

# **ROADS to SUCCESS**

Grade 8

Setting Goals

Family Newsletter

## Getting Ready for High School

### Roads to Success

is a new program designed to help middle and high school students prepare for their futures. This newsletter will keep you posted on what we're doing in school, and how families can follow through at home.

### Did you know?

The teen brain is a work in progress! new research shows that the part of the brain that guides planning doesn't reach maturity until after age 20. Scientists believe that discussing choices with your teen may build decision-making skills that last a lifetime.

Remember your child's first day of school? Maybe you sent her off with new supplies, a specially chosen outfit, or a pep talk about what to expect.

Getting ready for high school is just as important. You've probably talked to your teen about making responsible decisions when it comes to issues like drugs and alcohol. But he can also use your advice on the academic choices he's facing — what courses to take and why.

Here are some things to consider:

**What courses are required for graduation?** This varies from state to state and district to district. Your son or daughter's counselor will

provide details.

### What does she want to do when she graduates?

Students planning to attend college will want to sign up for challenging math and science courses and a foreign language, too. They'll also want to aim for at least a B average. Most colleges expect good high school grades as evidence that students are ready for college work.



**What special courses does your high school offer?** Many schools offer courses with a career focus, from auto mechanics to cosmetology. Some offer courses that count toward college credit while a student is still in high school.

**What electives are available?** Once your teen has signed up for all the required courses, there may be time left in the school day for other courses she'd like to take. Electives are a great way to learn new skills or discover new interests.

For more about college and careers, visit us at [www.roadstosuccess.org](http://www.roadstosuccess.org).

## Grade by Grade: Decision Making

Figuring out what high school courses to take isn't the only decision facing your teen.

The smaller decisions they make each day can make a difference. Teens may have difficulty seeing the importance of schoolwork until the moment of truth: the test, the report card,

graduation. Young people often need adult help thinking through consequences that are days or weeks away.

This year, we're getting eighth-graders to think about the cost of a missed opportunity. (If your son or daughter decides to spend the night playing video games, the **opportunity**

**cost** is the chance to study for tomorrow's test.) Life is full of these trade-offs, big and small.

Steps for making tough decisions:

- List possible choices.
- Think of the consequences (good and bad) for each choice.
- Weigh your options, then decide.