Don’t “blow off” homework to be with friends.
  - Don’t wait until the last minute.
  - Get the important tasks done – then reward yourself with something fun.

When planning your schedule, keep in mind your list of goals – and which activities will help you meet them.

Always plan ahead.
Being prepared for future tasks will save you a lot of time and frustration.
- Ask your teacher for any assignments he or she can provide ahead of time. By knowing what’s coming, you’ll be better prepared – and have a head start!
Use a monthly or semester calendar to help you see what is ahead and to set priorities. Keep it where you’ll see it often.

Be aware of approaching deadlines by highlighting important dates on your calendar. Or set up alerts/reminders on your PDA. Use your daily planner to schedule time ahead for working on them.

For long term projects try to:
- Make extra time for projects you know will take longer than usual.
- Pace yourself. Break large projects into smaller tasks, and complete one at a time. For example, if you are writing a research paper, collect research one week, take notes the next and begin writing the next.
- Make deadline for each step. Include these on your calendar and in your planner!

For short term projects or things you need to do every day be sure to:
- Update your planner every morning.
- List the things you need to do that day in order of importance.
- Check off each task as you complete it.
- Add anything from the day before that you did not complete.

Once you’re organized, you’ll have time for work and fun.

A well-balance schedule should allow time to:
- Complete assignments on time or ahead of time. If you can stick to the schedules you make you should have time to finish assignments as planned.
- Take part in after-school activities like the one of our 100+ clubs or 20+ sports teams.
- Play sports after school or on weekends with friends. You might want to join park district team or just play for fun with other kids. Being in shape physically will give you energy to do schoolwork as well.

Remember be realistic about how much you can fit into your schedule.

What if I still need help? You can still get advice from lots of people.
- Teachers
- Parents and other family members
- School Counselor
- School Social Worker
- Friends
- Mentor

Start getting organized today!