Choosing Courses for High School
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Transitioning from middle school to high school can be an intimidating and overwhelming experience. Choosing the classes your child will take is a big decision that can impact the course of their high school education and college/career decisions. Even though you may be feeling intimidated by this process, there are ways to work through it effectively in order to make the right choices.

The first step that parents and students should take is looking at the high school’s registration guide. Most schools publish a document that details all of the classes that are offered as well as the school’s graduation requirements. You might have received this already. If not, many times, the document is easily accessible on the school’s website. If you have trouble finding it, contact the high school or district office for assistance.

The next step is to communicate with the child’s current middle school teachers and counselor. The middle school staff has spent a lot of time getting to know your student’s strengths and weaknesses. They know whether your student should be enrolled in remedial courses, regular education, or honors classes. Most likely, the middle school teachers have communicated with the high school so that they understand the different kinds of coursework offered and what would be most appropriate for your child. Talk to your child’s current teachers and counselor to find out what courses they recommend as your child enters high school.

Another very important person to rely on is the high school counselor. This individual is a vital resource, providing a vast amount of information about courses. The high school counselor knows who to ask if they do not have the information that you need. A counselor can act as a liaison, finding information and pointing you in the direction of the right people to speak to for any questions you might have. Make sure that you attend any organized presentations involving the high school counselor, such as an Open House for incoming freshmen or a registration day. If your high school does not offer these activities, contact the high school counselor to see if you can arrange a meeting to discuss course selection.

The best way to finalize high school course decisions is to have an open dialogue with your child. Ask them what their interests are and if they were curious about any classes as they looked through the registration guide. There are often very limited opportunities to choose courses in the early years of high school, but your child may have ideas about electives such as world languages, arts, or technology classes that they might want to take. Assess your child’s comfort level with the course material and demands of the class work. Challenge your child without pushing them into territory where they cannot succeed. Allow them to make some of the decisions, when possible, with your support, guidance, and input. This collaborative approach can help to set your child up for success in high school.

For additional information, please visit:
http://www.schoolcounselor.org


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