

Transitioning From Middle School to High School—Things to Do & How to Prepare

During middle school students should be fine-tuning many academic skills that they will need to be successful in high school. Making sure your middle school student is prepared for high school can include a wide variety of skills and competencies. Here is a list to help get you started:

***Core Academic Skills:** Make sure your student is academically sound in the “core subjects” such as math, English, social studies, and science. Is he/she placed correctly in his/her math level? Is your student struggling with any of these core subjects? Is your student taking the correct core subject courses to be prepared for high school-level core subjects. If you are not sure, please discuss your concerns with your student’s PEC and/or our school counselor. Consider having your student take the iReady assessments so those core subject areas can be assessed. If you feel as though your student is behind academically start considering hiring a tutor, or ask your PEC what supplemental academic options there are for boosting your student’s core competencies.

***Encourage Self-Advocacy:** Start to encourage your student to be reaching out to his/her Course Instructors (CI’s) and PEC on their own (via email, phone call, or IM in Teams 365). Have them work on asking for help, sending questions or concerns, or asking for a retake/resubmission in a course without you doing it for them. This is the time to help teach your student to advocate for themselves & that begins with them communicating directly with their CI’s and PEC. In high school, students are expected to be more independent & take more ownership for their course choices, grades, and academic decisions. Middle school is the time to begin learning these practices.

***Get Organized:** Help your student learn to organize his/her monthly, weekly, and daily academics, as well as extra-curricular activities. How can they get organized in such a manner that they stay on top of deadlines, don’t miss meetings, & continue to make good progress in his/her courses? Do they need to set up alarms or notifications? Do they need a daily/weekly schedule to abide by? They can also work directly with their PEC to help them set up ways to get academically organized. Learning these skills now in middle school will be dividends in high school.

***Learn/Practice Time-Management & Good Study Habits:** In high school, students will have more demands, more assignments, more social activities, and more extra-curricular activities, as well. Learning good time management skills is an important aspect of being a successful high school student. This skill goes hand in hand with the “get organized” section above. Making sure your student is using his/her time wisely, not wasting time on “off-task” searches or for example, video games, when he/she should be working on a course, is an important skill. Learning to manage time wisely will be a skill that will help your student not only succeed in high school, but life after high school (college) and beyond!

***Monitor Your Student:** Continue to keep a close eye on your student’s school progress. Use all available resources to help monitor student progress (i.e., parent login in Genius, Buzz or progress emails). Also, continue to check in with your student. Ask them how school is going? Ask them for specific examples of things they have learned about that day/week. See if their learning area/space is still conducive to online learning. Reach out to your student’s PEC and/or CI to see how they are progressing with their courses, etc. Although we are working to teach high school students independence, we need to still keep track of their progress and show we care about how they are doing!

***Use Support Systems (w/ Peers & Adults):** Make sure your student knows they have many layers of support throughout the teen years. These years are fraught with social pitfalls, academic struggles/challenges, and so much more! Your student has many options to access support here at CMASAS, as well as at home. Please have a conversation with them to help them understand that they can always come to you for social, academic, or other support. Your student's PEC will also emphasize the many layers of support we have available at CMASAS. We don't want students to feel they are all alone! They have peers and adults in their lives that can help them navigate this (often) difficult period in their lives.

***Prioritize Self-Care & Mental/Emotional Well Being:** Continue to monitor and assess your child's mental and emotional well-being. Is he/she showing signs of stress, anxiety, or depression? If so, please reach out to us or your pediatrician for specific help. We want to build resilient, successful high school students and if your student is showing signs of stress, anxiety, or depression in middle school we want to seek help sooner rather than later.

***Give Perspective:** Remember that although high school can seem really serious, it is also a time of huge growth. With growth can come failure, or at least setbacks! How does your child react to failure or setbacks? Additionally, you should encourage your student to try new things, explore new passions/interests, and feel safe enough to take some risks. For example, instead of just "playing it safe" by taking the "regular" Biology course, maybe your student takes Honors, or even our dual enrollment/ASU college Biology course. It's important to also remind students that even if they expect perfection, less than an "A" in a course does NOT mean they will fail in life or not get into college. Sometimes high school feels really overwhelming and we (as the adults in this student's life) need to put these things in perspective for them.

After reading this guide, please let me know if you still have questions about preparing your student for high school. Your PEC and our Director of Counseling are available to set up meeting to discuss any concerns you may have.

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Sources Consulted: Aplustutoring, Inspiritai, Poudre S.D. (Colorado)