



## How to Get Started Finding out about High School

The difference between Middle School and High School can be huge for you and your child. You may be moving from a school with 1,000 students or less to a large, comprehensive high school of 3,000 or more, with students coming from many different middle schools. There may be many differences in the programs.

You and your child should expect to have a *transition IEP* meeting toward the end of Middle School. A representative from the high school should be in attendance. Talk to the Special Education Case Manager in the last grade of Middle School about the kinds of differences there will be for your child in high school, or make a list of questions to ask at the transition IEP.

*Examples of general questions may be:*

- What is the daily schedule like?
- Is there a special schedule for rallies, testing, etc?
- What guidance counseling is available?
- What are the options for food? (breaks, lunch, etc)
- What is the PE program; what are the expectations?
- Is busing available?
- What are the opportunities for my child to participate in extracurricular activities? (sports, clubs, etc.)
- What kinds of electives are available?
- What are the prerequisites for these activities?

*Find out what options there will be to address your child's unique needs:*

- What are the Special Education classes like?
- What are the options for mainstreaming and integration?
- Are "push in" and "pull out" programs offered?
- Are there classes co-taught with special and general education teachers?
- What related services are available?
- What supports are available for special education students in mainstream classes or extracurricular activities?

***Work with the IEP team and your child to develop a program that will be challenging and fun.***



## What about "Life after High School?"

Transition planning is important because it focuses the efforts of the school staff and the family in the last years of high school not only on success in school, but on success after school. In planning, you are deciding what you and your child want to accomplish while in school, what you and your child want to be ready to do after high school, and what services might be needed to accomplish those goals.

- All special education students, 15 and over, will have transition goals and services included in their IEP to prepare them for life after high school.

Transition planning must address their dreams and goals for:

- Training and/or education
  - Employment
  - Independent living skills (if appropriate)
- Transition services:
    - College exploration
    - Career assessment & counseling
    - Participation in the WorkAbility program
    - ROP
    - Work Experience
    - Assistance with budgeting
    - Career preparation

***Work with the IEP team to develop a plan for transition that will help your child reach his or her goals!***

*Provided by the  
Ventura County Special Education  
Local Plan Area (SELPA)*

Mary E. Samples, Assistant Superintendent

Fran Arner-Costello,  
Director, Programs and Services

# Transitioning to HIGH SCHOOL

## A Guide for Parents of Special Education Students



**Questions and strategies to prepare you and your student for the move to high school**



Ventura County Special Education  
Local Plan Area

5100 Adolfo Rd, Camarillo, CA 93012  
(805) 437-1560

[www.venturacountyselpa.com](http://www.venturacountyselpa.com)



## Before the First Day of School:

- Find out if your school district has an assistant principal or department chair that is in charge of Special Education on campus. This will be your contact person for questions or concerns.
- Identify the Case Manager that has been assigned to your student prior to the start of the school year and start the communication process.
- Make sure the new Case Manager has a copy of the IEP before school starts.
- Find out how to communicate with teachers (e.g., website, email, etc.)

## How Will We Get Orientated to the School?

Find out if middle school students can attend a field trip to the high school during school hours to preview campus and various campus activities.

Ask if your high school offers an information session for parents at the school. Topics that may be covered in these sessions:

- scheduling
- credits
- electives
- grades
- graduation

Find out if there is also a separate information session for parents with students that will be in the Special Education program.

Visit the high school website and become familiar with the ins and outs of the site:

- school calendar
- teacher sites
- student handbook
- campus map
- PTSA
- Zangle

*Work with the IEP team to determine strategies to get your child oriented to the new school.*



## What about Registration?

Find out how registration is done at the school.

Your student will need to:

- Pick up schedule (work with special education Case Manager to make any adjustments to the schedule if needed)
- Find assigned locker and PE locker
- Pick up supplies:
  - books/workbooks
  - lock
  - PE uniform
- Take school ID photo

This is a great time to tour the campus again and find classrooms.

## What about Accommodations and Modifications?

Any accommodations and modifications on the IEP will be carried over to the high school.

*Accommodations* are changes to the course content, teaching strategies, standards, test preparation, location, timing, scheduling, expectations, student responses, environment, etc. which provide access for a student with a disability to participate in a course/standard/test which **DO NOT fundamentally alter or lower the standards or expectations of the course.**

*Modifications* are changes which **DO fundamentally alter or lower standards or expectations of the course.**

Typical accommodations at the high school level:

- Extra time (particularly on tests)
- Use a written outline, review sheet or study guide
- Take exam orally
- Dictate answers to teacher
- Increased waiting time for response to questions

If your student is in a class with modifications, check with the Case Manager to find out if they will be given course credit if they receive a passing grade.

*Work with the IEP team to anticipate the type of accommodations or modifications your child may need in high school.*



## What about Graduation?

### High School Diploma

Requires passing CAHSEE and achieving the required number of credits. (each district has its own requirements for credit). As of 2010, students with IEPs are not required to pass the CAHSEE in order to obtain a diploma.

### California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)

Students are given **five** opportunities to pass the test, beginning in 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

- If the student fails the exam on the first attempt, they may take CAHSEE prep classes to support passing the math and English sections.
- Students who pass one or more sections of the CAHSEE by using modifications may be granted a diploma by the school board.
- Students in a functional skills curriculum may not take the CAHSEE at all.

### General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

Students who take the GED exam must not be enrolled in or graduated from high school, must be over the age of sixteen and must meet other state requirements.

## What if my child doesn't graduate?

- May obtain a Certificate of Completion. Certificate of Completion is for special education students who have:
  - ✓ Completed an alternative course of study (or)
  - ✓ Met their IEP goals satisfactorily (or)
  - ✓ Attended high school, participated in instruction and met transition goals
- May participate in all graduation activities.
- May continue to receive special education services until age 22.
- Community colleges do not require a high school diploma.

*Work with the IEP team to decide whether or not your child will be working toward a diploma.*