

Chippewa Valley 9th Grade Center

Guidance Department

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Getting Ready for High School

High school brings back special memories for each of us. Looking back, I remember those years with nostalgic fondness, yet I wouldn't want to return to high school and start over. High school students struggle with personal identity, fitting in a social group, peer pressure and of course the stress of academic studies. They also are concerned with dating, driving and figuring what they will do once high school is over.

Certain high school experiences may have life-long consequences. Many of the choices students make in high school will lead them into adult habits and situations. Students still need direction and guidance from teachers, counselors and most of all from their parents.

There are a few ways parents can provide support and guidance to their kids who are about to enter high school.

Promote the importance of education

Most educators would agree that when education is promoted and supported by parents, student achievement is higher. Parents need to remain active in their children's education, even through the teen years. Preteen and teenagers still need the guidance of their parents in making crucial educational decisions. Obviously, parental involvement will differ from the preschool and elementary years. Parents of students about to enter high school will need to become informed about their child's performance in school and learn about high school options.

Learn about high school graduation requirements and begin thinking about post-secondary education. Unlike elementary and middle school, high school grade-point averages are cumulative. Stress to your children that the grades that they earn as a freshmen are as important as any other year when applying to colleges or post-secondary education programs. Parents should stay in contact with their children's teachers and school counselors to help students stay on track.

Select the high school and the program carefully

There are many factors in choosing a high school program appropriate your child. The selection process should actively involve both the student and the parent. Consider your child's study habits and interests. You may want to explore the possibility of a magnet program if your child has a particular interest. School districts offer various programs and have varying application requirements and deadlines. When selecting a high school and program, you and your teen will need to consider the options and resources the school or program has to offer. Consider the academic options, such as advanced placement course availability and other programs such as art, music and athletic programs.

Parents and teens should visit the school or program prior to enrolling making course selections. Meeting with a program coordinator or school counselor will prove to be an invaluable investment. High school students will have opportunities in high school to tailor their course selections to their individual needs, goals, abilities and interests. Most schools offer courses in honors, advanced placement, special education, remedial as well as a variety of electives both academic and vocational. Electives should be chosen with future goals in mind. Parents should listen carefully to their teens so not to impose their own interests on them while remaining supportive and objective. Parents can assist their teens into making selections that will be most beneficial to the individual student. To learn more about high school programs and options, you can visit your school district's Web site at <http://www.chippewavalleyschools.org/>.

Importance of Peers

Being a parent of a preteen or middle school student, you are already aware of the influence of peers in your child's life. Some kids do things in direct contrast to the beliefs parents have hoped to instill in order to be accepted by peers. None of us dealing with preteens and young teens should ever underestimate the value of peer pressure.

The good news is, peer pressure can be a positive aspect to your teen. The peer group your child has in high school may shape the direction of your son or daughter's success in school and in early adulthood. Encourage your kids to be involved in positive activities, both during school and during their free time. Teens can influence each other to keep their grades up, stay away from drugs, try out for a play or sport and become leaders in school.

Communication with your child during the teen years may be more crucial than ever. Be a good model for your teen, and remain a constant in his or her evolving life. Get to really know your child and his or her friends.

Parents can assist their kids with the transition from middle to high school by being informed and offering guidance and support. Acknowledge that this is a major step from childhood to adulthood. The most important goal of high school is to graduate with purpose and an action plan for the future. Parents and students are encouraged to talk to a school counselor to explore options. High school is the beginning of your child's future. Encourage your son or daughter to take charge now, and be your child's fundamental support.

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