

Focus

- Develop good habits through organization, attention to detail, using a calendar to help meet academic deadlines
- Challenge yourself with advanced/honors courses or world language courses – earn HS credit if possible
- Build strong relationships with peers and teachers. Surround yourself with supportive and positive people that will help you meet your goals
- Develop skills in leadership, collaboration, and teamwork. Keep up to date in communication with teachers and counselors

Explore

- Ask questions – it means you are learning
- Take classes to explore – taking a variety of elective or CTE courses will allow you to try new things and expand your interests
- Consider potential career options
 - Use your school's available resources:
[Career Information Systems \(CIS\)](#) , [Career One Stop, Apprenticeships](#)
 - Talk to teachers, family, or other adults in a variety of professions to determine what they like and dislike about their jobs and what kind of education is needed for each kind of job
- Learn about admission requirements or experience needed for career pathways after high school to ensure you will be able to meet them by graduation
- Attend career and college fairs and presentations
- Visit college campuses or trade schools (virtually or in person)

Engage

- Actively engage in your classes: Ask questions, speak up, discuss, and study
- Get involved -- extracurricular activities, school clubs, sports, community service, and/or volunteer opportunities
- Share and discuss your interests and career aspirations with teachers, family and peers



ASPIRE: Middle School Checklist

- Participate in peer mentoring opportunities with HS ASPIRE students, if offered
- Build strong study habits: Connect with peers in study groups to help you focus and excel in your academics
- Attend ASPIRE career and college events and family nights, if offered
8th graders: Attend high school orientation

Practice

- Participate in ASPIRE career and college activities, programs, and events
- Look ahead at your high school opportunities: academic offerings, elective/CTE courses, clubs, sports, activities
- Make a plan to get involved in HS activities
- Over summer, participate in camps, summer enrichment programs and volunteer opportunities to help keep you engaged in learning. For ideas: <https://oregongostocollege.org/explore/summer>
- Be mindful and consider your [social media footprint](#)

Investigate

- Start familiarizing yourself with the ways to pay for college or career training after high school
- The [Oregon College Savings Plan](#) is a 529 savings account that has special tax advantages to help people save for educational expenses like tuition, computers, supplies and more. Keep saving for college each year
- If you have identified a career path of interest, begin to target MS/HS courses you can take that develop needed skills and volunteer in organizations that would be complementary to that work (this builds your resume)

Celebrate

- Take notice of how you are doing and celebrate your successes
- Take time for self-care: Be active, stay connected (build a support system – friends, family, mentors, etc.), read or write for fun