

#### Why Ninth Grade Matters

#### 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?

Passing ninth grade courses is key to success in high school. Other signs your teen is on the right track:

- Good attendance
- Feels connected to classmates and school
- Hangs out with kids who intend to graduate

To a freshman, the four years until high school graduation seem like forever. To a ninth-grader, graduation is one-quarter of a life-time away! But ninth grade is an important step in your son or daughter's education. Here's why:

**Grades count.** From now on, the courses he takes and the grades he gets are part of his official transcript. This information may be requested by future employers and colleges he wants to attend.

**Skills count.** Not every college or employer requires top grades, but your teen will need basic math and reading skills no matter what she does next.

#### Good beginnings count.

Students who do well in ninth grade are much more likely to finish high school. Here are some ways you can help make your student's first year a success.

#### • Getting organized

Does your student know how to keep track of homework, take notes, plan for long-term assignments, and organize school materials? If not, help him set up a study plan that works for him. (At the beginning of the year, check every day to make sure he's following through. It takes



weeks for a new routine to become a habit.)

#### • Getting basic skills

If your student is reading below grade level or struggling in math, she has to work extra hard to "get" ninth grade material. Talk to her teacher or guidance counselor about school programs that provide extra help.

#### • Getting the message that this is important

Your high expectations are a big factor in your student's success. Make sure your message is clear. "This is important, and I know you can do it. I'll do whatever it takes to help you succeed."

#### Grade by Grade: Setting Goals

In ninth grade, Roads to Success students take a look at the habit needed for success in school—like going to class each day, taking notes, writing down homework assignments, and finding a time and place to study.

Then, each student creates a "SMART" goal for improvement. Each

goal must be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**imed. A goal like "I want to do better in science" isn't considered "SMART" because it's not clear what the goal-setter has to do, or when he has to do it.

"I will get a B on my next science test by reviewing my notes

every night after school and asking questions in class when something isn't clear" is specific and measurable. It's clear what is expected, and when. It's easier to reach a goal when you know exactly what has to be done to get there.

To find out more, check us out on the Web at [www.roadstosuccess.org](http://www.roadstosuccess.org).