

# Planning for Their Future, One Piece at a Time

## A F.A.C.T. Sheet for Middle School Success



Supplement to the "Planning My Future: One Piece at a Time" Middle School Planner

Middle school students need to know that they can count on their Families, Administrators, Counselors, and Teachers (F.A.C.T.) to help them plan for their future. Become a part of your students' F.A.C.T. team by taking a look at the information below to help guide them on their journey beyond high school.

### FAMILIES

- **Talk about college with your student.** As parents, your expectations have a huge influence on what your children expect of themselves. Talk to your child about how his or her interests might translate into a college major and career. If you live near a college, look for upcoming events, sports activities, or classes on campus that are open to the community. Just being on a campus may get your child interested in college.
- **Make the school your partner.** Middle school is the time parents tend to become less involved in their child's school life, in order to encourage self-reliance and independence, but it's the very time your child needs you the most. Let teachers and other school staff know that you want to be informed about any changes in your child's academic performance or behavior.
- **Get involved in your child's choice of classes.** Your student will need to meet more than basic high school graduation requirements to be prepared to succeed in college. Students who take algebra in the eighth grade are much more likely to go to college than those who don't. Explore honors math classes, foreign language classes, and/or electives that correspond with your child's interests and talents.
- **Get educated about college costs.** There are lots of ways to finance a college education, but you have to do your homework and starting now will benefit you in the end. Savings options, such as 529 plans, are a great way to prepare for the costs of college. Visit [virginia529.com](http://virginia529.com) to learn more about Virginia's college savings plans.
- **Seek opportunities for your child to learn time-management, organization, and study skills.** It's easier to address these issues now than it will be when the work gets more challenging. These skills can be developed through chores and by participation in community service and extracurricular activities.
- **Make sure your child has a quiet place to do homework and the necessary supplies to get the work done.** When necessary, utilize appropriate public spaces and libraries that offer free WiFi services.

### ADMINISTRATORS

- **Create opportunities** for students to engage in career exploration and postsecondary planning.
- **Offer a variety of extracurricular activities,** clubs, organizations, and athletic programs to expose students to different areas of interest and to provide opportunities for leadership skills development.
- **Offer rigorous courses,** including algebra, foreign languages, and honors classes. Encourage students to take challenging classes to prepare them for high school and postsecondary pursuits.
- **Create college-going clubs/organizations within the school.** Providing students with structured opportunities to learn about the college admissions process and to explore colleges through guided virtual and on-campus tours, followed by counseling reflective sessions, can help make the path to postsecondary education clearer and more attainable, especially for first-generation students.
- **Host parent programming** that focuses on course selection and provides resources about how to support students on the path to college readiness.





## COUNSELORS

- ♦ **Invite college students to come and speak about what life is like in high school and college.** Encourage the participants to discuss the steps that students can take now to be successful in high school and beyond.
- ♦ **Invite financial aid officers from nearby colleges to talk with students and parents about ways to pay for college.**
- ♦ **Talk to your school about featuring a college of the week prominently at the school,** using college pennants as decorations, and asking staff members to wear sweatshirts from their alma maters.
- ♦ **Arrange a college tour for your students,** and provide time for students to ask questions of the admissions office.
- ♦ **Collect college brochures and guidebooks** to be included in your school library for all students to access.
- ♦ **Hold a career day,** inviting representatives (including parents) to talk about what they do and how they prepared for their careers.

## TEACHERS

- ♦ **Integrate college/career information into the curriculum to reflect students' interests, talents, and abilities.** Connect students' interests to academic preparation, postsecondary education, and real-world careers.
- ♦ **Collaborate with other teachers** to develop interdisciplinary learning opportunities that make clear connections between academics and careers.
- ♦ **Provide support for students experiencing academic difficulty.** Provide peer support and mentoring to help students learn concrete ways to improve their academic performance through skill development.
- ♦ **Provide meaningful community service opportunities** that enhance students' future postsecondary admission applications.
- ♦ **Integrate postsecondary admissions application processes into the existing academic curriculum.** Activities might include writing personal essays, developing resumes, and documenting personal and family information.
- ♦ **Integrate financial literacy and financial aid vocabulary into the existing academic curriculum.**

It's Never Too Early To  
**START THINKING  
ABOUT COLLEGE**

Download a copy of our Middle School Planner, found in the "Become the One" section of the i-am-the-one.com website, and start helping your student plan his or her future one piece at a time!