

# TRANSITION CHECKLIST



The following checklist for students in grades 4-8 can help them develop a plan to successfully transition throughout the middle grades.



## 4th and 5th Grades to Middle School

- Work hard at your academics, making sure you have a grasp of all the basic concepts.
- **Take responsibility** for completion of homework and in-school projects. Don't rely on parents and teachers to remind or prod you.
- Develop problem solving and study skills. Ask teachers, counselors and parents to assist you with these two skills that will be critical for middle school and beyond.
- Become involved in sports and organized groups. It's important to learn leadership and team skills and how to balance study with outside activities.
- Talk with teachers, counselors, your parents and trusted older students about what middle school will be like.
- Schedule a visit to your future middle school during 5th grade.
- Visit with the middle school counselor to determine what courses you will take and what opportunities exist for electives and future high school credit. Fifth grade may seem early to worry about high school, but planning ahead will allow you the greatest flexibility.
- Begin exploring careers that interest you and find out what education is required.
- If you haven't already, begin to create a portfolio that will centralize all key academic and extra-curricular information. In addition to test scores, certificates and other official documents, keep track of names and contact information. This is especially important for mobile military students who may attend as many as nine schools in their academic career.

## Middle School to High School\*

- One of the most helpful strategies for highly mobile military children is to plan two years in advance. By doing so you will build time into your schedule to make any necessary changes that may arise. As an example, in the spring of your 8th grade year, develop your high school four-year plan with a high school counselor. Review the MCEC Recommended Academic Plan beforehand.
- **Challenge yourself by taking the most rigorous courses you can.** Some subjects, particularly math or foreign language, have predetermined sequences, so look ahead and make sure you are keeping your options open for the future.
- Look into taking high school classes, if possible. If you do, check into end-of-course tests as some schools require not only completion of a course but also a passing grade on an end-of-course test in order to award credit.
- Explore rigorous programs, such as AVID and IB programs, as well as pre-AP courses.
- Begin discussing and planning for college expenses with parents and counselors.
- Tests become more common now. Every time you take a standardized test, discuss the results with your counselor. Add all test scores and any test information to your portfolio.
- Build a solid base for both academics and extracurricular activities. What you do in high school directly impacts where you can go to college.
- Consider participating in the *Junior Student 2 Student (JS2S)* program sponsored by MCEC (if available).
- Investigate taking the SAT and ACT for practice only. Scores from these tests can be used to qualify for certain scholarships and recognitions, such as the Duke Talent Identification Program.
- During summers, attend camps of interest at local colleges. You'll not only have fun but will also get a taste of life at that college.
- See summer school as an opportunity to fulfill requirements, explore a new subject, or build a stronger base in core subjects.
- Explore career fields. Work with a counselor to find out what high school courses are necessary to pursue certain careers.

\* From the Military Child Education Coalition Chart Your Course: Roadmap to Success (Middle School)