

# Parent School Counselor Guide

## 12<sup>th</sup> 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. Counselor Ruth Lohmeyer at Northeast High School in Lincoln, Nebraska, says a survey of her 9th graders shows parents are the biggest influencers on students' career and college choices. 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.

- **Twelfth grade is when you and the counselor are preparing to launch your child into her next phase.**

It is important for you to continue your relationship with your child's counselor so you both can monitor progress during this year. There should be no surprises on outstanding credits or other requirements that would hinder an on-time graduation, and the school counselor will have all that information.

- **Your child's workload will be even more rigorous than in 11th grade.**

In addition to academic classes, your child has the added pressure of the post-secondary application process. Again, keeping open lines of communication with your child's counselor will be crucial to making sure she stays on track and is meeting deadlines, both for her classes and applications. Many counselors recommend having all college applications in by December 1st of senior year.

- **Many counselors can offer help for parents filling out the FAFSA.**

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid can be cumbersome for parents applying for financial aid for college-bound students. Having some guidance in filling out the forms can be helpful, and many counselors' offices provide guidance on the form.

Produced by:



Information Adapted from:



Sponsored by:

PEARSON