

Time flies when you're having fun. That's what they say, right? School has been an adventure. A time for making friends, learning how to work and succeed as a team and individually, for building self-discipline, learning more about the world, and exploring a variety of career paths through academics. I am sad this adventure is ending, but excited to move on to the next one. I believe my particular district has done an excellent job of supporting me and preparing me for this next step. As with all things, there is certainly room to consider changes and possibilities for improvement. I know that many skills are integrated into our courses, but there could still be a whole class devoted to learning all the skills necessary for daily life as an adult. Simple things like paying taxes and bills, using a credit or debit card, balancing budgets, learning about insurance and health benefits, preparing for and cooking a meal, making travel arrangements, maintaining homes and vehicles are all important for navigating adulthood. I believe a class dedicated to basic adulthood skills would be helpful for every senior.

Another way our school district could prepare graduating students for life as young adults is by broadening our class variety. There are a few classes in particular I would have liked to have taken in high school: physics and coding. These classes would help with the career decision-making process by offering me an early look at something I may be interested in. I would have benefited from the opportunity to narrow down my career path options earlier so I could enter college with a more focused direction.

Incorporating another class focused specifically on applying to college and applying for scholarships would be great for those students heading on to post-secondary education. This is more of a convenience than a necessity, but it's still a change I believe would be beneficial. Students who work or are involved in extracurricular activities would find this helpful. One class every school day would give students plenty of time to work on researching scholarship opportunities, writing applications, and investigating financial aid possibilities.

Another way our school could help prepare us for life after school is by changing our Careers class. Currently, it is offered to eighth graders. I certainly didn't know what I wanted to do when I was in eighth grade, and I don't remember most of the class. I believe this would be more beneficial at the junior or senior level. If I could take it again I would as it would be much more helpful now than it was in eighth grade.

Finally, I think a review of the overall grading system could be beneficial. As I watch successful adults around me, I don't think they are successful because they got a top score on a test or because they took the most challenging classes. They are successful because they have a desire to help others and to make the world a better place. In school, there is a lot of emphasis placed on state and national test scores. That's been fine for me, because I have excelled at these types of assessments. But those tests aren't really telling me or anyone else how successful I might be outside of school. The successful people I admire are hard-working, have integrity, and care for

others. Finding a way to assess and then provide feedback to students based on skills necessary to successfully obtain and keep a job might be beneficial.

In summary, I believe our district does a good job of preparing students for life as young adults, but there are many improvements that can be made. Life skills classes, more career-specific classes, and less focus on test scores would all be helpful ways to improve how our school district prepares graduates for the real world.