

OREGON GEAR UP TOOLKIT



The Transition to High School

strategies to help students, staff
and parents

REACHING HIGHER

RIGOR

RELEVANCE

RELATIONSHIPS

RAISING AWARENESS

7 8 9 10 11 12 13+

Parents Community **Teachers**



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RIGOR

Academically prepare all students for postsecondary education through rigorous curriculum and necessary academic support.

RELATIONSHIPS

Students who have relationships with people who expect them to go to college are far more likely to attend.



DOWNLOAD PRINT-AND-USE RESOURCES: bit.ly/1TUxJ9F

Look for the printer icon and green text throughout the toolkit!

- Freshman Transition Camp
- Summer Bridge Program
- Event Evaluation

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Sources & More Information

Education Partnerships, Inc, [Transition from Middle School to High School](#)

Edutopia, [Transition Resources for Parents, Teachers, and Administrators](#)

Lost River High School

McKay High School

La Pine High School

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

The transition to high school has become more important because of the high rate of course failures and dropout rates in the 9th grade. The single most predictive indicator of high school dropout is the student's academic standing during the ninth grade. Students that have a successful transition are more likely to achieve in the 9th grade, to attend regularly and to not drop out of school. They are more likely to develop and sustain positive social relationships with peers and with adults. Therefore, the transition to freshman year is also an important step in helping students enter postsecondary education.



STEPS FOR SUCCESS

The most successful schools see the transition between the middle grades and high school as a process, not an event. These schools involve teachers, students and families in continuous planning to support students' academic and social success in high school and beyond.

There are four components of effective transition systems: providing **students and families accurate and useful information**, supporting **students' social success** in high school, preparing students for **academic success** in high school, and **working collaboratively** to monitor transition plans and adjust those plans based on data about student success (attendance, achievement, dropout rate).

The single most predictive indicator of high school dropout is the student's academic standing during the ninth grade.

► TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

Seniors need support in the transition to college, too. Check out our toolkit with strategies and resources to improve student enrollment and retention.

oregongearup.org/resources/transition-college-toolkit



STAFF COLLABORATION

The most successful transition programs are the result of extensive collaboration between the middle grades school and the high school.

HOW TO DO IT

- **TRANSITION TEAM:** Create a group of teachers, administrators, parents and students from the middle school and the high school. This group should identify the needs of transitioning students and develop and implement activities, while paying attention to outcomes and data about student success. This group can be the same, or different, as the team that helps plan college readiness and GEAR UP activities.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Information

- Parent information activities
- Honest information about what is expected academically at high school
- Bridging communication gaps
- Co-curricular fair
- Identifying multiple ways to share information

► PARENT ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Includes workshop agendas and power points as well as monthly newsletters.

oregongearup.org/resources/parent-engagement-toolkit



Social Support

- Organizing school visits
- Mentoring programs
- Eighth grade culminating activity
- Eighth graders shadowing a ninth grade student
- Professional development on young adolescents

Academic Support

- Support high academic expectations for all students
- Examine and recommend ideas to redesign the ninth grade experience (course offerings, schedule, extra-help)
- Arrange teacher exchange or shadowing between middle school and high school
- Review achievement



INFO FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS

One of the most effective ways to mediate the anxiety of transitioning to a new school is to provide ample information early in the middle grades and continuing throughout the transition. Parent involvement in students' transition from middle to high school is essential.

WHAT TO SHARE

- **RIGHT CLASSES**: Share information about the right classes to take for each year of high school and the conditions necessary for high school graduation as well as college admissions requirements.

► OREGON DIPLOMA

Information available from the Oregon Department of Education for parents about high school graduation requirements.

oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/Pages/Graduation-Requirements-and-College-Preparation.aspx

- **ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS**: Tell students and parents the truth about what counts in high school and what they will need to know and be able to do.

► PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE

Information for parents of middle and early high school students with specific strategies to ease the transition to the high school.

sylvanlearning.com/docs/default-source/resources/middle-and-high-school-transitions.pdf

- **WHO WILL HELP**: Provide lessons on how and who to approach when questions and concerns arise in the new school.

HOW TO DO IT

- **STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES**: Have 8th grade students lead the traditional parent-teacher conferences with information about the transition to high school and their college and career plans.
- **PEER PARENT NIGHTS**: Connect middle school parents with parents of current high school students for question-and-answer sessions.
- **HIGH SCHOOL VISITS**: Hold an event, like a **Freshman Transition Camp** 🏕️, that bring students and parents to the high school, with a trial day where students open lockers and follow their classroom schedule as well as engage in team building and other fun activities. Gather feedback with an **Event Evaluation** 📋 in order to improve the event in the future.



Lost River Junior/Senior High School's **Locker Dash**.



SOCIAL SUPPORT

Friendships and social networking are really important for middle grades and high school students, particularly as they move to a new school. Implement multiple activities at both the middle school and the high school to support students' social transition.

WHAT TO SHARE

- **TELLING THEIR STORY:** Encourage students to ["tell their story"](#) and identify their support network.
- **SETTING GOALS:** Focus on personal problem solving and decision making in both middle school and high school. Help students learn how to set and assess realistic personal and academic goals.

► GOAL SETTING RESOURCES

- characterlab.org/woop
- success.oregonstate.edu/learning-corner/goal-setting

- **LEARNING STYLES & MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES:** Provide lessons on how to learn, how to study and how to take tests.

► LEARNING STYLES RESOURCES

- Research and application of theory: edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-learning-styles-research
- A sample learning styles inventory: vark-learn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/The-VARK-Questionnaire-Younger.pdf
- Student self-assessments: educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments


HOW TO DO IT

- **PEER PEN PALS & MENTORS:** Have students at both schools write letters to students at the other school. Invite middle school students to shadow ninth graders. Create a peer mentoring program that pairs high school students with middle school students.

► MENTORING RESOURCES

Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in Schools

educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/peer_book.pdf

- **FRESHMAN ACADEMIES:** Establish small houses or academies for 9th graders.
- **SUMMER BRIDGE PROGRAMS:** Create a **Summer Bridge Program**  for incoming freshman and include an opportunity to interact with high school students.
- **PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS:** Provide specialized eighth and ninth-grade courses that focus on a multi-year plan for success in high school.
- **SUPPORTIVE ADULTS:** Provide every ninth grader with an adult mentor or adviser.



ACADEMIC PREPARATION

The one thing that defines the most successful transition programs is the shared commitment to the academic preparation of students. An effective instructional program, a rich, rigorous and challenging curriculum, and a commitment to providing students with additional time and support if needed, makes students more successful.

HOW TO DO IT

- **CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT:** Provide time for teachers from both schools, in the same content area, to meet and discuss curricular issues by using data about student success to guide curricular revisions.
- **RIGOR:** Review the middle grades curriculum and identify ways to add additional rigor and challenge. Modify instruction to include challenging, meaningful and engaging assignments anchored in real-world problems. Adopt no-zero grading policies. Monitor ninth grade failure rates to determine what middle grades must do to assure greater high school success.

► RESOURCES ABOUT RIGOR

Information and strategies to build rigor and academic support.

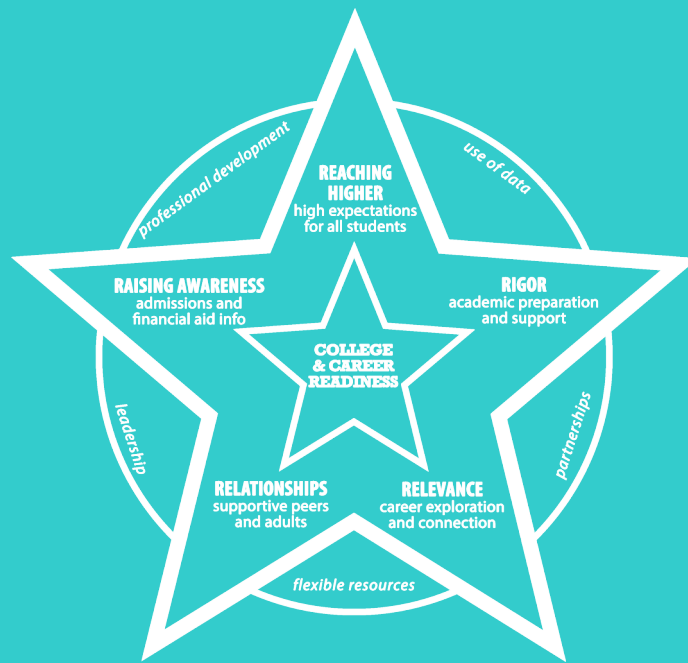
oregongearup.org/our-model/rigor



- **HIGH EXPECTATIONS:** Talk about high standards and expectations. Communicate clearly what students will need to know and be able to do in preparation for high school work. Teachers should make it known that they believe students can do high-level work.
- **CREDIT RECOVERY:** Successful schools require students to redo work, provide extra support or stay after school to complete unfinished coursework. Establish a way to provide extra-time and extra-help programs to assist students.
- **ACADEMIC SUMMER PROGRAMS:** Implement summer programs to support success in the ninth grade.
- **DOUBLE DOSE:** Some schools arrange double doses of English and math classes for struggling students.

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION PLANNING GUIDE

STAFF COLLABORATION	INFO FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS	SOCIAL SUPPORT	ACADEMIC SUPPORT
Who's on the transition team?	What information needs to be shared?	How will we offer social support?	How will we offer academic support?
	How will the information be shared?		



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COLLEGE. It's not a dream, it's a plan.