



Preparing for Success in 9th Grade and Beyond



SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PARENT INFORMATION GUIDE

Here's the bottom line:

Ninth grade is critical to future success

- ▶ Preparation for college* must begin in the 9th grade, starting to think about this in 11th or 12th grade may be too late.
- ▶ The top priority is for your son or daughter to graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their next step.
- ▶ The pathway to college is available to every student, but you must get on track in 9th grade by paying attention to five key areas.

* Degree or certificate granting post-secondary institution or apprenticeship program.

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 credit. These students are also much more likely not to graduate.

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 a regular schedule for your student with limits on bedtime.

2. Courses and Credits Count

Ninth-graders must earn at least five credits to advance to 10th grade and be on track for graduation. 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 passing all of the courses required for graduation.
- ▶ Schools should be helping students put together a High School and Beyond Plan. Ask to see a copy of the plan.
- ▶ Encourage your student to use their electives to explore their interests and take advanced classes.
- ▶ Understand the specific 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.



3. Good Grades are Important

Students can pass their courses and earn credits with a 60 percent or above - but to be on track for college, your student should strive to earn the best grades possible. Students who earn low grades may not be prepared for the state exams (required for graduation) or college. 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 for 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."

Fact: In a recent survey of Seattle Public Schools high school students we found that more than 70 percent rely on their families more than anyone else for advice on college. You make a difference!

Fact: Students who enroll in college earn an average of \$12,900 more a year than high school dropouts.



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

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 to determine next steps.

5. Parent Involvement is Key

Once your student reaches high school, they may try to talk you out of being involved. They might tell you, "It's not cool." Or, "No one else's parents are involved." Don't believe it. Your student needs you now as much as they ever did!

How parents can help:

- ▶ Attend school open house, meetings and conferences to learn more about what students are learning and how learning is measured.
- ▶ Make sure to 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.
- ▶ Set aside time for and ask your student about their homework.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Sign up for The Source, a Seattle Public Schools online tool to help parents monitor your student's daily attendance and grades.