



Student Transition from Middle to High School

Parents should be aware that transition to high school can be associated with a decrease in:

- school attendance
- social support
- grade point averages
- academic motivation

It can be associated with an increase in:

- academic stressors
 - social stressors
 - depression
 - substance abuse
- (Hussong), 2007

What Parents Should Know:

- A partnership between the school and parents has been identified as a best practice to increase graduation rates.
- Adolescence is a confusing time for students due to the many emotional and physical changes that occur at this age.
- The 8th grade in middle school is nothing like 9th grade in high school.
- The type of middle school transition program the school has is a predictor of future success in the 9th grade
- 8th grade students worry about transitioning to high school.

More students fail the 9th grade than any other grade level and more students drop out in the 9th grade than any other year.

What does research say about the transition from middle school to high school?

- Success or failure during the 9th grade often sets the tone for a student's entire high school career.
- If a student is successful during the 9th grade, there is a higher likelihood the student will graduate and enjoy the high school experience. (Silverthorn, 2005).
- There is a higher risk of school-drop out related to negative school experiences. (Hussong, 2007)
- When parents are involved in their student's transition to high school, they tend to stay involved in their child's school experiences (MacIver, 1990);
- When parents are involved in their child's high school experiences:
 - Students have higher achievement (Linver & Silverberg). 1997; Paulson, 1994)
 - Students are better adjusted. (Hartos & Power, 1997)
 - Students are less likely to drop out of school. (Horn & West, 1992)

The success or failure experienced during this transition can be a turning point in the social and academic lives of students. (Schiller, 1999)

What Parents Can Do to Assist with the Transition to High School

- Discuss high school course work and schedule with your child and guidance counselor in middle school. Find opportunities to visit the high school and talk about what it will be like.
- Set up a meeting with other parents of high school students to discuss what they encountered during this transition time; they are excellent resources. Ask your child's guidance counselor to arrange this meeting.
- Stay involved in school during the middle school years so the transition will be easy for you into the high school environment. This will make you confident that your involvement makes a difference in your child's academic success.
- Seek information from teachers and guidance counselors to help you gain the knowledge and skills you need to monitor and guide your child's education and understand the critical role you play as your teen's college advocate.
- Develop the attitude "I expect my child to go to college" instead of "I'm hoping my child attends college." Start making college visits and seeking information on various college programs with your child beginning in middle and continuing through the high school years.

Tips for Getting Involved in Your Child's Learning Experiences

Get to know the teachers. Ask about their expectations. Find out how much time your child should spend on homework each night. Ask what is the best way to get in touch if you have questions.

- Serve as an adviser for activities such as the school paper or chess club.
- Be in the school. It is a great way to get a feel for what is going on.
- Volunteer to chaperone school dances and drive kids to school sports competitions.
- Go to school meetings and events.
- Post a family calendar in a central place. Write down important school dates, including parent meetings and due dates.

- Talk it out. Show enthusiasm about the high school experience. It may rub off on your children.
- Be prepared. The work load in high school is more demanding. Help your teen develop good study habits and organization.
- Iron out the details. Make sure transportation arrangements are clear. Your teen needs to arrive at school with all necessary materials and be on time.
- Lend an ear. High school is a big change. Be ready to talk about issues that arise, and be supportive and open to communication with your child.

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