

Essay

Please write and title a 500-700-word essay on the following theme:

In what ways would you change how your School District prepares graduating students for life as young adults?

Some of the biggest issues I've noticed in my school is that a lot of students have no idea what they want to do after high school (even as a senior) and that many students have low resilience and low confidence. I think both of these issues can be fixed by adding a new class to our school called "Preparation for Life After High School." I'm sure students would jokingly call it "Adulting 101." No matter what the class is called, students should be required to take it every year. As a freshmen, they would learn how to take effective notes, how to study, how to manage time, what clubs and activities are available through our school and community, what colleges and jobs are looking for and how you can start building your resume as a freshman, and would include activities that would help students explore possible career routes. I think it is very important for freshmen to begin thinking about careers because all too often, seniors are graduating without any clue. Activities could include identifying hobbies and personal strengths, careers related to those hobbies and strengths, shadowing possible career options, and a final project could involve an indepth research presentation about your top 3 career ideas and your plan on how to reach that career.

The sophomore level class should include skills for how to find a job and how to apply for a job as a teenager, financial management, skills to overcome adverse situations, ACT/SAT prep, and to check in on the career plan that was written during freshman year. The teacher and student could have one-on-one discussions about whether the student is on track with their plan and how they can adjust the plan. The second semester of the sophomore class can be focused on more individual projects that focus on one chosen career path. For example, a student could use second semester to intern with a company that fits their career goals or to get experience with a nearby college. My school is 30 minutes away from the University of Central Missouri and an hour away from Kansas City. With buy in from parents and administration, internships could be easily possible. Students could even land summer internships or jobs because of this experience. Plus, the time spent in an internship and creating depth in a student's field would make their application for college or a job look much stronger.

The junior level class could include how to find, apply for, and win scholarships, identifying holes in personal resume and what can be done to strengthen resume, and could include activities that involve planning and giving back to the community. These community projects, also known as passion projects, could help fix a problem our community has that relate to the chosen career

path the student is interested in. Students would have to take the initiative to create, plan, and *actually do* the project, but they would also have the support of the class and school.

By taking a hands on and individual approach, seniors should feel adequately prepared for life after high school and have developed the confidence and initiative to do things on their own. I wish I would have known as a freshman that creating depth in my career path is much more important than spreading myself between multiple different activities that might not mean anything in the end. This program should eliminate wasted time by helping students develop soft skills while participating in activities and projects that are most meaningful to them.