

Parent School Counselor Guide

10th Grade

Your child's school counselor is a vital resource. The counselor is trained to take a complete look at your child, from academic achievement to college and career planning to emotional and social development. You should contact and stay in touch with your child's school counselor, in addition to your child's teacher. While every school is different, many have counselors on-site during parent-teacher conferences, and encourage parents to drop by for a meeting. Additionally, many schools offer counselor-led parents' nights, or back-to-school nights, where they offer a variety of information and advice for parents of students in each high school grade. The counselor's role varies in each school, but many counselors follow a class for all four years of high school, which means the counselor assigned to your child's 9th grade class will stay with that class until 12th grade. This gives the counselor a unique view of your child as she progresses through high school. The counselor can offer insight into what types of classes your child will be challenged by and what kinds of careers may interest her, and can also suggest special-education or AP classes that would be a good fit for your child.

- **No one knows your child better than you do.**
Despite the fact your child is taking on more responsibility and independence in high school, your involvement is still critical. The counselor will likely be doing a lot of work with your child in planning for her future. Your insights for the counselor are just as important as what the counselor can offer you. The partnership you form with the counselor will benefit your child and help all of you find the right fit for your child after graduation, whether it is a four-year university, community college, military enrollment, or career.
- **Your child's school counselor has a more comprehensive view of your child than her teacher may have.**
Especially in high school when teachers are often focused on their class or subject, counselors monitor your child's academic progress and make sure she is taking the right types of classes to graduate on time and be prepared for career and college.
- **If your child is struggling, the first person you may hear from is the counselor.**
If your child is having difficulty in multiple classes, the counselor may be brought in to arrange conferences with different teachers. He can develop interventions like monitoring homework completion, having you keep track of grades online, and bringing in tutors if necessary. He may ask you questions about home life – if there's a place for your child to do homework or if there's anything emotionally concerning at home that may be interfering with her ability to focus on schoolwork. Counselors are concerned with your child's overall wellbeing, and can offer referrals to mental health professionals if your child is having emotional or behavioral difficulties.
- **Your child should start narrowing down interests and abilities.**
These are conversations you should have with your child, as in 9th grade, but now even more specific. It's likely the counselor will also have conversations with your child about his interests and it's important you are all on the same page. Your child will have more electives in 10th grade than in 9th and knowing his interests and abilities will help the counselor place him in elective classes that may turn an interest into a passion – which may then spur career ideas.
- **Start to think seriously with your child about life after high school.**
Depending on what your child's goals are after high school, the courses he should take can be different. Is he planning on going to a four-year university? If so, you may want to ask the counselor to place him in higher-level or advanced placement classes. Is he planning for a vocational degree? Some schools, like counselor Wendy Rock's Hahnville High School in Boutte, Louisiana, offer a concentration and career-focused high school program specifically for students planning a two-year or vocational post-secondary education.
- **This is when many schools begin preliminary college testing.**
Both the SAT and ACT have practice tests, the PSAT and ACT PLAN, respectively. Some counselors will schedule meetings with you and your child to go over the test results. They can be a good indication of where your child is in terms of college readiness, and can help guide which classes your child enrolls in the following semester or year. For example, if your child scores well in math but is behind in science, the counselor may suggest enrolling him in more science classes.
- **Talk with the counselor about dual enrollment or college credit courses.**
If your child is on the college track, tenth grade is a good time to discuss the options for classes available outside of the high school with the counselor. Some local community colleges and universities allow students to dual-enroll, meaning the student takes college courses and earns credit while still in high school. Depending on the course, many high school districts will cover the cost of your child's college classes, which is one way to keep the cost of college down.

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