

## **How to Prepare your Eighth-Grade Student for High School and Beyond**

### **ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENT TO READ.**

Reading is a critical skill for all students. As they progress through school, they must read and comprehend increasingly challenging textbooks. How can you help?

- Encourage your student to read a variety of materials including fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, magazines, short stories, and novels.
- Make sure you have books and magazines in your home to read.
- Take your student to the library.
- Let your children see you reading for information and pleasure on a regular basis.

### **ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENT TO WORK HARD IN MATH, STAY UP TO DATE WITH HOMEWORK, AND ASK FOR EXTRA ASSISTANCE FROM THE TEACHER WHEN NEEDED.**

Algebra 1 gives students the basic building blocks for all future math and many science courses. Even if you don't understand the concepts your student is studying, you can still encourage success.

- Throughout the school year, ask about your student's grades in math.
- Set aside regular time in the evenings for your student to do homework and study for tests.
- Attend parent conferences, and follow up with your student.
- Talk about ways you use mathematics in your own job and at home (i.e. paying bills, managing a bank account, etc.).

### **HELP YOUR STUDENT DEVELOP THE GOOD HABITS THEY WILL NEED IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.**

Earning good grades starting as high school freshmen puts students on the track for college and career success. Even if your child plans to start a career after high school, a 2006 report by ACT notes that students entering the workforce need similar academic skills as students entering colleges.

([act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/readinessbrief.pdf](http://act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/readinessbrief.pdf))

- Model time-management by showing your children how you keep track of important deadlines and due dates.
- Help your student develop schedules and calendars to track their homework, activities, and other responsibilities.
- Help students prepare for tests and projects by quizzing them from their notes.

## PLAN FOR AND UNDERSTAND THE EXPLORE TEST.

The EXPLORE test is the first of three important tests that your student will take over the next four years. Both the EXPLORE and PLAN tests predict students' success on and introduce the framework of the ACT test, which many colleges use when accepting new students. Taking the EXPLORE test seriously will result in accurate scores, allowing your high school to place your student into the classes that will best prepare her or him for college and career needs.

- Find out the dates for the EXPLORE test. (November 9<sup>th</sup>)
- Talk to your student about the test and its importance.
- Find out what your student's scores mean.
- Talk to your student about the strengths and weaknesses indicated by his or her scores.

## PLAN FOR COLLEGE EXPENSES.

The longer you wait to think about the cost of college, the less time you will have to make important decisions and seek assistance.

- Visit the College Board's website to predict college costs:  
[apps.collegeboard.com/fincalc/college-cost.jsp](https://apps.collegeboard.com/fincalc/college-cost.jsp).
- Don't assume that college is too expensive. Learn everything you can about scholarships and financial aid.
- Remind your student that grades, community service, and participation in school activities can help him or her qualify for scholarships.

## About This Guide

This guide was designed by the Alliance for College Readiness, a partnership between Elgin Community College and Community Unit Districts 300, 301, 303, and U-46. Our goal is to improve all students' academic success, increase the college-going rate, and hope this guide will help you begin planning, right now, for your student's success after high school.