

It is very important to know what will be expected when your child gets to high school, especially if he/she plans to go to college. This chart gives you more information about what students should be taking in high school.

SUBJECT	STANDARD DIPLOMA		ADVANCED STUDIES DIPLOMA	
	UNITS OF CREDITS	VERIFIED CREDITS	UNITS OF CREDITS	VERIFIED CREDITS
English	4	2	4	2
Mathematics	3	1	4	2
Science	3	1	4	2
History Social Science	3	1	4	2
Foreign Language			3	
Health/PE*	2		2	
Fine Arts Practical Arts	1		1	
Electives	6	1	2	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>

\*PE = Physical Education

A **verified unit of credit** is awarded when, in addition to successfully completing a 140-hour course, the student passes an SOL test for certain courses in high school.

For the **Standard** diploma, a student must earn 22 units of credit as well as six verified credits.

For the **Advanced Studies** diploma, a student must earn 24 units of credit with nine verified credits.

Source: Virginia Department of Education website  
[www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Parents/soastude.html](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Parents/soastude.html)

## PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Financial aid is available from four sources:

- ☛ Federal Government
- ☛ State Government
- ☛ Colleges/Universities
- ☛ Private Sources

To apply for federal financial aid (grants, work study, and loans) you and your child must complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. This form is available at any college financial aid office, from most high school guidance counselors, and any public library. An electronic version also is available through [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). You should obtain the FAFSA soon after your child sends off the application(s) for the colleges he/she wants to attend.

For more in-depth information about financial aid and the process of applying for financial aid, visit SCHEV's website at [www.schev.edu](http://www.schev.edu).

It is never too late to start saving for your child's education. You can save for your child's education by putting money away in a separate savings account, or through saving bonds, and mutual funds. You also can participate in the Virginia College Savings Plan program. For more information about this popular program, visit [www.vpep.state.va.us](http://www.vpep.state.va.us) or call **1-888-567-0540**.



# Parents' Guide to College for Middle School Students



In middle school, children are just beginning to learn about the many options available to them for the future. Students will probably change their mind several times about the type of job they want to have when they grow up. It is important that you emphasize that no matter what career they plan to pursue, they need to begin to prepare by building a strong educational foundation *now*.

Sometimes seeing the long-term benefits of preparation can be difficult for students to grasp. Your child does listen to you when you talk about the importance of school and the value of a college education, although they may not act like it.

It is important for you to emphasize with your child that getting a college education can give him/her more options about what to do as an adult. This brief guide will help you get started in helping your child take the right steps towards a brighter future.

## Where Do I Start?

- ☑ Ask your child about his/her interests.
- ☑ Brainstorm activities and careers that relate to those interests.
- ☑ What careers has your child thought about? Do not discourage any career. Encourage exploration and suggest some alternatives.
- ☑ Encourage your child to talk to people who work in the career field(s) they wish to pursue. Help them set up informal interviews to get more information.
- ☑ Start discussing what subjects are critical to the careers your child named. (Even if your child dreams of becoming rich and famous, explain that everyone needs to learn writing, reading, and other academic skills to be successful throughout their life).
- ☑ Ask your child about his/her current plans after high school. Does he/she have any? Encourage him/her to think about what he/she might want to do after graduating high school.
- ☑ Introduce college as an important foundation and opportunity to accomplish career goals.
- ☑ Discuss what preparation is needed now and in high school to be prepared for college.

## Helping Your Child Succeed in School

- ➔ Get involved. Get to know your child's guidance counselor(s) and teachers. Let them know that you are there and that you are concerned about your child's performance.
- ➔ Set a time with your child to do homework everyday.
- ➔ Encourage your child to study at a desk or table rather than in a bed or easy chair.
- ➔ If it is hard for your child to sit still or concentrate for more than a short period of time, encourage him/her to walk while looking at flash cards or talk aloud when reviewing information.
- ➔ Discourage distractions like TV, conversations in the background, or calls from friends during homework time.
- ➔ If your child cannot get started, talk through the assignments with him or her. Be supportive, but avoid doing homework for your child.
- ➔ If you are unable to help your child with a difficult subject, ask for help from a relative or friend. Also see if the school, library, or community or religious organizations can provide help with homework through an after school program.
- ➔ Check to see that all the work is done. Sign it if your school has such requirements.
- ➔ Supply your child with study aids, such as a dictionary, thesaurus, or encyclopedias. Show your child how to use them.