



GEAR UP: College and Career Preparation Family Standards 6-12

K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal

Grades 6-8

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Career Pathway Exploration

- F.6-8.1 (S)** Talk with students about how education after high school—whether through college, career technology programs, or certification programs—can lead to better job opportunities, higher earnings, and personal growth.
- F.6-8.2 (S)** Encourage students to explore all college and career options, including universities, community colleges, career technology programs, schools, or apprenticeships.
- F.6-8.3 (S)** Join students in researching colleges, career technology programs or certification programs, and the military and support students with college and career planning.
- F.6-8.4 (S)** Attend college and career events with students.
- F.6-8.5 (K)** Become familiar with application deadlines, testing requirements, and admission processes for post-secondary programs.
- F.6-8.6 (K)** Explore ways to fund postsecondary education, such as scholarships, grants, work-study programs, and loans.
- F.6-8.7 (S)** Attend financial aid workshops or webinars hosted by schools or community organizations.

Goal Setting

- F.6-8.8 (S)** Begin conversations about college and career options, encouraging students to dream big, explore their interests, and identify their talents.
- F.6-8.9 (S)** Work with students to create achievable short-term and long-term goals, like improving grades in a subject. Check in regularly to celebrate progress and adjust plans as needed.
- F.6-8.10 (K)** Help students see how education goes beyond academics and how it fosters life skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork.

Self-Management

- F.6-8.11 (A)** Share personal life experiences and background values with students about lessons pertaining to hard work, perseverance, and overcoming challenges.
- F.6-8.12 (S)** Provide gentle guidance and motivation to students related to postsecondary pathway exploration and planning, without putting too much pressure on students.
- F.6-8.13 (S)** Gradually give students more responsibility, like managing their schedules or reaching out to teachers for help. Let students take the lead in decision making while offering guidance when needed.

Self-Efficacy And Awareness

- F.6-8.14 (A)** Celebrate students' journey of self-discovery. Help students see that it is okay to try new things, change their minds, or take risks. Share personal examples.
- F.6-8.15 (A)** Believe in students' abilities to succeed and express confidence in them.
- F.6-8.16 (S)** Build an open dialogue in which students feel heard and valued. Practice active listening by summarizing students' thoughts and asking follow-up questions.
- F.6-8.17 (K)** Teach students that education isn't just about grades or diplomas; it's about becoming curious, resilient, and adaptable. Show how these traits are valuable in any career or life path.

Key: K - Knowledge | S - Skills | A - Attitudes



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Academic Preparation

F.6-8.18 (S) Be involved as students move from middle school to high school and beyond. Help them prepare for transitions by discussing the changes students will face and the skills they will need, such as managing time, taking more responsibility, or exploring college or other postsecondary entrance requirements.

F.6-8.19 (S) Explore different postsecondary pathways available to students during high school, including college, career technical programs, apprenticeships, military service, and entering the workforce, to help students make informed decisions about their future.

Self-Advocacy

F.6-8.20 (S) Build relationships with teachers, counselors, and postsecondary advisors. Ask questions and seek guidance about postsecondary success.

F.6-8.21 (A) Accept help from teachers, counselors, or community mentors.

Sense of Self

F.6-8.22 (A) Celebrate the unique knowledge, language, and traditions that families bring to a student's journey.

F.6-8.23 (A) Support students in feeling confident about who they are and proud of their personal backgrounds.

F.6-8.24 (S) Share examples of family members or friends who have pursued further education and found success.



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Grades 9-10

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Career Pathway Exploration

F.9-10.1 (S) Explore the best ways to learn about college and career pathways. This might include attending workshops, meeting with a school counselor, or researching online as a family. Choose what works for your schedule and interests.

F.9-10.2. (K) Become familiar with the different educational tracks available, including:

- Two-year and four-year colleges: Community colleges and universities offer a variety of degree options.
- Career and technical programs: These programs provide specialized training for specific careers.
- Dual enrollment and AP courses: High school students can earn college credits early by taking these advanced courses.
- Early college programs: Some schools allow students to complete college coursework alongside high school requirements.

F.9-10.3 (K) Make a plan for funding students' education, including scholarships, grants, work-study programs, and loans. Attend financial aid workshops or webinars hosted by schools or community organizations. For example, investigate local scholarships that support students in the community.

F.9-10.4 (K) Begin learning about how student scholarships and loans work, their repayment terms, and how to minimize borrowing by pursuing scholarships, grants, and work-study opportunities.

F.9-10.5 (K) Understand how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and recognize its importance as a resource to make postsecondary education more attainable for students. Identify FAFSA requirements, financial information you must provide, and submission deadlines. Learn how completing the FAFSA can offer access to grants, loans, and work-study opportunities. Determine resources that offer guidance on completing the FAFSA, such as school counselors or financial aid workshops.

F.9-10.6 (S) Develop a way to keep track of application deadlines, testing requirements, and admission processes. Resources like college fairs or websites can help clarify what's needed.

F.9-10.7 (S) Visit college or postsecondary campuses, attend open houses, or watch virtual tours with students to make college and career opportunities feel real and exciting.

Goal Setting

F.9-10.8 (S) Take time to talk with students about their ideas, interests, and dreams for life after high school. Ask open-ended questions like, "What excites you about the future?" or "What kind of impact do you want to make?" These conversations help students explore their passions, clarify their goals, and feel supported as they plan for their next steps.

F.9-10.9 (S) Talk about college and other postsecondary opportunities often with students. Share personal experiences or ask questions like, "What would you like to study?" or "What kind of job would you enjoy?" Discuss past experiences with college or postsecondary institution campus visits, open houses, or virtual tours to make college and career opportunities feel real and exciting.



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Grades 9-10

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Self-Management

- F.9-10.10 (S)** Help students create a schedule to balance school, homework, extracurricular activities, and downtime. For example, work with students to plan out weekly tasks or set reminders for important deadlines, like application or scholarship submissions.
- F.9-10.11 (S)** Give students more responsibility, like managing their own schedules or reaching out to teachers for help. Let them take the lead in decision-making while offering guidance when needed.
- F.9-10.12 (S)** Work with students to create a savings plan for college or other postsecondary opportunities to explore options like part-time jobs or budgeting. For example, open a savings account for educational expenses or discuss how to minimize student loan debt.
- F.9-10.13 (S)** Provide gentle guidance and motivation to students without putting too much pressure on them. For example, suggest exploring one extracurricular activity at a time rather than pushing for overcommitment.
- F.9-10.14 (S)** Build an open dialogue with students so they feel heard and valued. Practice active listening by summarizing students' thoughts and asking follow-up questions. For instance, when a student shares a challenge, respond with, "I hear that this is frustrating—how can I help?"
- F.9-10.15 (K)** Encourage students to engage in community service or volunteer work. Activities like volunteering at a local food bank or tutoring younger students can help build their sense of responsibility and contribute to a "well-rounded" application.

Self-Efficacy and Awareness

- F.9-10.16 (A)** Share life experiences and personal values as powerful tools for guiding students and to serve as lessons about hard work, perseverance, and overcoming challenges.
- F.9-10.17 (A)** Celebrate the unique knowledge, language, and traditions families bring to students' journeys toward college and career readiness. For example, highlight how bilingual skills or personal experiences can make students stand out in college or careers.
- F.9-10.18 (S)** Support students in feeling confident about who they are and proud of their personal backgrounds. For example, encourage students to share traditions in school projects or celebrate how their uniqueness adds value to any team or community.
- F.9-10.19 (S)** Keep a folder or digital file to collect important documents, such as report cards, awards, or examples of students' work.
F.9-10.19a (S) Regularly review these together to celebrate students' successes and identify areas for growth. This helps build confidence and keeps students motivated.

Academic Preparation

- F.9-10.20 (K)** Understand the courses students need to be taking in high school to meet admission requirements for postsecondary institutions. For example, many colleges expect students to take math, science, English, and world language classes throughout high school.
- F.9-10.21 (K)** Encourage students to participate in clubs, sports, and other activities that align with their interests. These experiences not only build skills but also strengthen college or other postsecondary applications by showing leadership and commitment.
- F.9-10.22 (K)** Work closely with the school district to understand the academic pathways, plans, and curriculum designed to support student success. Attend informational sessions, ask questions, and share your thoughts with teachers, counselors, and school leaders. Being open to their guidance and expertise ensures students are on the right track for their academic and future goals.
- F.9-10.23 (K)** Learn how to support students' individual learning preferences.
- F.9-10.24 (S)** Share tools like study guides, online learning platforms, or connections with mentors. For example, if a student struggles in math, look for tutoring programs or apps to build their confidence.



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Academic Preparation (continued)

F.9-10.25 (S) Be involved as students move from high school and beyond. Help them prepare by discussing the changes they'll face and the skills they'll need, such as managing time, taking more responsibility, or exploring college or other postsecondary institute entrance requirements.

F.9-10.26 (K) Help students understand how education extends beyond academics to foster life skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork. For instance, discuss how joining a school club or volunteering can build these life skills.

F.9-10.27 (K) Demonstrate to students how traits like curiosity, adaptability, and resilience can be valuable in any career or life path. Discuss with students how education goes beyond grades and diplomas and helps students develop these traits.

Self-Advocacy

F.9-10.28 (K) Understand that colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutes offer accommodations for students with disabilities, such as extended test time or note-taking assistance. If a student uses accommodations in high school, begin exploring how to access similar support after graduation.

F.9-10.29 (A) If a student decides to move away for college and career opportunities, remind them that they always have the option to return home. Knowing they have a supportive place to come back to can provide them with comfort and confidence as they take steps toward independence and explore new possibilities

F.9-10.30 (A) Celebrate students' journeys of self-discovery. Help them see that it's okay to try new things, change their mind, or take risks. Share personal examples of learning through experiences.



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Grades 11-12

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Career Pathway Exploration

F.11-12.1 (K) Explore the best ways to learn about college and career pathways. This might include attending workshops, meeting with a school counselor, or researching online as a family. Choose what works for your schedule and interests.

F.11-12.2. (K) Familiarize yourself with the different educational tracks available, including:

- Two-year and four-year colleges: Community colleges and universities offer a variety of degree options.
- Career and technical programs: These programs provide specialized training for specific careers.
- Dual enrollment and AP courses: High school students can earn college credits early by taking these advanced courses.
- Early college programs: Some schools allow students to complete college coursework alongside high school requirements.

F.11-12.3 (K) Have a plan for funding students' education, such as scholarships, grants, work-study programs, and loans. Attend financial aid workshops or webinars hosted by schools or community organizations. For example, investigate local scholarships that support students in your community.

F.11-12.4 (K) Begin learning about how student scholarships and loans work, their repayment terms, and how to minimize borrowing by pursuing scholarships, grants, and work-study opportunities.

F.11-12.5 (K) Understand how to highlight students' unique skills and experiences on postsecondary applications to help them stand out and showcase their full potential.

F.11-12.6 (K) Understand that the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is a critical resource for accessing financial assistance for postsecondary education, know the deadlines for submission, recognize the importance of completing it every year, and seek support if needed to ensure that students benefits from available funding opportunities.

F.11-12.7 (S) Complete the parent portion of the FAFSA accurately and on time, as it is essential for determining students' eligibility for financial aid to support their postsecondary education.

F.11-12.8 (S) Develop a way to keep track of application deadlines, testing requirements, and admission processes. Resources like college fairs or websites can help clarify what's needed. For example, review the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) website and deadlines to ensure that students can access financial support.

F.11-12.9 (S) Visit college campuses, attend open houses, or watch virtual tours with students to make college feel real and exciting.

Goal Setting

F.11-12.10 (S) Take time to talk to students about their ideas, interests, and dreams for life after high school. Ask open-ended questions like, "What excites you about the future?" or "What kind of impact do you want to make?" These conversations help students explore their passions, clarify their goals, and feel supported as they plan for their next steps.

F.11-12.11 (S) Talk about college and future opportunities often as a family. Share personal experiences or ask questions like, "What would you like to study?" or "What kind of job would you enjoy?" Discuss past experiences with college or postsecondary institution campus visits, open houses, or virtual tours to make college and career opportunities feel real and exciting.

F.11-12.12 (S) Support students in navigating the challenges and stress of preparing for college or a career by breaking the process into manageable steps, providing emotional encouragement, and celebrating their progress, reminding them that they are not alone in this journey.



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Self-Management

- F.11-12.13 (S)** Help students create a schedule to balance school, homework, extracurricular activities, and downtime. For example, work together to plan out weekly tasks or set reminders for important deadlines, like application or scholarship submissions.
- F.11-12.14 (K)** Encourage students to engage in community service or volunteer work. Activities like volunteering at a local food bank or tutoring younger students can help build their sense of responsibility and contribute to a “well-rounded” application.
- F.11-12.15 (S)** Build an open dialogue with students so they feel heard and valued. Practice active listening by summarizing their thoughts and asking follow-up questions. For instance, when students share a challenge, respond with, “I hear that this is frustrating—how can I help?”
- F.11-12.16 (S)** Provide gentle guidance and motivation for students without putting too much pressure on them. For example, suggest exploring one extracurricular activity at a time rather than pushing for overcommitment.
- F.11-12.17 (S)** Give students more responsibility, like managing their schedule or reaching out to teachers for help. Let them take the lead in decision-making while offering guidance when needed.
- F.11-12.18 (K)** Gain an understanding of what daily life looks like for students in postsecondary education, including their class schedules, responsibilities, and social experiences, to better support and connect with them as they navigate this new chapter.
- F.11-12.19 (S)** Work with students to create a savings plan for college or explore options like part-time jobs or budgeting. For example, open a savings account for educational expenses or discuss how to minimize student loan debt.
- F.11-12.20 (A)** Support and value students’ growing independence as they prepare to leave for postsecondary education, recognizing this as an important step toward their personal and academic development.

Self-Efficacy And Awareness

- F.11-12.21 (A)** Share life experiences and personal values as powerful tools for guiding students and to serve as lessons about hard work, perseverance, and overcoming challenges.
- F.11-12.22 (A)** Celebrate the unique knowledge, language, and traditions families bring to students’ journeys toward college and career readiness. For example, highlight how bilingual skills or personal experiences can make students stand out in college or careers.
- F.11-12.23 (A)** Support students in feeling confident about who they are and proud of their personal background. For example, encourage students to share traditions in school projects or celebrate how their uniqueness adds value to any team or community.
- F.11-12.24 (S)** Keep a folder or digital file to collect important documents, such as report cards, awards, or examples of students’ work. Regularly review these together to celebrate students’ successes and identify areas for growth. This helps build confidence and keeps students motivated.
- F.11-12.25 (K)** Recognize that family dynamics may change as students transition to postsecondary education, and embrace these changes as opportunities for growth and adaptation for everyone.
- F.11-12.26 (A)** Trust the process students choose and have confidence in students’ abilities to succeed in postsecondary education, knowing that support and belief in them will help them thrive.
- F.11-12.27 (A)** Embrace the changes that come with students leaving for postsecondary education by acknowledging and addressing fears and frustrations, while focusing on the opportunities for growth and new experiences.



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Grades 11-12

11-12

Academic Preparation

F.11-12.28 (K) Understand the courses students need to be taking in high school to meet admissions for college, career technology programs, or the military. For example, many colleges expect students to take math, science, English, and world language classes throughout high school.

F.11-12.29 (K) Encourage students to participate in clubs, sports, and other activities that align with their interests. These experiences not only build skills but also strengthen college applications by showing leadership and commitment.

F.11-12.28 (K) Work closely with your school district to understand the academic pathways, plans, and curriculum designed to support students' success. Attend informational sessions, ask questions, and share your thoughts with teachers, counselors, and school leaders. Being open to their guidance and expertise ensures students are on the right track for their academic and future goals.

F.11-12.30 (S) Share tools like study guides, online learning platforms, or connections with mentors. For example, if students struggle in math, look for tutoring programs or apps to build their confidence.

F.11-12.31 (K) Help students understand how education goes beyond academics to foster life skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork. For instance, discuss how joining a school club or volunteering can build these life skills.

F.11-12.32 (S) Be involved as students move from high school and beyond. Help them prepare by discussing the changes they'll face and the skills they'll need, such as managing time, taking more responsibility, or exploring college entrance requirements.

F.11-12.33 (K) Continue to demonstrate to students how traits like curiosity, adaptability, and resilience can be valuable in any career or life path. Discuss with students about how education goes beyond grades and diplomas and helps students develop these traits.

Self-Advocacy

F.11-12.34 (K) Understand the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and how it affects a student's access to educational records once they enroll in postsecondary education, ensuring that you respect their privacy while supporting their success.

F.11-12.35 (K) Know how to support students in applying for accommodations and advocating for themselves at the college level, and encourage students to apply for these accommodations, such as extended test time or note-taking assistance. If a student uses accommodations in high school, begin exploring how to access similar support after graduation.

F.11-12.36 (A) If a student decides to move away for college, work, or other opportunities, remind them that they always have the option to return to their home community. Knowing they have a supportive place to come back to can provide them with comfort and confidence as they take steps toward independence and explore new possibilities.

F.11-12.37 (A) Celebrate students' journeys of self-discovery. Help them see that it's okay to try new things, change their mind, or take risks. Share personal examples of learning through experiences.

K20 Center. (2025). *Student college and career preparation standards 6–12*. <https://k20center.ou.edu/collegeandcareerpreparation/>