October 2017

Helping Your Child Succeed in High School

Jesse Owens
High School Principal

Partnering with families who value a CHRISTIAN education and who are willing to make a financial sacrifice for their children is a wonderful privilege the faculty and staff do not take lightly. Prince parents are invested in their children and want to see them succeed. While we all desire success, we often look in every direction trying to find ways to support our children in reaching their goals.

While there is no perfect guide or list for parents that ensures a student's success in high school, I want to share just a few recurring themes that have proven helpful to students and families.

1. Be present. Simply minimizing instruction time missed and contact hours with teachers greatly impacts academic success.
2. Communicate your academic expectations for your child clearly and routinely. Every child is different. For some, your expectation may simply be, "do your best." For other children, expectations of a numeric average may be needed. You know your child best.
3. Provide clear and consistent rewards and consequences for your child.
4. Look beyond the numeric grade. Know why your child's grade is what it is, not just the grade itself. For example, one quick check of a student's assignment grades may reveal they are simply not turning in homework assignments. They may be doing fine on tests and quizzes but their homework category is pulling their overall grade down.
5. Encourage your child to get involved in a co-curricular activity. Involvement in a group or activity outside of class helps students become more invested in school and can serve as an opportunity to make friends. This can also allow students to get to know teachers and develop leadership and teamwork skills.
6. Ensure your child has a quiet space to study and complete homework with the resources they need. Trips around the house looking for a pen, pencil, calculator or grammar book is a distraction and wastes valuable time.
7. Allow your child the freedom to fail while staying present and involved. This is a delicate balance, but many lessons can only be learned on the other side of failure. Also, success after failure is an extremely rewarding feeling.

8. Help your child learn to break down larger tasks into smaller more manageable items. We all know the tendency to wait until the last minute to study, review, or complete a project. Some students struggle with this more than others. Similarly, help your child learn to study or review even when no official assignment is due. Reviewing and becoming familiar with notes or reading from the school day will lessen the needed study time in a last minute "cramming" session.
9. Encourage your child to communicate directly with their teachers. Parents can help teenagers develop the communication skills they need to advocate for themselves. This skill takes time to develop, but the high school teachers at PACS also desire to help students in this area. Whether drafting emails to teachers, scheduling a study time or requesting a meeting, as students take ownership of their responsibilities and communication they are cultivating a skill that will be an enormous asset in the years to come.
10. Make sure your child is getting enough sleep, keeping good eating habits, and managing their time wisely. A student who stays up all night studying may perform worse on a test due to exhaustion than the student who studied for an hour and had got a good night's sleep.
11. Make discussion of your child's college and career goals a routine. As your child thinks about these goals and aspirations, begin discussing the path to reach these.

Each child is uniquely made by God with different abilities and ambitions. Finding the right balance of encouragement, discipline, and knowing when parent intervention is needed is a challenging responsibility where Godly wisdom and grace is required daily.

Please let myself or one of our teachers or counselors know if there is ever anything we can do to be of assistance.