

A young boy and a woman are smiling and embracing each other. The boy is on the left, wearing a grey and blue striped polo shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a pink top and a beaded necklace. The background is a warm, reddish-brown color.

High School is Happening!

A Guide for
FAMILIES
on High School
Transition



School transition is a process that prepares students, families, schools, and communities to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and relationships to assist students in successfully moving from one setting to another. Moving from middle school to high school can be a big change for students and for their families as well. A smooth high school transition for students and their families will build the foundation for an enjoyable and a productive academic career. As students prepare to explore new horizons, there is a misconception that parents should be less involved in high school than elementary or middle school. Parent involvement does not disappear in high school, but it does look different. Teenagers may not want you to chaperone their high school prom, but they still want to know that you are there to support them in school. Thanks to guidelines established by federal regulations such as Title I, more schools are creating policies and building structures to ensure that parents have the opportunities to be involved in their child's education from kindergarten to graduation.

DID YOU KNOW?

When families are involved in their student's high school experience, the student is more likely to have higher academic achievement, be better adjusted, and graduate.

This brochure is designed to keep families actively involved in high school by providing them with the information needed to successfully navigate the transition process and guide their students. To better prepare parents for the expectations of high school, this brochure concentrates on five areas of focus that are identified as particularly important to the life of a high school student.

- Becoming Self-Dependent
- Developing Student Responsibility
- Before the Report Card Arrives
- The Graduation Plan
- Being Involved in High School

The first day of high school represents the start of new possibilities and is an exciting day for both you and your student. As the parent of a high school student, you will be involved in guiding your student to make the right decisions and develop the skills needed to be successful. Continue reading to learn and discover what you can do to make sure your student has a successful high school transition.

Becoming Self-Dependent

Becoming self-dependent is part of the developmental process that students will experience during high school, which includes social, personal, and academic growth as they transition towards adulthood. During this time, your student will begin to discover their own identity and develop their own opinions. As they meet new friends in high school, you may notice changes in their personality and interests. Their social interactions can also impact their academic achievement as they learn how to balance extracurricular activities with coursework. High school offers a wide variety of events and organizations for students, so it is normal for them to pursue different activities and change interests. This allows students to find their passion, which can lead them to try new classes and explore possible careers. When students become excited about school, they are motivated to do well in their classes. Listen to what motivates your student in school by asking questions about what interests them.



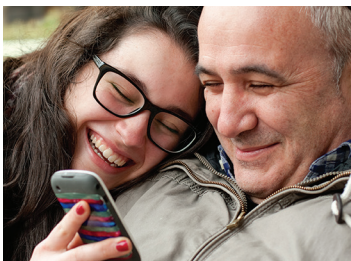
DID YOU KNOW?

Students achieve better grades and are less likely to drop out when there is a caring and positive connection with an adult who is responsible for teaching and mentoring the student.

There are many ways for families to help their student develop their self-dependence.

- Encourage your student to explore extracurricular activities
- Talk to your student about school and their peers
- Supervise and follow your student on social media
- Lend an ear — never underestimate the power of a good listener
- Use your home as a positive gathering place
- Help your student express feelings or concerns into words
- Suggest trusted mentors for additional adult support

Developing Student Responsibility



Helping students **develop responsibility** in high school will prepare them to handle extra requirements with their classes, activities, and friends. During high school, students will take a variety of academic classes while also participating in additional extracurricular activities, so daily preparation and planning are essential to their success. At first, students may need help in understanding how to prioritize their commitments and tasks. Watch for signs that your student could be feeling overwhelmed, such as changes in sleep patterns or a sudden lack of interest in school. Before granting them extra freedom, communicate your expectations about their priorities and responsibilities. High school is about learning, and students learn from making their own decisions as well as mistakes. Provide your student with the opportunities, the guidance and information to develop their decision making skills. Teaching your student to plan each day, keep up with homework assignments, and learn to self-advocate will help them become more accountable and responsible.

DID YOU KNOW?

Students who participate in transition activities that actively engage students, parents, and staff members are less likely to drop out of high school.

There are many ways for families to support their student's development of responsibility.

- Teach your student to set small, attainable goals to accomplish larger projects
- Encourage time management skills by supporting and monitoring their progress
- Help your student understand the importance of working in groups and sharing responsibilities
- Show your student how to create a calendar that is reviewed regularly
- Register for the high school's online parent portal to view grades and attendance, if available
- Sign-up to receive alerts and notices from the high school
- Allow your student to relax and spend time with friends and family



Before the Report Card Arrives

Before the report card arrives you should get to know your student's teachers and what classes they are taking. There are usually several opportunities for parents to check their student's grades during the school year, either online or through progress reports. By monitoring your student's progress regularly, you will be able to identify any possible concerns as early as possible. Pay attention if you notice your student rarely brings schoolwork home or avoids talking about a particular class. If you notice any issues, it is important to contact your child's school right away to learn about their tiered approach to providing support to help students who may be struggling.

The final grade that you see on the report card will be entered on your student's transcript and factored into their cumulative grade point average. This is important because colleges and employers will request a copy of your student's transcript to review their overall academic performance in high school. At home, you can support your student by showing enthusiasm about school and expressing an interest in what your student is learning. While the academic courses will be more rigorous in high school, knowing your student's teachers and the high school curriculum will make a difference in your child's education.

DID YOU KNOW?

The most accurate predictor of student achievement in school is the extent to which one's family is able to become involved in their child's education and communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their child's achievement.

There are many ways for families to help ensure their student experiences academic success in 9th grade.

- Monitor your student's grades and performance in class during the year
- Meet with your student's teachers and counselor
- Create a supportive learning environment at home
- Know what achievement tests and core classes your student is required to complete
- Congratulate your child on improved test scores or for showing gains
- Set high, yet realistic, academic expectations for your student
- Visit the school website to learn about the various high school courses and their syllabi
- Attend academic workshops or meetings for parents at the school

The Graduation Plan

Early on in high school, parents will have an opportunity to learn about their student's **graduation plan**, which maps out their student's classes and goals over the next four years. While high schools offer a variety of courses, there are specific courses that your student must pass in order to earn a high school diploma. Students are required to complete certain academic courses in English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies plus Personal Fitness/Health. Additional graduation requirements must be satisfied by completing three sequenced pathway courses in Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education, World Languages, Advanced Academics, or Fine Arts/Performing Arts. Students can add, as part of their graduation plan, college-level courses and earn concurrent credit or dual enrollment credits towards a high school diploma and a college degree while in high school. It is best to make an appointment with your student's high school counselor to learn more about these courses and options. By knowing what classes your student needs to take, you will be able to help your child stay on track towards earning a high school diploma.

Asking your student questions about their career interests and college goals can be beneficial and insightful for both of you. Your child needs to understand what they enjoy doing on a regular basis. Do they like working with their hands, outside building things, for example, or would they rather work in an office writing computer code? Understanding who they are and what they enjoy, will lead them to learning and mastering essential skills for a career. Once they choose the most appropriate educational path, you and your student can then make their career dreams come true by selecting the best high school courses, completing dual enrollment courses, and arranging postsecondary programs of study.

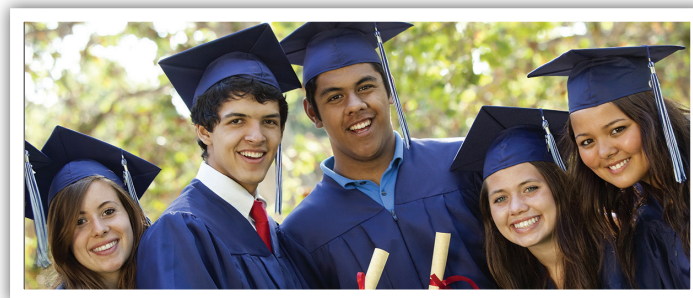


DID YOU KNOW?

If a student is successful during 9th grade, there is a higher likelihood that the student will graduate and enjoy their high school experience.

There are many ways for families to help prepare their student for college and a career.

- Complete a four-year plan of study with your student and their school advisor (counselor, homeroom teacher, etc.)
- Keep track, along with your student, of their progress towards graduation
- Find ways to allow your child to experience a variety of possible career fields
- Visit local colleges and universities with your student early on in high school
- Attend college and career events at the high school and nearby locations
- Understand the high school promotion and graduation requirements
- Learn about the different Career Clusters and Pathways in Georgia
- Arrange job shadowing experiences for your student during the year in a chosen career field of interest



How Do I Continue to be Involved in My Child's School and Education?



While opportunities for family engagement may change at the high school level, your involvement in your student's education remains a critical part of their academic success. Even though students are expected to develop independence, it is important for parents to remain informed and knowledgeable in order to provide guidance and support to their student.

Stay Informed. Often times in high school, information and announcements are still relayed to parents through their students. However, in addition to asking your child what is happening in high school, be sure to regularly visit the websites for the school and school district. Signing up to receive alerts and phone messages, attending meetings,

and joining parent groups will also make you an informed parent. There may not be a specific date for parent-teacher conferences in high school, but parents can schedule meetings with teachers or counselors throughout the year.

Set a Good Example. You may think that your teenager doesn't hear a word that you are saying, but they are listening and watching. Show them the importance of high school by speaking positively about your student's teachers and the school. Avoid scheduling appointments or making plans that may cause your child to miss time in class. Teach them to value their education by making it a priority in your lives.

Find the Time. High school only lasts four years, but those years are filled with sporting events, school dances, parent meetings, choir recitals and graduation. Enjoy the opportunities to watch your child and support their hard work in the classroom, under the lights or on the stage.

Lend a Hand. Parents are valuable members in the school community and help improve the overall success and image of the school. Consider lending your time and talents to make the school a better place for the community, students, families, faculty and staff. Ask the principal or counselors about possible projects or opportunities which parents can complete to contribute to the school's success.

Talk with Your Student. By listening to what their student is saying or perhaps not saying, parents can learn how their child is doing in school. Help your student find solutions to their problems by allowing them to express their concerns or struggles. Make sure that your student knows you are available to listen and talk with them when they are facing challenges in school.

Meet the Teachers. In high school, there are various faculty members who will work with your student during the year, including teachers, counselors, administrators and the principal. Be sure that you know how these people can help your student to be successful in high school as well as how to contact them when you have questions or need assistance. Attend events at the beginning of the year, such as open house or transition activities, to meet your student's teachers and give them your contact information.

Know How Your Student is Doing. You don't have to solve physics problems to be an involved parent in high school. By monitoring your child's progress and keeping tabs on their academic performance, you will be prepared to spot any signs of trouble as soon as possible. Utilize online systems to track your student's grades. Remember that knowing and understanding the school's grading system, promotion and graduation requirements, and course schedules will help you to track your child's progress.

