

In a 1-2 page typed essay please discuss 3 skills an 8th grader should have for a successful transition to high school and discuss what strategies you would use to help develop those skills.

Nostalgic memories take me back to the “readiness” I felt when transitioning from a middle school student craving the fantasy of high school happiness, to a high school freshman craving the “reality” of middle school daze. I was lost, to say the least, and it wasn’t just my mother’s new husband and upcoming pregnancy, it wasn’t just my decrease in amazing grade stamina, nor was it just my horrible breakup with my middle school dinner dance date, but it was all that and more. I felt like the butterflies in my stomach overturned every morning when I had to wake up and smell the, what was that black stuff adults drank, coffee, and understand every rule there was to innocent maturity. I felt lost in a world of high school woes, new friends, and constant stares into beautiful eyes of older guys and popular cliques of mean girls. I felt that I didn’t belong.

To say the least, middle school was probably the most emotional stage in my life. I was the only child, and with a work-a-holic single-parent mother, there were many things I needed to discuss that equated to every struggle, with mommy. Body changes. Disliked mirror images. Boys. Acne. I felt like my life was crumbling before me, and the best way to show my anxiety was to hold everything in and disrespect the one lady that loved me most. I needed everything. I needed someone there who had been through it all. I needed guidance. I wanted it. But I never knew how to say it, how to tell someone what I wanted to feel, because I didn’t know how important it would be to me at that moment.

An 8th grader transitioning into high school is a very huge step, and as much as we as young adults tell kids to “take it easy” or give them clichéd ideas of how it will be, everyone still has their own journey into the high school realm. Instead of us telling kids what to expect from this transition, we need to listen instead. Listening is the biggest form of communication and I feel that if a child knows that someone is there listening to them, about whatever questions, comments, or concerns they may have, then it may strengthen the process of high school as well as parent-child/mentor-child relationships. And by listening I don’t mean probing kids to talk to you about everything, but asking little by little. Maybe doing an activity they like to do, while asking them questions about themselves as well as giving them personal experiences from your days back in high school. I believe listening is a great skill to possess, especially in the transitioning stages of life.

Whenever I talk to my younger cousins and students coming to The University, I continuously encourage them to get involved in high school. Most students equate this to being on a sports/cheerleading team, but there are so many opportunities in student clubs in high school. Some may say that becoming involved increases your chances for scholarships and others interested in college, which can be true, but I encourage student to only get involved in something they can see themselves being interested in. And if they don’t know these things yet, to try. As a teenager, I was involved in different clubs that catered to my everyday interest; dance/gymnastic, painting, fashion, etc. Did I love every single club I was involved in? No. But did it help me learn more about myself to understand what I did like? Yes. I would use this the strategy of encouraging students to join clubs just as a way to “try them out” initially, then, if they like them, to continue with them with the hope of meeting new friends, learning new abilities, and perfecting a new or improved craft.

Lastly, students transitioning into high school should critique the skill of taking freshman year seriously. Back in high school, I can say that I took my freshman year seriously, but that still doesn’t mean that it wasn’t challenging for me throughout my freshman year. I still struggled with some grades and disliked my first and third report cards by getting B’s (something I wasn’t used to in middle school). Aside from that, a lot of people in my freshman class did not take freshman year seriously at all, and it resulted in them going to a different school for their sophomore year. In relation, both situations can occur for students when transitioning into high school: they can take it seriously, but still struggle OR they cannot take it seriously and struggle even more. When informing students to “take freshman year seriously”, I just mean that they should know that they’ll need help, may struggle with the newfound class requirements and personal adjustments, and may be drained from summer fun time. I would want students to take it seriously in a matter in which they understand that they roadblocks may happen, and that they understand to ask for help if they can. Knowing to predict if unpredictable things will happen may prepare students to be taken seriously in an environment such as high school. They need to vent and get personal things that can weigh them down off of their chests. They need to talk about the things they think about when taking an exam or finishing an assignment. And they most importantly need to know

that their freshman year is the most important year in their high school career because it can make or break early habits, friendships, and learning abilities that come on later down the road.

[Name of Application]