

PASSPORT  
===== TO =====  
SUCCESS

*Your Guide to  
High School and Beyond!*

## INSIDE YOUR GUIDE

---

### High School Matters

<b>How is High School Different from Middle School?</b> .....	2
» Grades .....	4
» Grade Point Average .....	5
» Promotion Requirements .....	5

<b>What You Can Do Now To Prepare For High School</b> .....	6
» Tips for Getting Better Grades .....	8
» Extracurricular Activities .....	9

<b>Here to Help</b> .....	10
» Get to Know an Adult at Your School .....	10
» School Counselor .....	11
» Teachers .....	11
» After-School Program Leaders .....	11

### Begin Your Exploration

<b>Discover your Career Path</b> .....	13
--	----

<b>Choosing the High School That is Right for You</b> .....	14
» Neighborhood Schools .....	15
» Career and Technical Education Programs and Academies .....	16
» International Baccalaureate High Schools .....	18
» Magnet Schools and Programs .....	20
» Selective Enrollment High Schools .....	22
» Service Academies .....	24
» Small Schools .....	26
» Charter and Contract High Schools .....	27

<b>Mapping Out Your High School Plan</b> .....	28
--	----

<b>Choose Your Future!</b> .....	29
----------------------------------	----

# Your Next Big Adventure

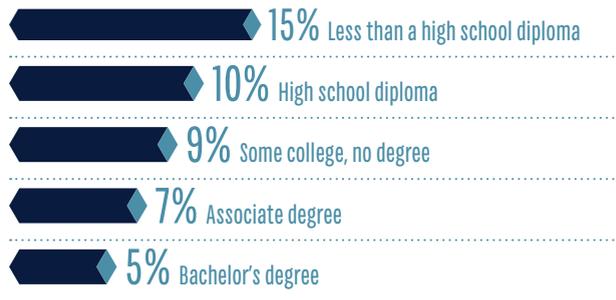
Welcome to your next big adventure on your journey to college and a career! This booklet will give you the inside scoop on how you can start preparing for success in high school right now. Counselors have provided their expert advice on how to get ready for high school. *Passport to Success: Your Guide to High School and Beyond* will help you make a smooth transition to the high school that is the best fit for you. Use this guide to pave the way for success in high school and beyond!

# Why School Matters

Finishing high school and obtaining a high school diploma is more important than ever as it will open up a world of opportunities for you. Recently the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) raised the minimum GPA necessary for student athletes from 2.0 to 2.3. A GED can no longer be used to enlist in military service. Even if you want to be a basketball star or a musician, it is still important for you to finish high school. Though some of you may be the next Derrick Rose or Lady Gaga, it never hurts to have a back-up plan! Derrick Rose graduated from Simeon Career Academy, a CPS high school, and attended University of Memphis. Lady Gaga attended New York University's Tisch School of the Fine Arts.

Finishing high school starts you on your path to college or to enroll in a technical training program and towards finding your dream job! The more education you have, the easier it will be for you to find a job that you love! The average person holds 7 to 15 jobs and may switch careers 3 to 5 times during their lifetime. For most of us, education is the key to success.

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY EDUCATION



Getting a good education allows you to have more options in your future and reach your full potential! Finishing high school and going to college also means that you can earn more money!

**Check this out:**

## AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS BY EDUCATION

Education Level	Average Weekly Earnings
Less than a high school diploma	\$420
High school diploma	\$600
Some college, no degree	\$690
Associate degree	\$780
Bachelor's degree	\$1,100

**It never hurts to start with your goals in mind so you know where you are heading! Picking the right high school is the first step to a successful career of your choice. Write down your top 3 career paths. In other words...What do you want to be when you grow up?**

Write down your top 3 career interests right now:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# How is High School Different from Middle School?

## Grades

Grades differ greatly from middle school to high school. Understand that some teachers use different ways to calculate your class grades. Grades will vary by school, by teacher and by class. Here is one example of how a high school teacher might grade student performance.

## EXAMPLE OF A GRADING SCALE

35%	35%	15%	10%
Homework	Exams	Quizzes	Participation

Generally, teachers emphasize homework and exams. Quizzes, participation and attendance are also important. To get the best grades, do your best in each of these categories!

## Grade Point Average

The Grade Point Average, or GPA, is a very important number. Colleges and employers will be paying close attention to your GPA when they are considering your applications. Your GPA is an average of all the grades you have received from your classes in high school.

## The GPA scale looks like this:

A	B	C	D	F
4.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	0

You will be given report cards to show the progress that you are making as you move from grade level to grade level. To calculate your GPA, whether it is for one semester or for the entire high school year, your school will add up all the number values of your grades, and then divide by the sum of the total number of classes. This final number will be your overall GPA.

Check with your school counselor about grading scales and extra graduation requirements at the high schools you are interested in applying to.

In high school, class attendance is very important and will count in your final grade for the class. If you are late or absent too often, you may not pass that particular course and will not receive credit.

If you fail a course and it is a requirement for graduation, you will have to make that class up in a summer school or evening program. Your GPA will suffer as a result and you will lose a lot of your valuable free time. A little studying now may go a long way toward saving you lots of time in the future.

## Promotion Requirements

Hard work and success in middle school will help you to move on to the 9th grade at the high school of your choice. In order to be promoted to 9th grade without summer school. Eighth grade students must have:

- » Final report card grades in reading **and** math of "C" or above
- » Final report card grade in writing of "C" **or** above or passing score on the District-Wide Writing Assessment (DWWA)
- » No more than 9 unexcused absences

# What You Can Do Now To Prepare for High School!

## Attendance

High Schools may look at your attendance when considering your application. The better your attendance, the better your chance of getting into the school of your choice!

## Grades

Your Grade Point Average (GPA) will play a large role in whether or not you are admitted to a school. Keep your grades up! Remember, your GPA is the “grade of all grades” and the one high schools will be looking at the most.

## Test scores

Doing well on the ISAT and District-Wide Assessments, like the EXPLORE test, will allow you to have more high school options. Study hard in class and it will pay off in your test results!

## Behavior

Try to get along with your classmates and teachers! Any behavior issues that are on your academic record may be taken into account when high schools are reviewing your application. Getting into a fight might end up hurting you in the long-run. It is also important to develop positive relationships with adults since some high schools require letters of recommendations as a part of their admissions process.

## Extracurricular Activities

Grades aren't the only thing that will help during your journey to high school and beyond. Going the extra mile will really attract attention from potential high schools, colleges and employers. Here are some things you can do to succeed beyond working hard in the classroom:

- » Get involved in extracurricular activities like clubs, student organizations, sports and community/service learning. Find something you love doing or try something new!
- » If you're given opportunities to pursue academic subjects and extracurricular activities that are new to you, take them!
- » Volunteer at your school and around your neighborhood
- » Look into additional academic options that may be available in your area, such as magnet programs, IB programs and school enrichment programs.
- » Participate in summer programs in your neighborhood.

# Tips for Getting Better Grades

Whether you are in middle school or a senior in high school, it is never too late to brush up on study skills. Use these tips and tricks to help keep your grades up!

**1. Remove Distractions** Try to remove any distractions to your studying. Siblings running around the house, cell phones or computers can be major distractions if you have a lot of work to do. Find a nice quiet place to work such as in the library or a quiet place in your house.

**2. Take Breaks Between Studying** Taking short breaks while studying can help you get more work done. Coming back to a problem after a short break may help you solve a difficult question because you are looking at it with a refreshed mind. The key word here is short. Don't take a break for too long or you may find yourself distracted once again.

**3. Join Study Groups** Join a study group at your school. If your school doesn't have a study group, start one! Surrounding yourself with others who want to be successful will help you stay on track and meet your goals.

**4. Make a List of Work AND Prioritize the List** With many different subjects, it will help to make a list of assignments, class work and projects that are due. Include upcoming due dates, how much time may be needed to study, and any other important information. Finish assignments sooner rather than later because waiting until the last minute is never a good idea.

**5. Stay Organized** In addition to organizing a list of your assignments, it will help to keep your papers organized. Keep a planner or an assignment notebook to stay on top of your homework, school projects and activities. It takes an unorganized person a lot longer to find something than it does for someone who has things neatly filed away and accessible. This could be time spent playing outside or doing something else you enjoy!

**6. Take Advantage of Spare Time** Waiting for your Mom to pick you up from school? An average person spends 4 years of his/her life waiting. Take advantage of this time by studying or doing your homework. Not only will it help prepare you for your classes and tests, it will keep you from getting bored!

**7. Take Advantage of Extra Credit** In high school, there will be many opportunities for extra credit. While these projects may not be required for class, they can help your grades and may make a big difference to your GPA. It's a win-win situation for you!

**8. Eat a Nutritious Breakfast** You may have heard this dozens of times before. A nutritious breakfast is critical for school success. Besides being healthy for you, it will keep your mind fresh and help keep you more energized throughout the day.

**9. Don't Hesitate to Ask for Help!** If you are stuck on a homework problem you just can't get past, ask someone for help. Often, there will be people that you know — a friend, fellow student, teacher, counselor, after-school leader, parent or guardian who will be able to help or get you the help you need.

# Here to Help

The adults at your school want to see you succeed. They are there to support you and see you through to the finish line of graduating from 8th grade and attending the high school that is right for you!

## Get to know an adult at your school.

Is there a counselor, teachers, administrator or after-school leader at your school who you think could help you succeed in class and support you on your journey to high school and beyond?

Set up a meeting with that trusted adult by asking if there is a time before or after-school or maybe during lunch that you could sit down with him/her to ask them some questions about high school and preparing for college and career.

Be sure to come prepared with questions and something to take notes on so you can reflect on what you learned. Some questions you might want to think about asking could be:

How did you start your career path? What made you want to go into education? Tell them about your high school, college and career plans and ask for advice or feedback.

**Who is the adult you want to get to know better at your school?**

---

**What questions will you ask this person?**

---

---

## School Counselor

Your school counselor can help you with pretty much anything. Your school counselor is there to help you find your path to high school and beyond. Reach out to your counselor and get to know him or her. Ask your questions about high school and beyond, talk to your school counselor about your interests and which type of high school might be a good fit for you.

**Who is your school counselor? Do you know where to find him or her?**

---

Name

---

Location of Office

**Set up a time to meet with your counselor.**

---

Day

Time of meeting

## Teachers

The more comfortable you are with your teachers, the easier it is to adapt to their teaching style and ask questions in class. These are essential elements for an awesome learning experience! Try to get to know each of your teachers and make sure to ask for help when you need it so you can be successful in class.

## After-School Program Leaders

Whether it is a coach or a school staff member overseeing a club, some of your best supporters can be found in after-school programs. These individuals are there to help mentor you in programs that enrich your academic experience. Get involved so you can get to know them and try new things!

# Begin Your Exploration!

This part of your guide is all about exploring the high school choices that best fit your college and career journey. It is your responsibility to go on a fact-finding mission to pick the best high school for you! It is never too early to start.

- » Talk to students who have graduated from your elementary school about their high school choice
- » Talk to older family members about high school
- » Research high school Open House Events
- » Talk to your counselor about high school options and setting up a What's Next Illinois (<http://www.whatsnextillinois.org>) account for career exploration
- » Think about your commute to various high schools: <http://www.transitchicago.com>
- » Review high school applications online and visit <http://cpssoae.org/index.jsp> for more information on the high school application process

## Discover your Career Path

It is important to choose a high school that also offers the things you enjoy doing. The things you are good at and enjoy doing can turn into a career!

What are the things you love doing?

---

---

List all of the careers that interest you:

---

---

---

Are there any programs at your school or in your neighborhood that are related to the things you enjoy doing or a career interest? If so, list them:

---

---

---

Keep all of these things in mind when exploring high schools. Make sure the high school you attend has programs, classes and activities that support your interests and career path.

# Choosing the High School That is Right For You!

## Neighborhood School

Every CPS student has a neighborhood high school. Each neighborhood school has an attendance boundary. Generally, all students who live within this area can be automatically enrolled into the neighborhood school. Neighborhood schools are always an option. There are over 48 neighborhood high schools across the district, <http://tinyurl.com/NeighborhoodSchools>.

There is no application process or admissions requirement if you live within the school boundary. Admission requirements vary based on the school if you are interested in attending a neighborhood school outside of your residency area.

Neighborhood schools vary in terms of size, program offerings and atmosphere. Make sure your neighborhood school has the programs and focus areas that best fit your needs to reach your goals.

Which school is your neighborhood high school?  
Double check at: <http://schoollocator.cps.k12.il.us>

Who can you talk to that goes to this school?

What programs does your neighborhood high school offer that interest you related to your career goals?

## Career and Technical Education Programs and Academies

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs and Academies provide hands-on learning within the classroom that is focused around career areas. These programs and academies are offered within various Chicago public high schools. CTE offers a unique way for students to prepare for college and career success by connecting core school subjects like math, science and writing to real world experiences. CTE students have the opportunity to participate in hands-on training in their chosen program and gain career experience through job shadowing and internships. Many programs offer students the opportunity to earn nationally recognized certifications, which students can use to get a job that will help pay for college and start their careers.

### There are 12 different industry areas in CTE

<http://www.chooseyourfuture.org/college-and-career-academies>:

- » Agricultural Sciences
- » Broadcast Technology & Digital Media
- » Business & Finance
- » Construction & Architecture
- » Culinary Arts & Hospitality
- » Education & Training
- » Health Science
- » Human Services
- » Information Technology
- » Law & Public Safety
- » Manufacturing & Engineering
- » Transportation

There are 19 high schools with College and Career Academies throughout the district. Applications are required for admission into College and Career Academies and admission varies based on school and program. There are also 40 high schools with non-application based CTE programs.

<https://www.chooseyourfuture.org/sites/default/files/cte-program-matrix.pdf>

**What industry areas most interest you?**

---

---

**Does your neighborhood school offer any CTE programs? Which ones?**

---

---

---

---

**What questions do you have for your counselor about CTE Programs and Academies?**

---

---

---

## International Baccalaureate High Schools

International Baccalaureate High Schools offer one or more of the International Baccalaureate Programmes (Middle Years Programme or the Diploma Programme).

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) core curriculum classes include focuses on world languages, English, mathematics, humanities, sciences, arts, physical education, and technology. The program is offered for students in grades 9-10.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is designed for students in grades 11-12 and offers courses for the IB Diploma, a prestigious secondary school credential recognized by universities worldwide. Students must apply while they are in eighth grade in order to be considered for the Diploma Programme.

### There are 15 IB High Schools

[http://tinyurl.com/IternatBaccalaureate:](http://tinyurl.com/IternatBaccalaureate)

- » Amundsen
- » Kelly
- » Senn
- » Bogan
- » Lincoln Park
- » South Shore
- » Curie
- » Morgan Park
- » Steinmetz
- » Hubbard
- » Ogdan
- » Taft
- » Hyde Park
- » Prosser
- » Washington

The IB High Schools have minimum academic requirements for inclusion in their selection processes. Eligible students are selected based on a point scale based on a variety of areas that can include seventh grade standardized test scores, seventh grade final grades, participation in an interview, and proximity to the school.

Are there any IB High Schools in your neighborhood?  
Which one(s)?

---

---

IB schools have academic requirements. What are some things you can do now to make sure your grades will qualify you to attend an IB high school?

---

---

---

IB schools require an interview as a part of their application process. Who do you know that could help you practice your interview skills? What are some questions you think you might be asked during the interview? (If you aren't sure, this is a great question for your school counselor!)

---

---

---

---

---

## Magnet Schools and Programs

Magnet high schools and programs place an emphasis on one particular subject area: agricultural sciences, fine and performing arts, or science. Magnet high schools attract students from throughout the city.

Most magnet schools do not have attendance boundaries and accept students from across the city. All magnet schools require an application and select students through a computerized lottery. Each of the magnet high schools has minimum academic requirements for inclusion in the lottery.

### There are four magnet high schools

<http://tinyurl.com/MagnetSchools>:

- » Chicago High School of Agricultural Sciences: *Agricultural Sciences*
- » Curie Metropolitan High School: *Fine and Performing Arts and Technology*
- » Michele Clark Academic Prep: *General Magnet Program*
- » Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center: *Science*

Magnet high schools and programs are specialized initiatives in neighborhood schools. The schools have neighborhood attendance boundaries, but the magnet programs require an application and accept students from across the city. The magnet programs have minimum academic requirements for inclusion in their selection processes.

There are two magnet programs – the fine and performing arts program at Senn High School, which also requires participation in an audition/portfolio process, and the engineering program at Harlan High School, which selects students through a computerized lottery.

Are you interested in a particular subject area?  
(Math/Science, Arts, Language, Technology)

---

---

---

---

Does your neighborhood school have a magnet program?

---

---

---

From the list of magnet high schools and programs,  
which are you planning on researching further?

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Selective Enrollment High Schools

These schools are designed to meet the needs of Chicago's most academically advanced students. The schools offer a rigorous curriculum with mainly honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

The schools strive to develop students' critical and analytical thinking skills, and promote diverse academic inquiry by bringing together students from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

### There are nine Selective Enrollment High Schools

<http://tinyurl.com/SelectiveEnrollment>

---

- |                          |                             |                                |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| » Brooks College<br>Prep | » Lane Tech                 | » Payton College<br>Prep       |
| » Jones College<br>Prep  | » Lindblom                  | » Westinghouse<br>College Prep |
| » King College<br>Prep   | » Northside<br>College Prep | » Whitney Young                |

The Selective Enrollment High Schools have minimum academic requirements for inclusion in their selection processes. Eligible students are selected based on a point scale comprised of seventh grade standardized test scores, seventh grade final grades, and performance on an admissions exam.

**What steps do you need to take now to prepare for the admissions process for selective enrollment high schools?**

---

---

---

---

**Choose three selective enrollment schools you are interested in to compare with each other:**

1. 

---
2. 

---
3. 

---

**Think of three questions you have for your counselor about applying to a selective enrollment school:**

1. 

---
2. 

---
3. 

---

### **Service Academies (formerly known as Military Academies)**

The CPS Service Academies are unique four-year learning centers for strongly motivated students who wish to develop leadership and team-building skills. Students study in a small school environment of focused learning, guided by a team of mentor teachers and military teaching partners. Students also receive military training, and are prepared for college and post-secondary success through a rigorous and relevant college preparatory curriculum. Each academy focuses on a specific branch of the military; some are schools-within-a-school in a general high school and others are school-wide academies.

#### **There are six CPS Service Academies**

<http://tinyurl.com/ServiceAcademies>:

.....

- » Air Force
- » Carver
- » Chicago Military Academy (Bronzeville)
- » Marine
- » Phoenix
- » Rickover

The CPS Service Academies have minimum academic requirements for inclusion in their selection processes. Eligible students are selected based on a point scale comprised of seventh grade standardized test scores, seventh grade final grades, and participation in an interview.

**Have you ever thought of joining JROTC? If so what are some of the reasons why.**

---

---

---

---

**Are any of the Service Academies located in your neighborhood? Which one(s)?**

---

---

---

---

**What three questions do you have for you school counselor about enrolling in a Service Academy?**

1. 

---

2. 

---

3. 

---

## Small Schools

With no more than 500 students, small schools foster environments in which parents, teachers, and students get to know one another well. Educational programs focus on: environmental studies, service learning, technology, peace, entrepreneurship, leadership, international studies, the arts, construction and Socratic dialogue.

Small schools are a way for teachers, students, parents and other school community members to implement strategies that they know will benefit the students. The small size serves as a platform from other important elements of successful schools can best flourish.

### There are 24 small schools within the district

<http://tinyurl.com/SmallHighSchools>:

Alcott High School, Austin Polytech, Best Practice, Bronzeville, Chicago Academy, Collins Academy, Infinity, Mason, Multicultural Arts School, New Millennium, Raby, School of Leadership, Social Justice High School, TEAM, Uplift, V.O.I.S.E, Williams Prep, and World Language High School

If the small school is outside your attendance boundary, there may be an application required depending on the school.

Is your neighborhood school a small school?

---

Is the size of your high school important to you? Why?

---

What small schools would you like to know more about?  
How can you get that information?

---

## Charter and Contract High Schools

Charter and Contract Schools are open to all Chicago students. The schools require an application, but there are no eligibility requirements and some schools use a lottery to randomly select students if there are more applications than available spaces

Charters are approved by the Board of Education but operate independently from the Board and each other. There are 38 charter schools across the district you can find a complete list of charter schools here: <http://tinyurl.com/CharterSchoolsCPS>.

Contract schools are public schools open to all students. These schools are operated by private entities under contract with CPS to provide an additional education option for students. There are 6 Contract schools across the district

### There are 6 Contract schools across the district

<http://tinyurl.com/ContractSchoolsCPS>:

Frazier Prep, Garfield Park, Hope Institute, Kwame Nkrumah Academy, Plato, and Rowe

Charter and Contract Schools vary in size and focus area. Have an idea of the kind of high school you want to attend when you start researching all the charter and contact school options in Chicago.

List three Charter and/or Contract schools you are interested in.

---

---

What stands out about these schools?

---

---

Who can you contact at those schools to find out more information?

---

# Mapping Out Your High School Plan

It is important to apply to several different high schools in order to have options. For instance, selective enrollment schools only accept a relatively small number of applicants. There are roughly 300,000 8th graders applying to high schools each year, but only 3,000 seats are available in the selective enrollment high schools. Charter schools use a lottery system so admission is random and there is no guarantee that you will be admitted. So, you see, having lots of options increases your chances to being admitted to one of the many great high schools in Chicago! Try to identify the following:

**School Choice #1** This is my first choice. If I begin preparing now, keep my grades and attendance up, maintain good behavior, and develop positive relationships with my peers and teachers this is the very best school to meet my goals!

---

**School Choice #2** This is my second choice. I would be happy with this school because it has all the programs and classes to help me meet my college and career goals.

---

**School Choice #3** This is my third choice. It has all the programs and classes to help me meet my college and career goals.

---

# Choose Your Future!

Now that you have all this great information about high school, what do you do now? Think about this information, process it, and figure out some questions that you can ask yourself and discuss with your parents or guardians.

## Explore the following resources:

What's Next Illinois (<http://www.whatsnextillinois.org>) and Choose Your Future (<http://www.chooseyourfuture.org>) are web-based high school, college and career planning resources that most Chicago Public School students can access for free!

.....

Check the CPS High Schools website for information about specific schools:

[http://www.cps.edu/Schools/High\\_schools/Pages/Highschools.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/Schools/High_schools/Pages/Highschools.aspx)

[http://www.cps.edu/Schools/Find\\_a\\_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx](http://www.cps.edu/Schools/Find_a_school/Pages/findaschool.aspx)

.....

You can also find school profiles on the CPS Office of Performance website:

<https://research.cps.k12.il.us/cps/accountweb/Reports/>

.....

The Office of Access and Enrollment provides enrollment information about different types of schools:

<http://www.cpsoe.org>

Once you have taken these steps and have explored these different sites, talk to your elementary school counselor about what schools may interest you. Ask them how you can begin preparing to get into the high school of your choice! Be sure to have a back-up plan but shoot for the moon! Even if you miss, you will end up among the stars.



## **Chicago Public Schools**

Office of Pathways to College and Career  
125 South Clark Street, 12th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60603

---

- » Before and After School Programs
- » K-12 Counseling and Advising
- » Office of Access and Enrollment
- » Career and Technical Education