

STEPS TO SUCCESS:
STRATEGIES PARENTS CAN USE
NOW TO HELP ENSURE THAT
THEIR CHILD GRADUATES!



November, 2014

Who are we and why are we here?

- Student Services Professionals: School Counselors, School Psychologists, School Social Workers
- Per the Florida Legislature, middle schools are required to track Early Warning System indicators of:
 - Attendance (below 90%)
 - Grades (failing grade in ELA or Mathematics)
 - Behavior (office discipline referrals and/or suspensions)
 - FCAT Level 1 prior year

Why are we here?

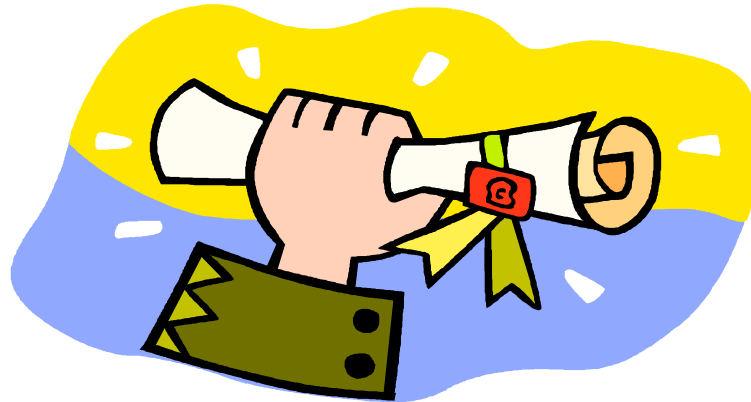
- Senate Bill 850 requires parents of students who are “off track” based on indicators to be invited to a meeting.
- Volusia County Schools is committed to partnering with parents to ensure that:
 - Students who are off track get back on track
 - Students who are on track stay on track
- Middle School performance (grades, attendance, behavior) is closely related to if/when students graduate.

School Attendance

What parents can do to help....

Everybody, Every Day, All Day

- Coming to school or class late is like arriving to see a movie after the movie started!
- Leaving school early is like walking out of the theater before the movie ends!



Children must be present to LEARN!

Did you know...

- Of the 6th grade students who **missed 20% of time** and failed Math or English, **only 25% of the students graduated.**
- 3 out of 4 students in 8th grade who **dropped out of middle school** failed Math or English and **had an attendance rate below 80%.**

□ Pinkus, L. (2008, August).



Regular School Attendance

It's Good for Our Future

- Regular school attendance:
 - improves student academic performance
 - encourages positive social interactions
 - increases student engagement in school and community activities
 - develops good work habits for future employment
- Research indicates a high positive correlation between:
 - attendance and achievement
 - poor attendance and dropping out of school
- Students who attend school regularly are:
 - more likely to graduate from high school
 - less likely to get involved with the criminal justice system

Compulsory School Attendance

It's the LAW

- Florida law (s. 1003.21) requires all children between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend school regularly.
- This law holds parents accountable for ensuring that their children are in school on time, every day, all day.



Parent Involvement is the Key to Regular School Attendance

- Regular school attendance is critical to a child's success in school.
- Families play a key role in ensuring that students arrive to school safely and understand the importance of regular school attendance.
- By working together as a team, our children will develop the skills necessary to become successful and productive members of society.

Helpful Tips for Parents

Make School Attendance A Priority

- Talk about the importance of arriving to school everyday and on time. Make that the expectation.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try to make medical and dental appointments when school is not in session.
- Avoid taking vacation when school is in session.
- Send your child to school every day unless they are truly sick.
- Develop backup plans for getting your child to school if something comes up.

Helpful Tips for Parents

Attendance Policy

- Know the school's attendance policy (Policy 206)– incentives and consequences.
- If you are aware of your child's absence and/or tardiness, notify the attendance clerk and/or call the school's attendance line. After the student returns to school from an absence, provide a note (keep a copy for your records).
- After 15 absences, parents must provide a doctor's note to excuse further absences due to illness.
- If your child has a chronic illness, obtain a doctor's note to excuse the absences (keep a copy for your records).

Helpful Tips for Parents

Help Your Child Stay Engaged

- Ensure that your child feels engaged in his/her classes and feels safe from bullies and other threats. Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues.
- Monitor your child's academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors, if necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

Helpful Tips for Parents

Encouraging Regular School Attendance

- Talk with your child about school every day.
- Continually encourage your child to abide by all school and classroom rules and maintain regular contact with teachers, school counselors, and administrators.
- Always maintain open lines of communication with your child and spend quality time with him/her regularly.
- If your child does not want to attend school, try to determine the reason. Consult with school personnel for their opinion and try to resolve the issue; set up short-and long-term goals to encourage regular attendance.

Helpful Tips for Parents

Monitoring Your Child's Progress

- Be proactive by attending school events and parent/teacher conferences.
- Look for communications from the school—report cards, interim reports, notes from teacher, newsletters, etc.
- Utilize the Parent Portal to access secure, password-protected Internet data, to monitor your child's progress/attendance, and to communicate with your child's teachers.
- Use the school webpage to access the teachers' webpages for information about syllabus, homework assignments, etc.
- Talk to your child's teachers and/or school personnel if you notice sudden changes in your child's behavior. These could be related to something occurring at school.

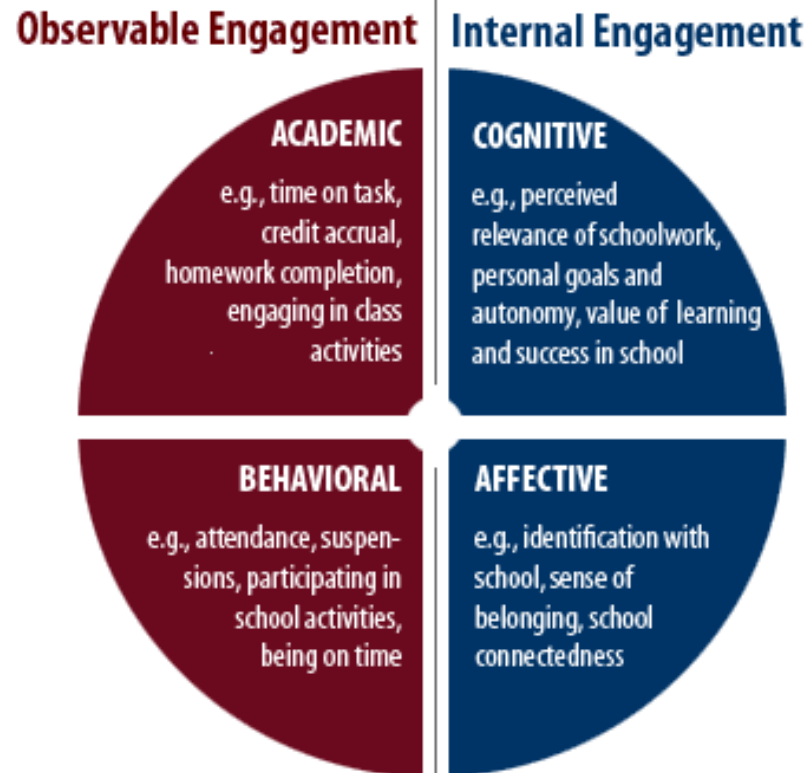
Student Engagement and Study Skills

What parents can do to help...

What is student engagement?

- Student engagement is active participation in academic and school-related activities.
- Engaged students are committed to educational goals, learning, and their future.
- Engaged students find learning meaningful.

Types of student engagement



(Appleton et al., 2008)

Why is it important?



- About 50% of students are disengaged from school by the time they reach high school.
- School engagement affects your child's academic performance, self-esteem, positive peer relationships, attendance, and overall life success.
- School disengagement contributes to school dropout.

What impacts my student's engagement?

Family

- Academic and motivational support
- Goals and expectations
- Monitoring and supervision
- Learning resources in the home

Peers

- Educational expectations
- Shared common school values
- Attendance
- Academic beliefs and efforts
- Peers' aspirations for learning

School

- School climate
- Mental health support
- Clear and appropriate expectations
- Teacher-student relationships

What can I do to help my child?

- Model the importance of learning, self-discipline, and hard work
- Set high but realistic expectations
- Provide structure and monitoring
- Know what is going on at school
- Make your home a learning environment
- Be persistent and consistent
- Promote strong study skills

Why are strong study skills important?

- Study skills allow your child to organize and learn new information effectively.
- Study skills help students understand and remember information.
- Strong study skills are crucial to academic success.
- Study skills are essential to all subject areas.
- Specific skills:
 - Organization
 - Time management
 - Note-taking
 - Goal setting
 - Preparing for exams

Study skills for success

- Promote independence
- Develop a positive study environment
- Get organized (materials and time management)
- Communicate with the teacher
- Utilize memorization techniques
- Apply the concepts
- Use a study buddy
- Engage in relaxation exercises

Encouraging School Commitment

Be familiar with school expectations for your child and for yourself:

- Attend Parent Night or other school events when possible.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
 - Help them to learn how to organize homework and school clothes before bedtime
- Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick.
 - Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety
 - Watch for signs of bullying or isolation
 - Talk with the school often if you are concerned about skipping class or poor peer relationships

Encouraging School Commitment

Help your teen stay engaged:

- ❑ Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and/or school discipline policies.
- ❑ Monitor academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Make sure the teachers know how to contact you.
- ❑ Be familiar with your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- ❑ Encourage meaningful after school activities, including sports and clubs.



Behavior and Bullying Prevention

What Parents can do to help...

Warning Signs of Bullying

- ❑ Unexplainable injuries
- ❑ Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- ❑ Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- ❑ Changes in eating habits
- ❑ Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- ❑ Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- ❑ Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- ❑ Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- ❑ Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

Relating to Your Teen

- Provide lots of positive attention:
 - spend time with your teen to show him/her that you care
 - listen to your teen when he/she talks, and respect your teen's feelings even if you don't agree
 - every time you discipline or correct your teen, try to compliment him/her twice

- Don't pressure your teen to be like you were or wish you had been at his/her age:
 - encourage your teen to be an individual but watch for risky or unsafe dress and behavior
 - give your teen some leeway when it comes to clothing and hairstyles but make sure they abide by school dress codes

Maintaining Discipline with Your Teen

Encourage your teen to behave well; discuss acceptable and unacceptable behavior. When setting limits:

- Avoid ultimatums
 - your teen might interpret an ultimatum as a challenge

- Be clear and concise
 - make your expectations, rewards, and consequences clear
 - put rules in writing
 - use this technique to counter a “selective memory”
 - review the Student Code of Conduct with your child

Maintaining Discipline with Your Teen

- Be prepared to explain your decisions
 - your teen might be more likely to comply with a rule when he/she understands the purpose
- Be reasonable
 - avoid setting rules your teen can't possibly follow
 - if your teen is struggling to follow school rules, work with his teachers on how to reinforce appropriate behavior and rule compliance
- Be flexible
 - as your teen demonstrates more responsibility, grant him/her more freedom. If your teen shows poor judgment, impose more restrictions
 - this is important both at home and school

Behavior Referrals and Suspension

Understand expectations for school behavior:

- Know the school's expectations and how to monitor your child's behavior
- Avoid allowing your student to have “fun” if they earn a behavior referral or suspension
 - having fun only reinforces the bad behavior
- Model the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work
- Work with the school on how to develop student compliance and school engagement
- Work with the school to address challenging behavior; this will show your student that you are in this together

Student Progression

What parents need to know...

Middle School Promotion Requirements

- In order to be promoted from:
 - Grade 6 to Grade 7
 - Grade 7 to Grade 8

A student must make satisfactory progress in at least **five** of **seven** courses per grade level to include at least **three** of the **four** core courses: English, mathematics, science and social studies.

Civics Requirements

- Civics is a required course for promotion to high school.
- All students enrolled in Civics will be required to take the Statewide, Standardized End-of-Course Exam (EOC).
- The EOC result will constitute 30% of the student's overall course grade.
- Students who remediate a portion of Civics will be required to take the EOC, even if they took the exam previously. Waivers maybe issued for ESE students.

High School Promotion Requirements

- 3 courses in English/Language Arts
- 3 courses in Mathematics
- 3 courses in Science
- 3 courses in History (to include Civics and Civics EOC= 30%)
- Career Course (embedded in U.S. History)
- Develop a 4-year plan for high school

High School Graduation Requirements

CATEGORIES	CREDITS
ENGLISH	4
MATHEMATICS <ul style="list-style-type: none">•1 credit in Algebra I (EOC =30% and must pass for graduation)•1 credit in Geometry (EOC= 30%)•If enrolled in Algebra II (EOC=30%)	4
SCIENCE <ul style="list-style-type: none">•1 credit in Biology (EOC=30%)•1 In a Physical Science Course (Chemistry, Physics, Earth Space, Physical Science, etc)•1 Equally rigorous science course	3
SOCIAL STUDIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">•1 credit in World History•1 credit in US History (EOC=30%)•½ credit in Economics (with financial literacy)•½ credit in American Government	3

High School Graduation Requirements

CATEGORIES	CREDITS
PHYSICAL EDUCATION •½ credit in Personal Fitness •½ credit in any other PE course	1
PERFORMING FINE ARTS	1
ELECTIVES	8
TOTAL	24

Graduation Requirements are subject to change based on legislation

STEPS TO SUCCESS – A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

- For additional information please contact your child's administrator, school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker.
- Thank you so much for joining us tonight!