**How you can help your child succeed in high school**

**Provide nutritious meals**

For years now I have been providing free snacks to students who for a variety of reasons are not getting enough to eat. Studies have shown that when kids are hungry they can't learn!

Breakfast within 20 minutes of the student waking up

For free help planning meals: www.choosemyplate.gov (super tracker)

**Exercise**

Childhood obesity is on the rise, students are dealing with Type Two Diabetes and other obesity related conditions. It is difficult to do well in school while simultaneously dealing with health complications.

The State recommends children should exercise for at least an hour a day. Assuming your child is working out in PE each day, he/she will need additional exercise.

**IGP**

Keep in mind that your child's high school counselor's main job is to help them graduate high school, not get into college

Create an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) with your child freshman year.

We do have a college counselor on campus in our college office who is willing to help!

www.tafthigh.org (college corner)

**Sleep**

Adolescents need at least 8 hours of sleep a night & they may need up to 12 hours of sleep.

PLEASE take ensure that the games (Xbox, PlayStation, etc), iPods, TV, etc are turned off

You may want to consider taking cell phones and/or chargers at bedtime

Some cell phone companies will cut off text capabilities at certain times.

For safety reasons it is recommended that computers are located in a central location, so families can monitor use

**Chores**

I have had to teach sixteen year old students how to sweep and how to clean a dish.

Chores (cooking, shopping, laundry, home repairs, cleaning, etc) can all help your child in life.

Chores teach responsibility, life skills, teamwork, perhaps financial responsibility, etc

**Weekly reports**

Freshman year is a time of transition & careful monitoring in the beginning of each semester can help it be a successful one!

We recommend that all students take around a weekly report each Friday. Teachers can let you know, on a weekly basis, how your child is doing in each of his/her classes.

Please tie privileges such as phones, TV, iPods, spending time with friends, trips, clothes, hair styles, etc to reasonable high school performance standards as it really works!

**Monitor 2 hours of homework/night**

Students need to complete a minimum of 2 hours of homework a night. This homework time can include studying for upcoming tests/quizzes (because for most students "cramming" doesn't work), working on projects (so they aren't the night before the project is due trying to get it done), as well as actual written homework.

Occasionally they really may not have any homework, so they should read for pleasure. The school & public library has lots of books for them to choose from & it really doesn't' matter what they read (even reading those vampire books will help with their vocabulary, grammar, spelling, reading speed/comprehension, etc).

Arranging tutoring early & often can be very helpful. We have free tutoring services available for many subjects before school, at nutrition, lunch and afterschool.

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**Health**

Regular medical (physical & mental health), dental, and vision checkups are critical to your child's success & health. There are many free/low cost services available to those who qualify; in LA County call 211 for free, confidential help/information.

If your child should be wearing prescription glasses, please impress upon him/her the importance of wearing them; if he/she can't see the board it will be difficult for your child to do well.

Please do not wait until school starts to get your child immunized. Schools are requiring that students are immunized *prior* to going to class. Starting school late can negatively affect your child's performance.

**Communication**

Communicate with teachers early & often. Please, please, please do not contact us for the first time "to see what your child can do to raise his/her grade" after the 10-week report card.

Please let us know if something is going on with/for your child. A death in the family, homelessness, divorce, etc can all effect your child. Letting his/her teachers know may enable us to make special arrangements.

Make sure that your child's teachers know if he/she has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), so that the proper accommodations are provided.

Show up at Back to School, Open House and other school events

If you have time join Booster Club and/or PTSA (parent volunteer/fundraising groups) and if you don't please consider writing a check to those groups!

**Mandatory fun**

Studies have shown that teachers can "catch up" most students who have fallen behind (below basic/far below basic), however, these gains are often lost over the summer.

A frightening number of my male & female students are already on probation (we have a fulltime probation officer stationed at our school); these kids obviously need more structure and more opportunities!

Students should be spending their free time doing community service, visiting colleges, being active members of organized sports & clubs & camps, participating in religious observances, visiting extended family and going on educational trips (museums, zoo, aquarium, etc). '

**Working**

Some students may need to work outside of the home in order to help their families pay their bills while others may be responsible for the care of younger siblings, however, these hours detract from their school responsibilities and often result in school failure.

**Attendance**

We can't teach them when they aren't here.

Please schedule medical appointments afterschool.

Please do not take family vacations during the school year.

If your child cannot attend school on a regular basis, traditional school may not be the best option for your student. Our staff may be able to help you find a more appropriate placement.

We expect a child to be absent no more than 3 times in a 20-week grading period.

Three tardies equals an absence.

\*Please know, the teachers and staff are available to help as needed!