

Freshman Year

Grade 9 Presentation

It may seem early to start planning for life after high school, but freshman year is the perfect opportunity to develop good study habits and a sense of personal responsibility for success in school. Students and families often believe that post-secondary planning begins in the junior year, but the reality is that this process begins as soon as a student enters the halls of Dartmouth High School as a freshman. Below are some suggestions for parents that will help students transition smoothly from middle school to high school.

Create a four-year high school plan

Once your child has settled into high school, introduce the idea of creating a long-term education plan that relates to his/her career goals. Make sure he/she understands which high school courses are required by colleges and suggest that he/she map out when these courses should be taken at DHS. Your child's school counselor can be an excellent resource for long-term academic planning. Even if your child decides later on that college isn't the right choice for him/her, a solid educational foundation will guarantee workplace readiness and personal success in a variety of settings.

Encourage career exploration

It is never too early to develop a career goal. Even if the goal changes, your child will be familiar with the process of setting goals and developing a plan to achieve them. Ask your child's school counselor about the *Do What You Are* personality type assessment available to all students at DHS. This online assessment, which is typically completed by all ninth grade students in their Freshman year, helps students understand the connection between personality type and career satisfaction. Students can access this assessment, and several others, through their Naviance accounts.

Encourage extracurricular involvement

Students who are involved in extracurricular activities perform better in the classroom than those who are not involved. With more than 30 student organizations, varsity athletics, and a nationally recognized music program, DHS offers students plenty of opportunities to engage outside of the classroom. Colleges are most interested in the depth of activity a student pursues, not a laundry list of activities with no real involvement. Students should choose activities they are truly interested in, and look to take on a leadership role. Students can find detailed information about getting plugged in on the DHS school website.

Meet with teachers and guidance counselors

Get involved in your child's education by attending the annual Open House in September, as well as college planning nights and AP information sessions. These are great opportunities to make a connection with your child's teachers and guidance counselor. Also consider joining the Parent/Teacher Organization. PTO meetings are an excellent forum for parent-to-parent communication and a way to share knowledge or concerns about issues at the high school.
