

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?

There comes a moment in the life of every high school student in which they must make the transition from a carefree childhood into the responsible life of an adult and begin contributing to society. Many make the transition seamlessly, knowing precisely what it is they wish to do with themselves. However, others are often left floundering for some semblance of purpose, not knowing who or where to turn for guidance, and therefore struggle when they are eventually thrust into the adult world. A traditional high school education is thought to bridge the gap between a student's younger years and their decision for their future career, but this is not always the case. Far too often a student will go through four years of courses which provide an incomplete idea of what a certain career might be like or fail to prepare them for a particular field entirely. Even courses designed to prepare students for the real world, such as a personal finance class, fall short of their intended purpose to familiarize young adults with the concepts they will need to be successful in life. If students are to flourish in their new lives as adult members of society, it is crucial that they are provided with materials which will help them as they fully transition into their new role as a freshly minted adult.

One solution to such a problem is to create a program in which students have a greater ability to explore potential career paths as they advance through high school. As students enter their junior year, they are expected to job shadow for at least one day. This experience is thought to provide students with insight into a particular career path, helping them to decide whether or not they wish to continue pursuing their current journey of preparing themselves to

step into such a field. Such an experience is often helpful when it comes to determining a student's future, but students often still do not have a clear idea of what direction they want to go when considering a career. West Plains High currently offers some vocational courses for juniors and seniors, such as a culinary class and a multimedia arts program. These three-hour block periods allow students who have already dedicated themselves to a career to receive a more in-depth education in that field. But what, one may ask, about students who have yet to decide what path they will take in life? For these students, one probable solution is to provide them with a two year exploratory and/or preparatory course for freshmen and sophomores similar to the Z-CAPS program, in which it offers students the chance to job-shadow multiple career paths in a variety of different areas, or even to offer classes for students which focus specifically on teaching about different jobs to educate students about the many options they have when choosing a career. Such a course, if made a requirement rather than an elective, would assuredly give students a more thorough understanding of the world around them, and would help them to make informed decisions about the direction in which they choose to steer themselves.

For many students, the process of transitioning from childhood to adulthood is fraught with stress and uncertainty, but it doesn't have to be. If students are provided with the opportunity to more fully explore the world around them and the opportunities it can afford them, they will more easily be able to assimilate themselves into the adult world, thereby taking their places among functioning members of society, and able to make their own meaningful contributions to the world around them.