

The High School Transition Process

The high school transition process can be an involved and daunting task. At Center School, this task is made manageable by an organized system to support students and parents. Beginning in the spring of seventh grade, students start the process of preparing for the transition to high school. This process continues into the fall of eighth grade when students are applying to various schools and meeting with members of the schools' staff. Center School students are taught and coached in preparing for the transition to high school. Collaboration is key to the success of this process. The seventh and eighth grade teachers, guidance counselor, and speech therapist work together to guide students through this journey.

Initial Contact and Conferencing

Near the end of seventh grade, parents are contacted by the Assistant Head of School to initiate conversation about the high school transition process. This discussion may include:

- I. Names of high schools
- II. Concerns for high school preparation
- III. Facilitating a smooth high school transition

At the beginning of eighth grade, parents are contacted by their child's eighth grade teacher. The teacher will discuss:

- I. Obtaining a new evaluation or updated testing if necessary
- II. Appropriate high school choices and/or suggestions
- III. Timelines involved with the high school transition process

Individual conferences can be scheduled to discuss the transition process in further detail.

Preparing for Writing

Writing is an essential piece of the high school application process. Students receive instruction in writing the types of essays for submission as well as writing a resume.

- I. Personal Essays: All private high schools require applicants to write a personal essay. In the spring of seventh grade, students practice writing personal narratives in writing class. Not only is this a required part of Center School's curriculum, but it helps students develop and organize ideas about themselves in preparation for writing application essays. When students enter eighth grade in the fall, this genre is continued, and students will have had ample practice in this style of writing.
- II. Resumes: During the fall of eighth grade, students learn to create a resume in writing class to highlight their successes and leadership roles which can be shared during interviews. This process is guided by both the eighth grade teacher and the guidance counselor.

Interviews

While most schools do not conduct formal interviews, they do require casual meetings where students are given the opportunity to discuss such topics as their experiences in Center School, their interests, their strengths, and how they support their individual challenge areas. Learning to converse in this manner can be overwhelming, so students are coached in how to participate in these kinds of conversations.

- I. **Guidance Lessons:** During scheduled guidance lessons, Center School's guidance counselor helps students hone in on and identify their strengths, verbalize the strategies they use to support their challenge areas, and become comfortable talking about themselves. These ideas are tracked, shared with the eighth grade teacher, and used in creating a student's resume.
- II. **Speaking:** The guidance counselor, in conjunction with the speech therapist, coach students in learning how to converse with adults appropriately and confidently while sharing their strengths and accomplishments. Students who are applying to high schools that require a formal interview may be coached individually.

Student Council

Leadership is an important part of developing into a productive citizen of Center School, and many schools look for this type of participation. The Student Council provides this opportunity.

- I. **Seventh Grade:** In the late spring of seventh grade, current eighth grade student council members recruit seventh graders for participation in The Student Council. During this time, seventh graders apply, interview, and run for a position within Student Council. All students participate in Student Council on some level.
- II. **Eighth Grade:** When students enter eighth grade in the fall, they have already been selected as leaders in The Student Council, so they can immediately begin participating.

Administrative Tasks and Paperwork

There are certain pieces of information to be aware of when applying to high schools.

- I. **Updated Evaluations:** Many private schools, especially those that support students with learning differences, require an updated evaluation for admission. In the fall of eighth grade, the eighth grade teacher will contact all parents to remind them of obtaining an updated evaluation and providing guidance if necessary.
- II. **Submitting Paperwork to the High Schools:** This involves recommendations, records, and other administrative paperwork. Many schools have moved to electronic submissions, and those can be sent directly to the identified staff member at Center School. The following are guidelines:
 - A. **Principal Recommendation:** Send to The Assistant Head of School.
 - B. **Teacher Recommendation:** Send to specified teachers.
 - C. **Transcripts:** Send to Administrative Assistant.
 - D. **Other records:** Send to Administrative Assistant.

If the school to which your child is applying does not have electronic submission, please bring all paperwork to the Administrative Assistant, and she will distribute it accordingly.

Transitioning to a Public High School

If your child is transitioning to a public school, Center School staff will help you to get the support your child needs in a public school setting, which may require the development of an Individualized Education Plan through your school district.