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9th Grade is the most important year in high school

Fact

In a recent survey of Seattle Public Schools high school students we found that more than 70% rely on their families more than anyone else for advice on college and career planning.

Family Engagement is Key

Once your student reaches high school, they may try to talk you out of being involved. Don't believe it. Your student needs you now as much as they ever did! Make sure you:

- ✓ Get a copy of your student's progress report (every five weeks) and report cards (every nine weeks) to keep track of your student's progress toward graduation.
- ✓ Attend school open house, meetings and conferences.
- ✓ Set aside time to ask your student about their homework.
- ✓ Know who to call at the school if your student needs help.

The top priority is for your son or daughter to graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their career goals. Preparation for college must begin in middle school or even earlier. To graduate from high school a student must be on track in 9th grade by paying attention to these four areas:

1. Attendance Matters

If students are not in class, they are not learning. Research shows that students missing more than five days a semester are much less likely to pass the class and earn credits. These students are also much more likely to drop out of school.

How parents can help

- Talk to your student about the importance of being in school every day.
- Help your student get out the door on time each morning.
- Set bedtime and homework schedule for your student.
- Set screen time limits for your student.

2. Credits Count

Ninth-graders must earn at least six credits to be on track for graduation (24 credits required). Students who do this are more than 85 percent more likely to graduate than those who do not.

How parents can help

- Make sure your student is taking courses required for graduation
- Make sure he/she is passing all 9th grade courses.
- Encourage your student to ask their teachers for help when they need it.
- Make sure you know the grading policies for each of your student's teachers.
- Encourage your student's teachers and counselors to contact you if your student's grades fall below a "C."
- Sign up for The Source, the Seattle Public Schools' online tool to help parents monitor student daily attendance and grades.
- Get to know your student's teachers and counselors. Encourage them to let you know if there is a problem that you can work together to solve.

Fact

College graduates earn an average of \$12,900 more a year than students who dropped out of school

Understand graduation requirements for your student. They can be found at the District website at www.seattleschools.org Go to “Students,” then “Academics,” then “Graduation Requirements.” Or ask your student’s counselor for a copy of the Graduation Bulletin.

Fact

People who complete college will make close to a million dollars more during their lifetime than those who don’t, and they will be much less likely to be unemployed.



Engaging Families in High School Success (EFIHS) is a collaborative initiative of Seattle Public Schools and Johns Hopkins University, funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

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3. Passing 9th Grade Courses Matters

Students can pass their courses and earn credits with a grade of 60 percent or above - but to be on track for college, your student should strive to earn the best grades possible. A “C” average is required for high school graduation. Students who earn low grades may not be prepared for the state exams (required for graduation) or qualify for college entrance requirements.

Even though students may repeat failed courses after school or during the summer, it is less likely they will be ready for advanced course during their 11th- and 12th-grade years which will make them less prepared to apply for a 4-year college.

How parents can help

- Make sure your student is doing homework every night.
- Set goals with your student and ask them about their progress.
- Encourage your student to ask their teachers for help when they need it.
- Make sure you know the grading policies for each of your student’s teachers.
- Encourage your student’s teachers and counselors to contact you if your student’s grades fall below a “C.”
- Ask your school to see a copy of your student’s *High School and Beyond Plan*.
- Encourage your student to use their electives to explore their interests and take advanced classes.

4. High School Proficiency Exams are Required

In order to graduate from any school in Washington State, your student must pass exams in reading, writing, math and science.

How parents can help

- Understand the state exam requirements for your student’s graduating class.
- Make sure that your student understands that the state exams are required for graduation, not optional.
- Make sure your student is ready on test day with enough sleep and a good breakfast.
- Make sure you review your students test results when they arrive. If your student does not meet standard on any section contact your school counselor.