

# CONVERSATION STARTERS AND TIPS: HIGH SCHOOL



## “What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?”

- Actively listen to and question your mentee about their futures and their plans for after high school.
- Talk to your mentee about potential career paths and the steps it takes to get there.
  - Check out the “Explore Possible Careers” information in the Additional Resources section to help you and your mentee think about the intersections between personal interests, career paths, courses, and required education.
- If you have access to a computer with internet, here are some websites to explore with your mentee:
  - Career alternatives website: [www.bls.gov/k12/](http://www.bls.gov/k12/).
  - Visit [www.mappingyourfuture.org](http://www.mappingyourfuture.org) and click on “Middle/HS Students.”
  - Visit [www.knowhow2go.org](http://www.knowhow2go.org). Click on your grade level (Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors) and then “Explore Your Interests.”
  - Go to [www.michigan.gov/careers](http://www.michigan.gov/careers), and click on “Career Exploration” under “Students & Parents.”



## Talk About Where You Went to College

If you attended college, or are familiar with a local institution, make sure to talk about your experience at or with this college. Fill out “Talking Points about Your College” in the Additional Resources section.



## Discuss College Life

Review college newspapers, admission guides, brochures, etc. with your mentee and discuss college life, activities, and admission processes.



## Extracurricular Encouragement

Encourage your mentee to participate in extracurricular activities through their high school years; such as sports, band, drama, student government, community service, and other leadership opportunities. This will help him/her develop a strong pre-college portfolio.



## College-Bound Behaviors

Talk with your mentee about developing the good habits and self-discipline they will need to be successful in high school and college. This could include improving grades, study and homework habits, school attendance, test-taking skills, and time management. Talk with your mentee about these college-bound behaviors.



## Discuss Educational Paths

Help your mentee think about the various forms of higher education (community college, vocational school, four-year university, etc). Check out the “Where can you learn job-related skills?” document in the Additional Resources section for more information on each path.



### **Advanced Classes**

Encourage your mentee to forego the easy classes and take the harder, more advanced classes whenever possible. The more difficult classes will better prepare them to take the college entrance examinations, the SAT and/or the ACT. Colleges take note that students were enrolled in the tougher courses when reviewing transcripts.



### **Familiarize yourself with the document entitled “Paying for College.”**

It’s important that you become aware of the alternate ways one can pay for their education. Encourage your mentee to pursue higher education without thinking they will not be able to afford it. Explain to them that they should talk to the counselors at their high school and the financial aid personnel at the colleges they are interested in attending to find out more information about ways to finance their education. The “Ways to Pay for College” document in the Additional Resources section will give you a basic overview of possible alternatives you can discuss with your mentee.



- Financial Aid Form Help: Provide your mentee with information about College Goal Sunday, [www.micollegegoal.org](http://www.micollegegoal.org); it’s a day when young people and parent(s)/guardian(s) can visit local colleges or universities and get help filling out financial aid forms.
- Financial Aid forms require very sensitive information (social security numbers, parent income, etc), therefore you should be providing information and encouragement to your mentee to complete these forms with their parent(s)/guardian(s).



### **Grades**

Talk with your mentee about the projects or homework they have for school, emphasizing those good grades are necessary when planning to attend college or any postsecondary education program.



### **College Fair Attendance**

Encourage your mentee to attend college fairs. Find out when one is going to be in the area. If possible, plan to meet them and their parent(s)/guardian(s) at the event.